

MODULE 3 METHODS AND STRATEGIES

Introduction

Module three will teach you that ESP methodology is a communicative one with its attributes of task-based, problem solving, collaborative and team teaching.

Unit1 ESP Methods and Principles of Communicative
Methodology

Unit 2 Some Attributes of ESP Methodology

Unit 3 Principles of Learning

UNIT 1 ESP METHODS AND PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATIVE METHODOLOGY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

So far in the course, you have studied the definition and characteristics of ESP. You have also been told about different ways to design an ESP course. In this module, we shall be looking at methodology in ESP. The emphasis on communicative methodology is to enable the learner use the language he or she has learnt in communication. To achieve this in ESP classroom, the principles underlining learning should be examined which is the thrust of this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain what is meant by communicative methodology;
- explain what is meant by the fact that ESP methodology is a communicative one;
- discuss what makes an activity a communicative one; and
- outline and discuss some principles of communicative methodology.

HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

- a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
- b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
- c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.
- d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
- e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 ESP Methodology – A Communicative One

According to Johns and Duddley-Evans (1991), ESP requires methodologies that are specialized or unique. They believe that ‘an English for academic purposes (EAP) class taught collaboratively by a language teacher and a subject-area lecturer and special English classes for students in the workplace... require considerably different approaches to those found in general English classes (p. 68). Of great relevance to ESP methodology is the link of strands of functional syllabus, communicative and learning-centred approaches, and authenticity, relevancy and appropriateness in language and materials (Jordan 1977, p. 109).

Some ESP advocates agree on the fact that ESP is not restricted to any specific methodology and that the communicative approach is often thought to be closely related to ESP (Stevens, 1988, Hutchinson & Waters, 1984). It can be asserted that an effective approach for teaching GE should work for teaching ESP, and the teacher who has sound experience in teaching general English can transfer it successfully to the ESP teaching situation. In other words, a new teaching method is not required for this new situation. Although the communicative approach

can be effective, the situation for both general English and ESP requires an effective eclectic approach rather than adherence to a specific teaching method. I also believe that, just like GE, “ESP does not have to employ any particular method or technique that already exists, if the requirements do not point in that direction.’ It is, however, observed that the communicative methodology has this eclectic nature, no wonder ESP is said to have adopted communicative methodology.

“Communicative” is a word which has dominated discussions of teaching methodology for many years. Although in a monolingual English language classroom, 'real communication' in English is impossible; in 'communicative methodology' we try to be 'more communicative'. That is to say, even though it may be impossible to achieve 'real communication', we should attempt to get close to “real communication” in our classrooms. It is based on the theory that the primary function of language use is communication. Its primary goal is for learners to develop communicative competence (Hymes 1971), or simply put, communicative ability. In other words, its goal is to make use of real-life situations that necessitate communication.

In the past the 'primary aim' of language learning seemed to be mastery of the grammatical system. The only practical task was translation and that was usually translation of 'great literature' rather than letters to the bank manager. The methodology for teaching modern, 'living' languages was identical to the methodology for dead, classical languages like Latin and Ancient Greek.

Today, we see our primary aim as teaching the practical use of English for communication with native speakers and others.

According to Nunan (1994), the aim of communicative language learning is achieving language proficiency based on the development of the four macro skills. It is quite natural that the level of language proficiency will be different for different contingents of learners and will depend on learners' needs. Nunan (1991:279) lists five basic characteristics of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT):

1. An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
2. The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
3. The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on the language but also on the learning process itself.
4. An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.
5. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom.

The assumptions in CLT are that: (a) learners learn a language through using it to communicate, (b) authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities, (c) fluency is an important dimension of communication, (d) communication involves the integration of different language skills, and (e) learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error ([http://wikigogy.org/Method and approach](http://wikigogy.org/Method_and_approach)).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Write a short note on communicative methodology.

3.2 Communicative Activities

Wesche and Skehan (2002:208) describe as communicative activities:

- Activities that require frequent interaction among learners or with other interlocutors to exchange information and solve problems.
- Use of authentic (non-pedagogic) texts and communication activities linked to “real-world” contexts, often emphasizing links across written and spoken modes and channels.
- Approaches that are learner centered in that they take into account learners’ backgrounds, language needs, and goals and generally allow learners some creativity and role in instructional decisions (p. 208)

In its purest form, a communicative activity is an activity in which there is:

- a desire to communicate
- a communicative purpose
- a focus on language content not language forms
- a variety of language used
- no teacher intervention
- no control or simplification of the material

Let us examine each characteristic in turn.

1. **A Desire to Communicate:** In a communicative activity there must be a reason to communicate. When someone asks a question, the person must wish to get some information or some other form of result. There must be either an 'information gap' or an 'opinion gap' or some other reason to communicate.
2. **A Communicative Purpose:** When we ask students to describe their bedroom furniture to their partners, we are creating an artificial 'communicative purpose' and making the activity more artificial by asking them to do it in English. We also create artificial 'information gaps' by giving different information to

pairs of students so that they can have a reason to exchange information.

3. **A Focus on Language Content not Language Forms:** In real life, we do not ask about our friend's family in order to practise 'have got' forms. We ask the question because we are interested in the information. That is to say, we are interested in the language content and not in the language forms.
4. **A Variety of Language is used:** In normal communication, we do not repeatedly use the same language forms. In fact, we usually try to avoid repetition. In many classroom activities, we often try to create situations in which students will repeatedly use a limited number of language patterns. This is also artificial.
5. **No Teacher Intervention:** When you are on a queue in filling stations, in a supermarket or at a film theatre, your teacher is not usually beside you to 'help' or 'correct' your English. Teacher intervention in classroom communicative activities adds to the artificiality.
6. **No Control or Simplification of the Material:** In the classroom, we often use graded or simplified materials as prompts for communicative activities. These will not be available in the real world.

Communicative activities are usually learner-directed and often involved pair and small group work. For Coffey (1984), all ESP exercises must be that of authenticity. All ESP work is in essence a simulation of a real-life task ... Serendipity is therefore one of the main virtues required (of the ESP writer): the ability to find authentic text that will fit pedagogic needs (p.5).

Coffey also attaches importance to role-play, self-directed learning, and team-teaching.

According to Littlewood (1981), the contributions of communicative activities to language learning include the following:

- They provide 'whole task practice', i.e. the total skill;
- They improve motivation;
- They allow natural learning;
- They can create context which supports learning.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

- i. What are communicative activities?
- ii. Name and explain at least four characteristics of a communicative activity

3.3 Principles of Communicative Methodology

Communicative methodology includes a number of different (and perhaps interconnecting) principles. Morrow (1981) gave about five principles that might help us to see that our students can use the language they learn in order to communicate. They include:

1. Know what you are doing: Every lesson should end with you as the learner being able to see clearly that you can do something which you could not do at the beginning – and that the ‘something’ is communicatively useful.
2. The whole is more than the sum of the parts: Every communicative method should operate with stretches of language above the sentence level and should also operate with real language in real situation. It also suggests that the processes are as important as the forms: the aim is to replicate as far as possible the processes of communication which include:
3. Information gap: the purpose of communication in real life is to bridge this gap. The concept of information gap seems to be one of the most fundamental in the whole area of communicative teaching. To the process of ‘information gap’ Hutchinson and Waters (1987) add media, reasoning, memory, jigsaw, opinion and certainty as other types of gap.
4. Choice is another crucial characteristic of communication. It means that the participants have choice, both in terms of what they will say and, more particularly, how they will say it. Deciding on these under the severe time pressure which language use involves is one of the main problems which foreign users of a language face.
5. To learn it, do it: Although the teacher can help, advise and teach, only the learners can learn: they must, therefore, become involved in the activities and learn by doing;

Added to Morrow’s (1981) principle are the following:

6. Mistakes are not always a mistake: With the aim of developing the communicative ability of the students, it may be necessary to be flexible enough to treat different things as ‘mistakes’ at different stages in the learning process; in other words, not every error should be corrected. Learners errors are tolerated as they are asset in the development of communicative skills: errors are used as a base for language teaching.
7. Communicative Syllabus Design: A syllabus pattern peculiar to the communicative approach is one which takes the learner into account before its design. It is the learner’s needs that determine the syllabus pattern to be adopted. It is recommended that an eclectic approach be adopted in drawing up syllabus in ESP. Such a syllabus should incorporate structures as well as functions,

- notions, and context in its design. Simulation, role play and games are used for language teaching and learning.
8. There is negotiation of meaning and two-way communication exists in class. Learners get progressive feedback from both fellow learners and the teacher.
 9. **Teacher's Role:** The teachers step out of their traditional didactic and domineering role. There is a co-operative relationship between them and the students. The teacher plays the role of a facilitator or guide and no longer controls class activities. A teacher that is already experienced in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) can exploit your background in language teaching. S/he should recognize the ways in which your teaching skills can be adapted for the teaching of English for Specific Purposes. Moreover, you will need to look for content specialists for help in designing appropriate lessons in the subject matter field she is teaching.
 10. **Learners' Role:** Learners have opportunity to express their own individuality and contribute their personality to the learning process. They also have opportunities for co-operative relationship to emerge among them. It could be said that communicative language teaching is learner-centred, that is, the learners are active participants in the learning and teaching process; they do something with the language in order to learn it; learners lead class activities; learners initiative is encouraged and their language needs determine the content and face of the lesson. What is the role of the learner and what is the task he/she faces? The learners come to the ESP class with a specific interest for learning, subject matter knowledge, and well-built adult learning strategies. They are in charge of developing English language skills to reflect their native-language knowledge and skills.
 11. **Class Management:** The communicative classroom allows for joint interpretation and co-operative negotiation. Class work is organized in group and in pairs. Also, peer supervision and co-operation are encouraged.

4.0 CONCLUSION

CLT methodologies embrace an eclectic approach to teaching, which means they borrow teaching practices from a wide array of methods that have been found effective and that are in accordance with principles of learning as suggested by research findings in research in SLA and cognitive psychology. Its open-ended or principle-based approach allows for a great deal of flexibility, which makes it adaptable to many individual programmatic and learner needs and goals.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have described methodological principles that facilitate the language learning process. CLT furthermore takes a pragmatic or performance-based approach to learning. Its goal is to promote the development of real-life language skills by engaging the learner in contextualized, meaningful, and communicative-oriented learning tasks. You were told that as far as theories of learning and effective strategies in teaching are concerned, CLT does not adhere to one particular theory or method. It draws its theories about learning and teaching from a wide range of areas such as cognitive science, educational psychology, and second language acquisition (SLA). In this way, it embraces and reconciles many different approaches and points of view about language learning and teaching, which allows it to meet a wide range of proficiency-oriented goals and also accommodate different learner needs and REFERENCES/FURTHER READING.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

ESP methodology is a communicative one. Discuss

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2 SOME ATTRIBUTES OF ESP METHODOLOGY

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- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Problem Solving
 - 3.2 Task-based approach
 - 3.3 Collaborative/Cooperative Teaching and Learning
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

"Learner-learning centred", "task-based", "activity-based" and "problem-solving" are all attributes which are generally associated with an effectively communicative-oriented approach. And, as may be deduced from the recent literature on ESP, this orientation is characteristic of special purpose language teaching in general and ESP in particular. Such an approach aims, among other things, at helping learners develop the skills associated with language learning, as well as skills related to their own discipline of study. Achieving these skills requires special methodology such as problem solving, task based, content based integrated learning and collaborative teaching. These are the truce of this unit. This unit will also discuss the advantages of using each communicative approach.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to;

- discuss problem solving and task-based as attributes of ESP approach;
- state the reasons why a teacher should do 'whole class' problem solving first in the class;
- give some examples of problem solving activities;
- explain the nature of problems in an ESP classroom;
- outline the factors that should make interactive tasks successful
- distinguish the meanings of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), CBI (Content-based Instruction) and TBL (Task-based Learning), giving at least two advantages of each;
- explain how ESP lecturer could establish contact with the content lecturer; and
- state some problems of collaborative teaching.

HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

- a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
- b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
- c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.
- d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
- e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Problem Solving

The interactive nature of ESP makes learners to engage in a lot of communicative activities. One of such is problem solving. This is a process that must be included in every educational practice as life is not devoid of problems. Problem solving can be seen as a way into new work, an opportunity to apply acquired knowledge and a rationale for gaining new skills and knowledge using an already acquired knowledge. We should remember that ESP prepares learners to function effectively in target situation. It is also a range of activities which require the learners to find solutions to problems of different kinds. A learner may not always solve all problems presented by the teacher but different strategies may be tried at achieving success. What learners do need is knowledge of strategies and processes which can be used to try and solve problem. This is why we say that ESP is learning-centred and process oriented. Some of problem solving activities include teaching learners how to get started, sorting of data, seeking patterns, linking to what you know, trying out theories, testing theories, etc.

A good teacher should, first of all, do ‘whole class’ problem solving to demonstrate the thinking processes the pupils need to use. It should also be used to consolidate work and to assess whether the children have acquired a piece of learning. Problem solving requires learners to bring to fore their prior knowledge and generic strategies for what to do next. A problem could be used to introduce a topic and get pupils interested in what you want them do.

Kinds of Problems

- a) Problems that have a single step and one solution, e.g. what two colours do you combine to create an orange?
- b) Problems that have many steps and a solution.

- c) Open ended problems – also known as investigations. They offer opportunities for learners to make decisions and pose questions, decide which line of action to pursue. They can arrive at different solutions and discover more questions.

3.2 Task-based Activities

In Communicative approach, the classroom activities are task-based. Learners are continuously presented with problems to solve, using the target language. For instance, learners could be asked to reorder jumbled letters or words; to listen to a speaker and report all the main points mentioned, to underline or list out all the nouns, verbs, etc. in a passage. Arranging the program around tasks such as information- and opinion-gap activities, it is hoped that the learner would perceive the language subconsciously whilst consciously concentrating on solving the meaning behind the tasks. There appears to be an indistinct boundary between this approach and that of language teaching methodology, and evaluating the merits of the former remain complicated.

A task-based approach assumes that speaking a language is a skill best perfected through practice and interaction, and uses tasks and activities to encourage learners to use the language communicatively in order to achieve a purpose. Tasks must be relevant to the real world language needs of the student. That is, the underlying learning theory of task based and communicative language teaching seems to suggest that activities in which language is employed to complete meaningful tasks enhances learning.

Tasks must be relevant to the real world language needs of the student. That is, the underlying learning theory of task based and communicative language teaching seems to suggest that activities in which language is employed to complete meaningful tasks, enhances learning. According to Ellis (2000), for interactive tasks to be successful, it should contain elements that:

- are new or unfamiliar to the participants;
- require learners to exchange information with their partners or group members;
- have a specific outcome;
- involve details;
- centre on a problem, especially an ethical one, such as deciding in a small group who should take the last spot in a lifeboat, a nuclear physicist or a pregnant woman; and
- involve the use of naturally occurring conversation and narrative discourse.

Teachers, using task-based syllabus, are expected to use problem-solving tasks to provide learners with opportunities to share ideas, build

consensus, and explain decisions about real-life issues important to them.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- i. Write short notes on problem-solving and task-based activities in ESP methodology.
- ii. Give at least four examples of problem solving activities.
- iii. How can you describe the nature of problems to be used in ESP teach-learn process.
- iv. What are the elements of interactive tasks in communicative methodology?

3.3 Collaborative/Integrated Teaching and Learning

The field of English for Specific/Academic Purposes has developed rapidly over the past 40 years and become a major force in English language teaching and research. The idea of including content of a subject under study into a language classroom was first introduced in the 1970s by Hutchinson and Waters. They stated that the content of a subject, for example, economics or management, should be used for teaching a foreign language. The emphasis of ELT has always been on practical outcomes on the language. It has always focused on the needs of learners and it has been preparing them to communicate effectively in the tasks required by their field of study or profession (Bojovi, 2006). The idea of “natural” language acquisition promoted by Krashen (1981) supported this approach as both claim that the best way to learn a language is to use it for “meaningful” purposes. These meaningful purposes change greatly so various applications of ESP have arisen in terms of the field or the approach of teaching specific English; i.e. EAP (English for Academic Purposes), CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), CBI (Content-based Instruction) and TBL (Task-based Learning).

CLIL, for instance, refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language in which this content is encoded (Marsh, et al, 2001). It is widely seen as an excellent means of learning a language, and of introducing international events into the teaching of content subjects. Advocators of CLIL claim that it is a very effective way of learning a language as it provides the learners with meaningful input and authentic situations as suggested by Comprehensible Input Theory of Krashen. According to Krashen (1981), the mistake of language teaching is that we first teach the skills and only later use them, while the most effective way should be learning something and using it at the same time.

Naves (2002) summarizes successful CLIL programme teaching strategies; teachers exhibit active teaching behaviours such as clearly giving instructions, accurately describing tasks, maintaining learners' engagement in instructional tasks by maintaining task focus, pacing instruction appropriately, and communicating their expectations for students' success. In presenting new information, they use appropriate strategies such as demonstrating, outlining, using visuals, building redundancy, rephrasing, scaffolding, linking new information to learners' previous knowledge, etc. to make input comprehensible and context-embedded. All these and above mentioned roles entail a good command of academic English and field-specific knowledge.

Collaborative/Team Teaching refers to teaching performed by a group of two or more persons assigned to the same students at the same time for instructional purposes in a particular subject or combination of subjects; the difference between the two, if any, may be that collaborative teaching places more focus on shared power than team teaching. The ESP teachers need to hear the content lecturers' concern about the students' ability to communicate effectively in English in their academic and professional work, and they need to be open to their suggestions. By focusing on the particular needs for communication skills, rather than on ESP at a more general level, the ESP lecturer is able to provide the necessary and appropriate support to the content lecturers for the education of the students in specific disciplines.

The content lecturer's job is to educate the students in the content and culture of the discipline/profession. They can help informally in setting priorities in an English syllabus by indicating what it is that most bothers them about their students' English. These priorities should be based on what affects the most frequent 'consumer' of the students' English. This relieves the ESP lecturer of much of the worry that the English class might not be appropriate for the students' needs. Savas (2009), supporting this view, states:

ESP teaching should be carried on by the collaboration of an EFL teacher with a content teacher. They can carry out ESP teaching scaffolding each other; the former provides the latter with methodology of language teaching while the latter makes the content meaningful, helping the EFL teacher learn content knowledge (p. 399). The ESP lecturer needs be able to support this training process. The ESP lecturer realizes the student may ultimately need an English proficiency level high enough to be able to interact with fellow professionals and to be sensitive to how language is used in that profession. They should be able to translate the priorities into appropriate communication objectives and activities.

Brennan and van Naerssen (1998), while explaining the job of ESP lecturer in collaborative teaching, state that the ESP lecturer generally has a good knowledge and command of how language is used in

different situations, and may well have experience in various academic/professional fields, but is not an expert in students' fields in the content teacher. Therefore, as the ESP lecturer defines his or her role, care must be taken not to move into areas of expertise and responsibility that rightly belong to content lecturer. This, as they say, will not be fair to any of the three people involved in the educational experience: the student, the content teacher or the ESP lecturer. A good coordination must exist among them. In academic settings, with the help of ESP instructor, cooperative or collaborative ESP teaching provides the learners with formal schemas of academic language through academic content they are already familiar with

Content-based ESP: Another application of ESP is the Content-Based Instruction (CBI), which focuses on the teaching of academic English through content knowledge. Language learning and content of subject matter could be brought together because a foreign language is most successfully acquired when learners are engaged in its meaningful and purposeful use. The integration of language and content involves the incorporation of content material into language classes. Content can provide a motivational and cognitive basis for language learning since it is interesting and of some value to the learner (Brewster, 1999).

3.3.2 How does the ESP lecturer establish contact with the content lecturer?

This could be done by seeking the support of the head of the content department and/or by surveying lecturers. In their introductory meeting, it is their duty to discuss the feasibility of developing various communication channels such as appointing a liaison person, observing classes, team teaching, attending departmental meetings, and participating in student selection interviews.

They can also distribute a questionnaire at this time to content lecturer to find out their views on the particular strengths and weaknesses of the students, and ways in which the English lecturer might be able to help. These channels, if opened, will enable the ESP lecturer to gain important information about the standards and status of English with the particular departments.

Apart from the formal contact, ESP lecturer may often have to establish contact informally in order to gain important information on the attitudes and perceptions of the content lecturers concerning the role of English in their teaching work. Content lecturer at times responds by saying something like "their grammar is weak"

3.3.3 Advantages of Collaborative Teaching

Cooperative Learning (CL) is the most widely used approach to ESP teaching and it is potentially beneficial for second language learners in a number of ways. First of all, CL can provide more opportunities for L2 interaction and improve L2 proficiency (Swain, 2001). It can also help students draw on their first language (L1) while developing L2 skills (Cohen, 1986). It can also include opportunities for the integration of language and content learning. Content-based, collaborative and interactive ESP teaching, therefore, helps both the teacher and students scaffold each other.

ELT teachers from functioning well when they are appointed as ESP teachers.

3.3.4 Problems of Collaborative Teaching

- Collaborative teaching, while rewarding, does have its challenges. Teachers often feel uncomfortable embracing a collaborative teaching model because they do not feel they have been prepared for organizing and delivering instruction when teaching roles and responsibilities are not defined.
- It requires a great deal of time and effort from teachers.
- It can become inefficient due to differing personalities, different cultures, different teaching styles.
- There may be unwillingness on the part of some departments to collaborate, thereby making it difficult for the ESP lecturer to establish contact.
- ESP lecturer may face the frustrating issue of allocation of hours and formal scheduling of the English language classes. This is because the departmental priorities take precedence over the logic of scheduling English classes to coincide with immediate needs. One of the hardest tasks of the ESP lecturer is dealing with a lack of formal schedule coordination (Brennan & van Naerssen, 1998).

Bailey, Dale, and Squire (1992) suggest:

- teachers should focus on goals rather than personalities to minimize power struggles.
- recognizing one another's contributions and setting aside time for planning on a regular basis are two important factors related to the success of collaborative teaching.
- collaborative teaching may be more useful for interactive courses that require dialogues and discussions than for courses that are receptive and discrete – skill based.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

- i. Write short notes on any three of the following: (a) Cooperative learning (CL) (b) Content based Instruction (CBI), collaborative teaching and learning.
- ii. How can ESP teacher establish contact with content lecturer?
- iii. Mention some problems of collaborative teaching.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The aim of ESP is to help learners achieve communicative competence in the target situation. In doing this, language and content-area learners construct their own knowledge on the basis of interaction with their environment. Effective teaching/learning enables learners to be in dialogue, to collaborate in the composition of knowledge and to share results of their inquiry. In academic settings, with the help of ESP instructor, cooperative or collaborative ESP teaching provides the learners with formal schemas of academic language through academic content they are already familiar with. They are like two sides of a coin in ESP teaching, and one cannot be favoured over the other. Teaching language structures is possible only when it is meaningful for the learners, and teaching content through L2 is useful only when learners can give feedback in L2, too.

5.0 SUMMARY

ESP programs are content-based, task-based, interactive programs which provide cooperative learning. In this unit, it has been established that Cooperative Learning (CL) is the most widely used approach to ESP teaching is that it is potentially beneficial for second language learners in a number of ways especially when performed through content. First of all, CL can provide more opportunities for L2 interaction and improve L2 proficiency (Swain, 2001). It can also help students draw on their first language (L1) while developing L2 skills (Cohen, 1986). It can also include opportunities for the integration of language and content learning. Content-based, collaborative and interactive ESP teaching, therefore, help both the teacher and students understand each other in the process of language learning.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

ESP teaching/methodology is said to be problem solving, task based, integrated and collaborative. Discuss.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Principles of Learning
- 4.0 Conclusion
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- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

ESP materials are relevant to learning needs, but it depends on how the teacher put them into action. They are not just effective in representing language use but are also effective instrument of language learning. Needs analysis can tell us a lot about the nature and content of the learners' target language needs, but it is difficult to find out how to attend that target competencies. To find out the learning needs, it is important to look at the theoretical models of learning. This unit will, therefore, examine some basic principles of learning which can provide a reasoned basis for the interpretation of ESP language need into an effective ESP methodology.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of the unit, you should be able to:

- mention some items in Phillips' learning principles;
- state some principles of learning as given by Hutchinson (1988); and
- discuss the implications of some of the principles to the teacher.

HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

- a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
- b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
- c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.
- d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
- e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

As you go through this unit, take note of some of the learning theories that are useful for you as a distance learner. Try to apply them as you study your manuals.

3.1 Principles of Learning

According to Philips (1981), Language for Special/Specific Purpose (LSP) course must set the student various tasks, and that these tasks ‘must reflect the structural characteristics of the learner’s special purpose and must be as integrated as possible and not be divided into minute, discrete elements. This notion led to his adoption of four principles of learning:

- (a) Reality Control: ‘control of the difficulty of the task demanded of the LSP student is exercised by means of the procedures of simplification appropriate to the field of activity constituting his or her special purpose’,
- (b) Non-triviality: ‘the learning tasks required of the student must be ... perceived by the student as meaningfully generated by his or her special purpose’;
- (c) Authenticity: ‘the language that the student acquires through following LSP course ... must be the language naturally generated by his or her special purpose’;
- (d) Tolerance of error: ‘errors of content and of formal adequacy are to be judged as unacceptable only to the extent that they entail errors of communicative adequacy’.

To Philips’ four methodological principles may be added Hutchinson’s (1988) nine fundamental principles of learning. They are:

Learning is developmental

The learner is seen not as an empty vessel waiting to be filled with knowledge. Learning is a developmental process in which learners use their existing knowledge to make sense of the flow of new information. In essence, learning can only take place if the learner has an existing knowledge. The teacher should first of all determine the knowledge the learners have so that it can be activated in the learning of the new knowledge. This makes for an efficient teaching and effective learning.

Learning is a thinking process

The learners, apart from having background knowledge, should be able to make use of them. This carries two implications for materials and methodology:

1. The teacher should help learners to become aware of what they know and how it can be used.

2. Tasks and activities should oblige learners to think – to use their cognitive capacities and their knowledge of the world to make sense of the flow of the new information.

Learning is an active process

The learner is seen not as passive receiver of information, but as active participant in the learning process. Hutchinson describes two kinds of activity to explain the term ‘active’. They are:

1. Psycho-motor Activity–involving the movement of hand, eye or mouth to produce or receive communication signals.
2. Processing Activity – that is, the activity involving the use of the brain to make meaningful what is heard, read, spoken or written.

Learning involves making decisions

Since learning is an active developmental process, it follows that it is an active thinking process in which learners use existing knowledge to make new information meaningful. The learners in the process make decisions that are meaningful and decide what knowledge will be useful in solving problems. Tasks and activities should therefore give learners the opportunity to make decisions which may be right or wrong.

Learning a language is not just a matter of linguistic knowledge

The second language learner brings to the classroom a complex mass of conceptual and factual knowledge. It, therefore, shows that it is not just the knowledge of language that enables us to learn a language. Language teaching must respect the learners’ cognitive and conceptual capacities. A great deal of language are learnt accidentally while working on problems of non-linguistic nature, therefore, full use should be made of the ESP learner’s subject and general knowledge as a vehicle for language learning.

Second language learners are already communicatively competent

The second language learners already know that language serves different purposes, that it takes different forms in different situations, that some words are appropriate in some situations but not in others. The learners’ knowledge of communication should be respected and exploited through simple techniques such as prediction.

Learning is an emotional experience

Learners are thinking beings who also have feelings. Apart from engaging the learners’ cognitive capacities, their affective qualities should also be harnessed. A good teacher will try to minimize the negative effects of the learners’ emotional reactions to learning and will instead try to boost the positive emotions. This should involve:

- using pair and group work to minimize the stress of speaking in front of the whole class;

- structuring tasks so as to enable learners to show what they do know rather than what they do not;
- giving learners time to think and work out answers;
- putting more emphasis on the process of getting the answer rather than the product of the right answer;
- making interest, fun and variety primary considerations in the design of tasks and activities, not just an added bonus.

Learning is not systematic

A good syllabus will acknowledge that setting out knowledge in a systematic way will in no way produce systematic learning. The learners must create their own internal system. Learners will learn only when they are ready to do so.

Learning needs should be considered at every stage of the learning process

Learning needs should be built into the whole course design process from needs analysis to the actual lesson. It should not be a matter of designing materials according to views about language and grafting a methodology on it for them. Methodological considerations should be a determining factor throughout the whole learning process.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) list a number of techniques that can be applied to lessons in order to put into practice Hutchinson's nine fundamental principles. They are gaps, variety, prediction, enjoyment, an integrated methodology, preparation, involvement, creativity and atmosphere in the classroom.

With these principles in mind, the teacher in planning his lessons should emphasize only the positive effects of learner emotional reactions. Task oriented teaching which includes problem solving, discussion, simulation, role play, project, case study, oral presentation; report, etc should be encouraged. This is in recognition of the principles that see the learner as a thinking being that thinks and solves problems and also be in active participation in what is happening in his environment.

ESP methodology should provide whole task practice; it should improve motivation and create contexts that support learning. Because learning is developmental, there should be evaluation and re-evaluation at the end of the course to determine if the learner could communicate in the target language.

ESP teachers should also be involved in team teaching with the subject specialist who acts as informant on what goes on in the subject discipline. Language for specific purposes must set the learners, which must reflect the characteristics of the learners' special purpose. It must

be integrated, real, seen as important by the learners, authentic and show tolerance to errors.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. How can the principles of authenticity and tolerance to errors affect the ESP teacher's methodology?
- ii. How can a teacher through his or her methodology minimize the negative effects of the learners' emotional reactions?
- iii. What can you say are the contributions of Philips' principles to ESP methodology?

4.0 CONCLUSION

The concern of ESP teacher and learner is not language use but with language learning. Needs analysis may have given us the language need at the target situation but it has failed to tell us how learners learn the language. As ESP teachers, we should be guided in our material and methodology by these principles of learning so as to achieve communicative competence in the learners of English.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has exposed you to what methodology in ESP should look like. The learner having been seen as an active processor of knowledge is involved in every stage of learning activity. The teacher's knowledge of fundamental learning principles leads him or her into adopting communicative activities in the ESP classroom.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

What is the implication of the principles that see learning as thinking and an active process?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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