

Approach to course design essay



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Nowadays, English becomes an international language which is used in many aspects of life, whether in daily life or in professional work. Many people now aware of the important of English and begin to join an English course. In spite of General English that teaches English as a whole, there is also English for Specific Purposes (ESP.) that teaches English only In a restricted area of the target situation.

ESP. Is described as the teaching of English used In academic studies or the teaching of English for vocational or professional purposes. However, to make the learning of ESP. successful, teacher should make a course design that suitable with the learners' need and goal. In choosing the best course design, there are many factors that may give an influence. But teacher doesn't have to worry because there are some approaches that can help her/him to conduct It. As there are many approaches to course design, the problem starts rising.

Some teachers don't know the characteristics of each approach and cannot decide which approach is good for their learners. Since this approach Is important, so teachers should be careful in deciding.

B. Statement of the Problem
The statements of the problem of this paper are: 1. What is the definition of course design? 2. What are the main types of approaches to course design? 3. What are the characteristics of each approach to course design?

C. Objectives
The objectives of this paper are: 1. To know the definition of course design. . To know the main types of approaches to course design. 3. To know the characteristics of each approach to course design.

Definition of Course Design
Course design is an Interpretation process of the learning needs and learning horses to produce an Integrated

series of teaching-learning experiences including producing materials depending on syllabus, developing methodology for teaching, and establishing evaluation procedure. It aims to lead the learners to a particular state of knowledge.

All the data we have gathered – learning needs and theories – should be interpreted in order to answer the questions that may appear (such as: What is the only use need analysis, but also depends on external constraints (classroom facilities/time), our own theoretical views, and experience of the classroom. B. Three Main Types of Approach to Course Design There are many different approaches to ESP. course design, however, we can identify the three main types: Language-centered Approach, Skills-centered Approach, and Learning-centered Approach. 1 .

Language-centered Approach Language-centered Approach is the simplest kind and most familiar course design to English teacher. It concentrates on the performance of the learners regarding their target situation. The purpose is to draw a connection as direct as possible between the analysis of the target situation and the content of the ESP. course. It proceeds as follows: From the chart, we can conclude that it is logical and straight forward procedure – starts with learner, proceeds through various stages of analysis to a syllabus, thence to materials used in the classroom and finally evaluates the mastery of the syllabus items.

However, it has several weaknesses. It might be considered as learner-centered approach because it starts from the learners and their needs. But in fact, the learners are only used to identify the target situation. Instead of

teaching the whole English as in General English, only a restricted area of the language is taught. The earners are used only to determine the restricted area, so they aren't considered in other stages as they suppose to. It can be criticized for being a static and inflexible procedure. Once the course designer is done with the initial analysis of the target situation, he/she is locked into a relentless process.

In other words, it cannot respond to unsuspected or developing influences as it doesn't have flexibility, feedback channels, and error tolerance. Based on its systematic model, it engenders false belief that learning is systematic - that the systematic analysis and presentation of engage data will produce systematic learning. The fact that knowledge has been systematically analyzed and systematically presented doesn't in any way imply that it will be systematically learnt. Learners have to make the system meaningful to themselves.

It gives no acknowledgment to factors which must inevitably play a part in the creation of any course. Data which is produced by need analysis is not important before it is interpreted. And in interpreting, we make use of all sorts of knowledge that are not revealed in the analysis. In language-centered approach, the analytical model is also being used inappropriately as a predictive model - an analysis of what happens in a particular situation is being used to determine the content of pedagogic syllabuses and materials. But there are other factors that will influence these activities.

For example, one of the primary principles of good pedagogic materials is that they should be interesting. Thus, if the materials are based on the

language-centered model, either there are other factors being used, which are not acknowledged in the model, or, these learning factors are not considered to be important. Its analysis of target situation data is only at the surface level. It reveals very little about the competence that underlies the performance. The skills-centered approach has been widely applied in a number of countries, particularly in Latin America.

The aim is not to present and practice language items, but rather to provide opportunities for learners to employ and evaluate the skills and strategies considered necessary in the target situation. The skills-centered approach is founded on two fundamental principles. A. Theoretical The basic theoretical hypothesis is skills and strategies, which are used by the learners to produce or comprehend discourse, underlie any language behavior. Unlike language-centered approach which concentrates on performance, skills-centered approach concentrates on the competence that underlies the performance.

Therefore, it will present its learning objectives of both performance and competence. Example: General objective (I. E. Performance level) The students will be able to read catalogue books written in English Specific objectives (I. E. Competence level) The students will be able to: extract the gist of a text by skimming extract relevant information from the main parts of a book . Pragmatic The basic pragmatic for the skills-centered approach derives from a distinction made by Widows (1981) between goal-oriented courses and process-oriented courses.

Goal-oriented courses just focus on the goal of the learning or the final product, while process-oriented courses focus on the process of how to

achieve that goal. Holmes stated that the main problem of ESP. is one of time available and learners' experience. For example, the aim of learning ESP. is to be able to read literature, but there may be not enough time to reach this aim during the course period, or the earners may be in their first year of studies so they have little experience of the literature. If these factors appear in the ESP. course, the aim may not be achieved.

The process-oriented approach removes the distinction between the ESP. course and the target situation. They are seen as a continuum of constantly developing degrees of proficiency with no cut-off point of success or failure. The emphasis in ESP. is not on achieving a particular set of goals, but on enabling the learners to achieve what they can. " The process-oriented approach... Is at least realistic in concentrating on tracteries and processes of making students aware of their own abilities and potentials and motivating them to tackle target texts on their own after the end of the course so that they can continue to improve. (ibid) The reasons why skills-centered approach is better than language-centered approach are: It views language in terms of how the mind of the learner processes it rather than as an entity in itself. It tries to build on the positive factors that the learners bring to the course, rather just on the negative idea of " lacks". It frames its objectives in open-ended terms, so enabling learners to achieve at least something. The role of needs analysis in this approach is twofold: perform in the target situation.

It enables the course designer to discover the potential knowledge and abilities that the learner bring to the ESP. classroom. In spite of its concern for the learner, skills-centered approach approaches the learner as a user of

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language rather than as a learner of language. Below is the chart of skills-centered approach to course design: 3. Learning-centered Approach

Learning is more than just a matter of presenting language items or skills and strategies. It is not just the content of what is learnt that is important, but also the activity through which it is learnt (Phrase, 1983).

Learning-centered approach is based on the principle that course design is a negotiation process in which both the target situation influence the features of the syllabus and also it's a dynamic process in which means and resources vary from time to time. The difference between learner-centered approach and learning-centered approach shown below: It is based on the principle that learning is totally determined by the learner even though teachers can influence what is taught.

The learner is one factor to consider in the learning process, but not the only one) It is seen as a process in which the learner use what knowledge or skills they have to make sense of the flow of new information. It is an internal process, which is crucially dependent upon the knowledge the learner already have and their ability and motivation to use it. It is a process of negotiation between individuals and the society. Society sets the target and the individuals must do their best to get as close to that target as is possible. This chart shows the comparison of approaches to course design.

Language-centered approach is the nature of the target situation performance. Skills- centered approach looks behind the target performance data to discover what processes enable someone to perform. Learning-centered approach looks beyond the competence that enables someone to

perform, because what we really want to discover is not the competence itself, but how someone acquire that competence. This approach has 2 implications: 1 . Course design is a negotiated process. The ESP. learning situation and the target situation will both influence the nature of the syllabus, materials, methodologies and valuation procedures. 2.

Course design is a dynamic process. It doesn't move in a linear fashion. Needs and resources vary with time. The course design, therefore, needs to have built-in feedback channels to enable the course to respond to developments. The learning-centered course design process is shown in this diagram: If we took a learning-centered approach, we would need to ask further questions and course: 1 . What skills are necessary to be taught? 2. What are the implications for methodology of having a mono-skill focus? 3. How will the students react to doing tasks involving other skills? . Do the resources in the classroom allow the use of other skills? . How will the learners react to discussing things in the mother tongue? 6. How will the students' attitudes vary through the course? Will they feel motivated? 7. How do students feel about reading as an activity? The important point is that these questions must be asked and the results allowed to influencing the course design.