Practical considerations in EAP and ESP course design

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Outline

1. The ESP spectrum
2. Theory, in brief
3. Back to reality
4. Syllabus composition
5. Connections and balances
6. Walk-through
7. Summary and principles
What do I mean by ESP?

Common thread to the definitions in the literature is:

English for *any* particular purpose
Examples

- English for (General) Academic Purposes (EGAP)
- English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP)
- Business English
- IELTS Exam Preparation
- English for High School
- English for open pit copper mine engineers at Chuquicamata mine, Chile
Types of ESP

Wide-angled  Narrow-angled
Where do they go?

Biz Eng

EGAP

ESAP

Chilean mine engineers

Wide-angled

Narrow-angled
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The triangle of inputs

Teacher (knowledge of English)

Course

Teacher/course designer (genre analysis skills)

Student (subject knowledge)

Based on Frendo (2011)
The literature: ESP course design

Most descriptions:

• Narrow-angled
• Access to the stu's and/or a well-defined context
• Focus on detail: materials
Techniques

Investigation of text types

DIY corpus

Ethnographic approaches (observations, interviews etc)
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But …

Is that usually possible for NEAS courses?

Do we have the resources (esp time) to do this anyway?

Teacher experience and the result?
So …

Start from info already available (Basturkmen, 2010)
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As NEAS says:

It *is* OK to base courses around coursebooks!!!
Why are course books useful?

- Less re-inventing the wheel
- Ready-made syllabus
- Sense of progression / continuity / direction
- Ensure coverage
- Everything Many things in one place
But … they’re generic

- Wide-ranging needs (prior experience, age, etc)
- Multiple contexts
- Avoid offence (no PARSNIPS!)
- Currency (no recent / current events)
- Skills balance
Some suggestions to overcome this:

Localise: supplement with local materials

Re-balance the skills; fill the gaps

Provide options
My approach …

Find a core text (or two) that fits the general needs of the students

Identify areas of mismatch between that text and student needs

Find supplementary materials that fill the gaps

Match units of all texts (core + supplementary) to weeks
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The connected curriculum

Learner profile
Objectives and learning outcomes
Syllabus outcomes
Assessment types and processes
Level descriptors / assessment criteria
Professional development
Evaluation (eg survey questions)
Promotional material
Balance

Prescription and consistency

Teacher creativity / response to ss

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One approach

- Main document ~25 pages
- Syllabus overview ~6-8 pages
  - Core texts
  - Systematic supplementary materials, activities, projects
  - Assessment activities
- Level syllabus (detailed) ~ 2 pages per week
  - Outcomes from core and supplementary texts
  - Assessment
  - Notes and suggestions
One approach ...

1 Rationale
2 The Students
3 Objectives
   - course objectives
   - learning outcomes
4 Curriculum design and content
   - Approach
   - Syllabus
   - Materials, timetables, teaching program
One approach …

5 Assessment
- Pre-arrival testing and placement
- Monitoring student progress/achievement
- Informing students
- Student progress records, certificates etc

6 Review and evaluation

7 Specialist staff

8 Promotion
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General suggestions …

Keep up-to-date with materials
Keep an eye on the literature to avoid re-inventing the wheel
Be specific but brief: Who? When? How?
Avoid teaching content
Keep everything linked
Don’t get bogged down in detail
Bibliography


