WCES 2014

Designing an EAP Course

Blanka Frydrychova Klimova[a*]

aUniversity of Hradec Kralove, Faculty of Informatics and Management, Rokitanskeho 62, Hradec Kralove, 500 03, Czech Republic

Abstract

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teachers can positively intervene into the learning progress and play an important role in learner acquisition of EAP skills. They can analyze students' needs and decide what to teach based on these needs. They can develop a coherent course and sequence of learning, decide on appropriate tasks and teaching methods and in so doing, diminish students' constraints and difficulties in L2 acquisition of EAP. Therefore, the article focuses on designing a model EAP course, particularly an EAP writing course, and demonstrates such an intervention for the effective development of students' formal writing skills. Moreover, the author attempts to show *how* to successfully present information to students in order to achieve their study goals.

1. Introduction

EAP teachers can positively intervene into the learning progress and play an important role in learner acquisition of EAP skills. They can analyze students' needs and decide what to teach based on these needs. They can develop a coherent course and sequence of learning, decide on appropriate tasks and teaching methods and in so doing, diminish students' constraints and difficulties in L2 acquisition of EAP. The following model of designing an EAP writing course demonstrates such an intervention for the effective development of students' formal writing skills. The model design of the course proposed by the author is based on current EAP methodological principles and approaches, such as task-based teaching, team-teaching, blended learning or using corpus linguistics. Moreover, the author attempts to show *how* to successfully present information to students in order to achieve their study goals.

———————

*Blanka Frydrychova Klimova. Tel.: +420-493332318
  E-mail address: blanka.klimova@uhk.cz

The author suggests the following procedure for designing an EAP course:
- conduct needs analysis and set course objectives;
- create syllabus design;
- develop course materials and tasks;
- deliver the course;
- set methods of assessment; and
- perform the evaluation of the course.

Compare to Chaudron et al. (2005).

2. Conducting Needs Analysis and Setting Course Objectives

Doing a needs analysis is a salient feature in the design of any EAP course because students use English to fulfil their academic studies. Therefore, the data on students' specific needs must first be collected. There exist different ways of doing this. For example, Brown (1995) lists 24 various procedures, while Jordan (1997) lists 14 procedures. The author of this study proposes to use the following common procedures (cf. Hyland, 2006):
- diagnostic test (DIALANG) in order to identify students' strength and weaknesses in the area of writing;
- questionnaires and focus interviews;
- analysis of students' written work;
- analysis of authentic written texts with the help of a concordancing programme;
- observations; and
- informal consultations with other language teachers, subject specialists, learners and faculty.

3. Creating Syllabus Design

In the teaching of EAP (TEAP) three task-based syllabuses[1] have been used since the 1980s: the procedural syllabus, the process syllabus and the task syllabus. As Hyland (2006) claims, the most common syllabus in TEAP is the process syllabus since it is more learner-led, extending the idea of developing language through negotiation for meaning during tasks to negotiating aspects of the teaching-learning process itself. The author of this book recommends the following syllabus for an EAP blended writing course (compare to Frydrychova Klimova, 2012a, p. 77):
1. *Introductory lesson; summary of a lecture or a seminar*
2. *Argumentative essay*
3. *Professional essay 1* (including references and bibliography)
4. *Professional essay 2* (including references and bibliography)
5. *Writing an article for Wikipedia*
6. *Final consolidation and evaluation of the course* by both the teacher and the students

Note: The social-constructionist approach by Dudley-Evans & St John (1998) is exploited in the learning and teaching process together with the blended learning approach.

4. Developing Course Materials and Tasks

Since an EAP writing course is aimed at meeting students's specific skills, no textbook or workbook are used and the materials and tasks strive to be as authentic as possible. Moreover, the author (cf. Frydrychova Klimova, 2012a, pp. 45-46) provides the following simple framework for the creation of any topic-based study materials, be they EAP online or traditional, i.e. textbooks. Maximally a two page document consisting of the following items should be developed:
- topic (a concise sentence or a phrase summarising the lesson content);

---

[1] Hyland (2006, p. 83) defines the syllabus as follows: *A syllabus is a plan of what is to be achieved through teaching and learning, identifying what will be worked on in reaching the overall course aims and providing a basis for evaluating students' progress.*

- learning goal (a short statement motivating the participants to study the particular lesson); prerequisites (previous knowledge required to master the lesson);
- skills (a description of the knowledge/skills to be gained in the particular lesson);
- explanation of the basic concept and ideas of the teaching matter discussed in the lesson (in the form of text and questions);
- conclusion with self-tests, tasks, quizzes (with keys), or an assignment; and
- bibliographical sources and or links to them.

5. Delivering the Course

As it has been indicated, blended learning is nowadays a common learning approach in English language teaching, including TEAP. Blended courses are undoubtedly suitable for the development of writing skills; one week students co-operate together in class in order to facilitate the solution and the completion of the task and the other week they work individually on the completion of the set task from the cosiness of their home and they can work at anytime and anywhere. The only condition is not to miss the deadline of the task submission.

In addition, the teachers/tutors play a significant role in the course delivery. In order to make sure that students will be successful in achieving their study goals, they have to perform a wide variety of tasks (cf. Frydrychova Klimova & Poulova, 2013):

- they have to organise, deliver and evaluate tutorials;
- they have to provide students with explicit and clear instructions and a study guide;
- they have to help students to overcome obstacles so that students can achieve their learning objectives;
- they have to correct, evaluate and deliver feedback on students' individual assignments and return them promptly;
- they have to resolve potential study conflicts;
- they have to support and encourage students in their studies by e-mail and discussion;
- they have to respond to enquiries and give advice;
- they have to create the content of the course, which makes them responsible for its quality;
- they have to consider student's different learning styles;
- they have to encourage consciousness raising ;
- they have to implement scaffolding strategies;
- they have to promote co-operation and collaboration;
- they have to nurture connections between fields, ideas, or concepts; and
- they have to work together with a subject specialist.

6. Setting Methods of Assessment

Assessment plays a crucial role in the teaching of EAP writing.[2] In writing classes formative and summative assessments are used. However, with respect to learning and acquiring writing skills, formative assessment should prevail since one of the major purposes of writing assessment is to provide feedback to students (Frydrychova Klimova, 2012a). It also gathers information about students' learning.

A significant alternative to teacher's feedback is *peer response/review* (cf. Pathare, 2005) because it might yield several benefits for student's learning:

- it might encourage a formative developmental process;

---

[2] According to Frydrychova Klimova (2012b), assessments are usually exploited by teachers to help their students to learn and to gauge students' progress. There are several assessment categories
(*Assessment*):

- formative and summative;
- objective and subjective;
- referencing (criterion-referenced, norm-referenced, and ipsative); and
- informal and formal.

- it might support students' co-operation and collaboration;
- it might decrease emotional undercurrents;
- it might develop thinking and reflective skills;
- it might teach students to be critical but in a constructive way; and
- it might develop other language skills.

For more information on peer response strategies see Kokernak & Pei (2012) and on the assessment of writing and its evaluation see Frydrychova Klimova (2012a).

7. Performing the Evaluation of the Course

A course evaluation is very useful in TEAP since it can provide useful feedback which the teacher and school can use to improve their quality of instruction. Moreover, it can reveal the impact of learning and of teaching practice on student learning. Course evaluations are usually done with the help of a questionnaire either institutional or private, elaborated by the course teacher in order to enhance his/her teaching practices. The information from institutional questionnaires can be used by administrators, along with other input, to make summative decisions (e.g. decisions about promotion, tenure, or salary increases) and make formative recommendations (e.g. identify areas where a faculty member needs to improve). Typically, these evaluations are combined with peer evaluations, supervisor evaluations, and results of student's test scores to create an overall picture of teaching performance. The course evaluation can also be done in the form of student's written reflections on the course in which a student expresses an overall impression of the course

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter outlines three common stages of the TEAP process (cf. Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001): design, implementation and evaluation. Bell (1981) provides a similar model that EAP course teachers and designers can use in order to make their courses successful (Fig. 1).
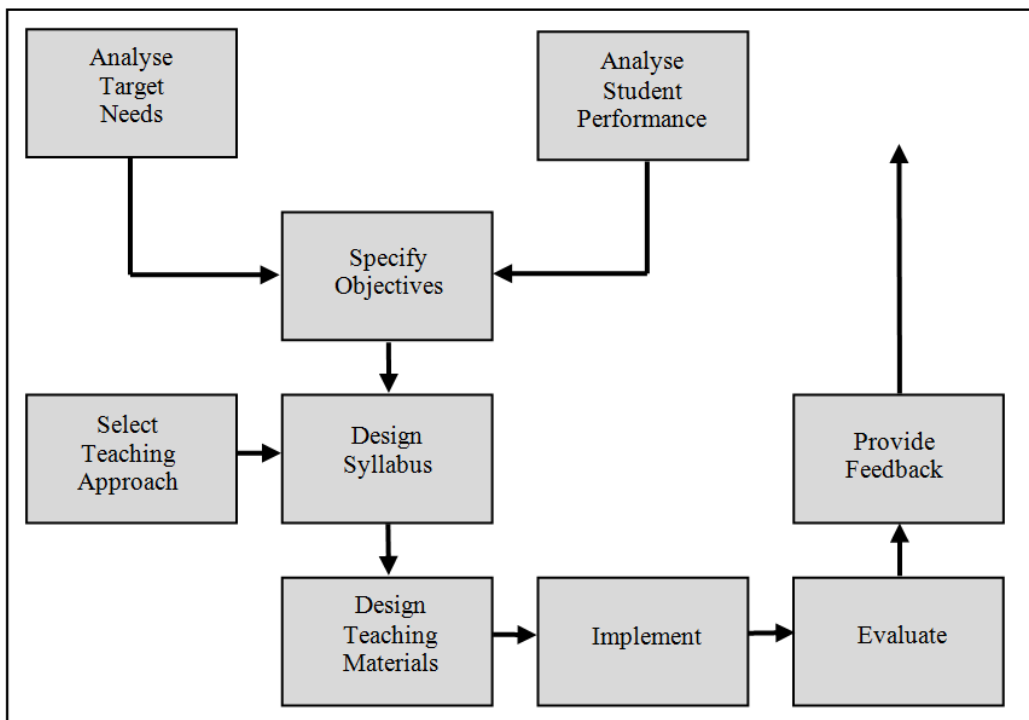

Figure 1. Course Design Model

References

Bell, R. (1981). An introduction to applied linguistics: Approaches and methods in language teaching. London: Batsford.
Brown, J. D. (1995). The elements of language curriculum: A systematic approach to program development. New York: Heinle & Heinle.
Chaudron, C., Doughty, C., Kim, Y., Kong, D. Lee, J., Lee, Y., Long, M., Rivers, R., & Urano, K. (2005). A task-based needs analysis of a tertiary Korean as a foreign language program. In M. Long. (Ed.), Second Language Needs Analysis (pp. 225-261). Cambridge: Cambridge University.
DIALANG. Retrieved September 14, 2012, from http://www.lancs.ac.uk/researchenterprise/dialang/about.htm
Dudley-Evans, T., & St John, M. (1998). Developments in English for Specific Purposes. Cambridge: CUP.
Flowerdew, J., & Peacock, M. (Eds.). (2001). Research perspectives on English for academic purposes. Cambridge: CUP.
Frydrychova Klimova, B. (2012a). Teaching formal written English. Univerzita Hradec Kralove: GAUDEAMUS.
Frydrychova Klimova, B. (2012b). The teaching of foreign languages. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 31, 201-206.
Frydrychova Klimova, B., & Poulova, P. (2013). ICT as an effective tool for learning English. The Third International Conference on Digital Information Processing (ICDIPC 2013) (pp. 569-573). USA: The Society of Digital Information and Wireless Communications (SDIWC).
Hyland, K. (2006). English for Academic Purposes: An advanced resource book. London: Routledge.
Jordan, R. R. (1997). English for Academic Purposes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Kokernak, J., & Pei, L. (2012). Peer response strategies. Retrieved August 2, 2013, from http://www.english.lsu.edu/English_UWriting/FacultyResources/TeachingStrategies/item33853.html
Pathare, E. (2005). Encouraging peer response. Retrieved August 2, 2013, from http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/encouraging-peer-response