

## TEAM TEACHING: AN APPROACH TO ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSE (ESP)

### PEDAGOGY

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#### Abstract

*This paper discussed English for Specific Purpose (ESP) as a new approach to English teaching methodology, in which the content is based on the needs of the learner. The emergence of ESP and material and organization was discussed. The paper also defined team teaching, why team teaching is used as a method and planning to implement team teaching. Merits and demerits of team teaching were discussed and conclusion was made. The paper further proffers recommendations among which is, urging government to provide additional infrastructure in schools.*

**Keywords:** Team teaching, English for Specific Purpose, English for Academic Purpose.

#### Introduction

English for Specific purpose (ESP) according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) is a course in which the aims and contents are determined principally or wholly not by the criteria of general education but by the practical and functional English requirements of the learners which are varied. What the students of liberal arts will consider necessary may not necessarily be considered so by the science students.

The need for methodological adjustment has become very necessary as expressed by Lyons (1995) that teachers of EST should be advised to seek methodological guidance not from the linguist or the philosopher of science but from the science teacher. By extension therefore, the ESP teacher of law

students should seek guidance from law teachers. This will be true of all different areas of specialization.

According to Maisamari (1999), the advent of ESP is a phenomenon that grew out of a number of converging trends. After the Second World War, there was an unprecedented expansion in scientific, technical and economic activities on an international scale. This expansion created a world unified and dominated by technology and commerce which consequently generated a demand for an international language for obvious reasons such as the colonies of Britain. English was saddled with this burden. It would be appreciative here that these learners need to master the language for specific functional purposes.

Team teaching on the other hand involves a group of instructors working purposefully, regularly and cooperatively to help a group of learners of any age. Teachers together set goals for a course, design a syllabus, prepare individual lesson plans, teach students and evaluate the result, George and Patricia (2000).

### **Emergence of ESP**

Certainly, a great deal about the origin of ESP could be written. Notably, there are three reasons common to the emergence of all ESP; the demands of a brave new world, a revolution in linguistics and focus on the learner.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) note that two key historical periods breathed life into ESP. First, the end of the Second World War in 1945 brought with it an age of enormous and unprecedented expansion in scientific, technical and economic activity on an international scale for various reasons. Second, the oil crisis of the early 1970s resulted in western money and knowledge flowing into the oil rich countries. The language of this knowledge became English. The general effect of all this development was to exert pressure on the language teaching profession to deliver the required excellence. While English had previously decided its own destiny, it now became subject to the wishes, needs and demands of people other than language teachers.

The second reason cited as having a tremendous impact on the emergence of ESP was a revolution in linguistics. Whereas traditional linguists set out to describe the features of language, revolutionary pioneers in linguistics began to focus on the ways in which language is used in real communication. Hutchinson and waters (1987) further point out that one significant discovery was in the ways that spoken and written English vary. In other words, given the particular context in which English is used, the variant of English will

change. If language in different situations varies, then tailoring language instruction to meet the needs of learners in specific contexts is also possible.

They further opine that the emergence of ESP has to do with linguistics and everything to do with psychology. Rather than simply focus on the method of language delivery, more attention was given to the ways in which learners acquire language and the differences in the ways language is acquired. Learners were seen to employ different learning strategies, use different skills, enter with different learning schemata, and be motivated by different needs and interest. Therefore, focus on the learners' needs became paramount as the methods employed to disseminate linguistic knowledge.

### **ESP Material and Organization**

It is obvious that ESP programs, whether as English for Academic Purpose (EAP) or English for Occupational Purpose (EOP) and whether as pre- sessional or in- study are English courses which are content specific. This means that the materials to be used in language courses across various academic specializations would have to vary. Similarly, the methodology may also vary depending on the language skills being emphasized and the context of use.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) clarify that early practitioners of ESP Operated on the principle that English of say Electrical Engineering constituted a specific register different from that of say Biology or General English. The aim of the analysis therefore was to unveil the grammatical and lexical features of these target situations. Teaching materials therefore took these linguistic features as their syllabuses. The main motive behind register analysis was pedagogic, that is making the ESP course more relevant to learners' needs. In other words, the aim was to design a syllabus which will give high priority to the language forms students are most likely to meet in their

content areas and in turn give low priority to forms they are likely to meet.

However, Graves, (1996) is cautious about this restriction of syllabus design and language teaching. According to him there is an advantage, but at the same time, he cautions that content area bound lexis especially those in the sciences, should not be used if it is likely to produce conceptual difficulties. This is because by over using them the students will become thoroughly bored. Therefore, the form of contextualization registers used in a passage should help the students develop the habit of intelligent guessing at the meaning of unknown words and to expand their vocabulary by using the skills being practiced.

### **Team Teaching Defined**

Team teaching according to Quinn and Kanter (1984) is a group of two or more teachers working together to plan conduct and evaluate the learning activities for the same group of learners. It is a team work between two or more qualified instructors who together make presentations to an audience.

In practice, team teaching has many different formats but in general it is a means of organizing staff into groups to enhance teaching and learning. Teams generally comprise staff members who may represent areas of subject expertise but who share the same group of students and a common planning period to prepare for the teaching. To facilitate this process a common teaching space is desirable.

It is worthy of note therefore, that teams can be of single-discipline, interdisciplinary or school- within- a- school teams that meet with a common set of students over a period of time. New teachers may be paired with veterans, innovations are encouraged and modifications in class size, location and time are permitted.

### **Why Team Teaching**

Buckley (1998) outline that in view of the complexity which team teaching initiatives introduce into departmental organization and in view of the time needed for staff to adapt to the new structure, it is relevant to ask what benefits accrue from team teaching. How for instance does it benefit teachers, part time tutors, students and the department itself?

For teachers who often work alone, team teaching provides a supportive environment that overcomes the isolation of working in self-contained or departmentalized classrooms. A partner is being exposed to the subject expertise of colleagues, to open critique, to different styles of planning and organization, as well as methods of class presentation.

Part time tutors otherwise called potential teachers can be drawn more closely into the department as members of teams, with a resulting increase in integration of course objectives and approaches to teaching.

Team teaching can lead to better student performance in terms of greater independence and assuming responsibility for learning. They will be exposed to the views and skills of more than one teacher and can develop a more mature understanding of knowledge often being problematic. Learning can be more active and involved.

### **Merits of Team Teaching**

Parker (1999) outlines the merits of team teaching as follows:

- i. Teachers together set goals for a course, design a syllabus, prepare lesson plans teach students and evaluate the performance.
- ii. Team teaching approach allows for more interaction between teachers and learners.
- iii. Working as a team, teachers' model respect for differences, interdependence and conflict resolution skills as it encourages planning, skilled management,

- willingness to risk change and failure, humility, open mindedness, imagination and creativity.
- iv. Team work improves the quality of teaching as various experts approach the same topic from different angles.
  - v. Teacher strengths are combined and weaknesses are remedied. Poor teachers can be observed and be improved by the other team members in a non-threatening supportive context.

### **Demerits of Team Teaching**

According to Parker (1999), demerits of team teaching are as follows:

- i. Team teaching is not mostly successful. Some teachers are rigid personality types or may be wedded to a single method.
- ii. Team teaching makes more demands on time and energy.
- iii. Opposition may also come from students, parents and administration that may resist change of any sort.
- iv. Financial implication is mostly involved in team teaching. Salaries may have to reflect the additional responsibilities undertaken by team members. Team leaders may need some form of bonus.
- v. When teaching involves two instructors the same class at the same time, the inevitability of larger class sizes may be a detriment for some students, particularly students with attention deficit disorders.

### **Planning to Implement Team Teaching**

Planning, conducting and evaluating team teaching are all important activities. Some of the important aspects of planning as outlined by Beggs (1964) include:

#### **i. Understanding staff concerns**

Like any other change or innovation, team teaching will raise concerns among staff members. The full range of concerns will only become clear over time after initial worries are dealt with and team members become comfortable with the innovation. From a team perspective, the ultimate aim will be to have individual team members reach a stage where they accept joint responsibility. One way of dealing with the concerns is to recognize that they seem to follow a time cycle. Early concerns usually appear to be procedural like determining roles, setting agendas, keeping records, meeting students need, planning to deal with individual student etc. Teams are expected to be seen as; a means of professional self-development, a forum at which ideas about instruction and coordinating can be shared and adjust to get students involved in decision making.

#### **ii. Selecting team members**

The composition of any teaching team is a matter which must be considered carefully if that particular team is going to function effectively. While it is possible that teams can be arbitrarily formed it is far more fruitful if they come together in response to needs and interests. Thought needs to be given to selecting team members and defining team roles and these decisions need to be evaluated periodically. Some of the sorts of issues which should be considered include; the basis in which team members can be selected, team members should not be clones of each other. This is because differences in subject expertise, interest, perspectives, backgrounds and qualification levels can contribute to the collective strength of a team and the growth of individual team members.

The role of the team leader is also worthy of note. The team leader will be concerned with internal and external functioning: The internal functioning includes setting agendas, keeping records, coordinating schedules and

ensuring the team stays on task. While the external functioning includes communicating with department heads to ensure that the team is resourced, supported and meeting departmental goals.

The team members need to contribute to the team in ways other than simply turning up for classes and meetings, it is essential that all team members contribute to formulating and achieving team goals.

### iii. **Setting Realistic Team Goals**

Teams need to have a sense of direction. In setting time line for teams to achieve realistic goals, it is important to ask what the aims of team teaching will be during the first year or semester/term and what are the longer-term goals. It is unrealistic to expect that all goals and expectations will be met immediately. Rather it is better to consider what is reasonable to undertake as teachers and to expect from students and at what stage.

### **The team in action**

Parker (1999) outlines the following in team teaching:

**Planning to teach:** One may ask for instance in what way will the team use small and large group contexts or independent study? Will it use a large group in an auditorium setting to introduce a topic or convey basic information and background material which all the learners need to know? Will the team decide to use a single teacher to make the presentation or will several teachers be used? Will small group discussions relate to large group presentations, demonstrate skills or develop a seminar discussion group?

In the same vein Weimer (1993) short list the following questions that underline the decision to be made in planning to teach:

- i. What are the programme, unit and lesson objectives?
- ii. What lesson content is to be presented and in what order?

- iii. Which content is to be presented by large group presentation?
- iv. Which methods and resources are to be used to present the content?
- v. Who will make large group presentations?
- vi. What will be discussed during small group meetings?
- vii. How will small groups be organized?
- viii. Who will be assigned to each small group?
- ix. What types of independent study will be appropriate?
- x. What blocks of time will be assigned to large group, small group and independent study activities?
- xi. How will students be assessed?
- xii. All of these questions are to do with ongoing interaction with students. A little later the team will have to consider questions such as:
- xiii. How can the activities be improved?
- xiv. What specific problems have arisen with particular groups of students and how can they be solved?

**Assigning Roles and Responsibilities:** This is another important aspect in team teaching. Effective teams are systematic in their division of labour, not forgetting that roles may be rotated on a regular basis. In allocating roles, strengths and weaknesses of individual team members need to be taken into account.

**Catering for Students:** This is an important segment in team teaching. While team teachers and their students are usually in happy mood with the community spirit that teams can provide, team work also has a considerate effect on classroom management. By planning together team teachers can clarify teaching policies and behavioral expectations that are applied to students. Teams of teachers can think of ways of improving student motivation, a sense of responsibility and overall student performance.



**Conducting meetings:** This can help improve and evaluate team teaching. It is a group work and as such teams need to develop as functioning groups. Blending differences constructively is a challenge to all members. To do this it is important to acknowledge team members' strengths, interests, personal and professional goals both in assigning responsibilities and in the conduct of meetings.

**Evaluating Progress:** In team teaching, all teams need to set aside some time to evaluate their progress in terms of both teaching the module and with their own development as an effective team. Some questions which might be asked in context of evaluation are: are the goals set for the team's work realistic? Have the goals been achieved and to what extent? Do all team members participate equally in team decisions? Have decisions been carried out? What more areas need more attention?

**Maintaining continuity from year to year:** Maintaining continuity from year to year is very important. In order to ensure the continuity of the course teams need to maintain clear documentation of the records such as: The course outline, weekly timetable, teacher's notes for each unit, teaching materials, copies of tests examinations and students and final course evaluations.

According to Mckeachie (1994) the following is the checklist of things to do in team teaching: Meet regularly, schedule learners' learning activities, set consistent expectations for team members, develop a team teaching guidelines booklet, rotate roles and responsibilities of team members, share major curriculum ideas with other team members, develop a process for recognizing students who are doing well, develop a process for recognizing students who are falling behind, schedule class tests and assessment, determine which academic and personal skills students need to develop and make a point of addressing these in class, use community

resources in teaching, develop a database of teaching resources relevant to the unit, determine which activities can best be carried out in a large group setting, decide on consistent expectations of students, discuss problematic students with the team, discuss educational philosophy with team members, conduct team meetings with students, share curriculum plans with an educational adviser.

### Conclusion

Conclusively, the role of ESP Practitioner as course designer and material provider that is based on the learner's need of the language cannot be overemphasized. The guiding principle of ESP is that the need determines the kind of language programme that is offered. Thus we can have English for legal practice, English for Business and Economics, English for social sciences and English for science and Technology. When the language is geared towards academic pursuit, then it is regarded as English for Academic Purpose. When it is geared towards occupational pursuit, the language course becomes English for Occupational purpose.

The issues surrounding team teaching are numerous. Team teaching is much more than an alternative scheduling format, it will lead to new more professional relationships between teachers, their students and administrators. Sometimes it is assumed falsely that because teachers talk a great deal in the course of their work they do not need assistance with communication skills when they are thrust together as teams. Skills in working successfully with groups are very essential. It is therefore important that team should seek the guidance of someone who has had experience in developing teaching resources and who can provide not only technical advice but indications of a realistic schedule of activities.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers are encouraged to organize themselves in small teaching groups to benefit from each other's experiences.
2. School administrators should encourage team teaching especially in large classes.
3. Some financial motivation should be provided to teams to encourage them participate very well in the team's activities.
4. Governments at all level should provide additional infrastructure to conveniently accommodate and facilitate teaching and learning.

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