

An Outline of an ESP Teacher Training Course

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Abstract: In this article an attempt is made to apply ESP methodology to home teaching situation in Russia and to present an outline of an ESP teacher training pre-service course. The materials of the article serve a model for designing in-service ESP teacher education courses in Russia. In the article, the following problems are briefly discussed: rationale and context, aims and objectives, the content and evaluation of the results of the proposed course. The article is written within the paradigm of the requirements of Federal State Educational Standards of Higher Education of The Russian Federation. The basis for the scientific exploration is the analyses and expertise of theoretical regulations of the process of competency-based teacher training, interdisciplinary activity, the analysis of genetic prerequisites competency approach in higher education. Developed the concept of ESP teacher training as a theoretical basis for the organization and implementation of the process in the pedagogical university, which has been effective on the methodological level-as the ideological basis for constructing the process of teacher training, on a theoretical level-as a set of theoretical principles reflected in the basic principles of the formation of coherent competencies and on a practical level-in the form of designing an ESP teacher-training course.

Key words: English for specific purposes • Teacher training • Synergy • Professional competence • Integrative approach • Language description • Theories of learning • Materials design • Lesson planning • Use of audiovisual aids • Pace and timing • Testing

INTRODUCTION

Foreign language for the system of education in Russia is not only a means of communication of specialists of different areas of science, engineering and technology, but also a means of integrative study of various areas of science, engineering and technology into as a single scientific picture.

At the same time the first impression a Russian reader gets after studying books published on the problems of the English language methodology [1-5] is that the situation in his home country needs improvement, especially in the sphere of new teacher training courses creation. However, the problem of course design for teacher training is something of a closed book, though from time to time attempts are being made to remedy the matter [5;6]. These researchers have significantly broadened our knowledge concerning this question. The purpose of this article is to present the results of designing an ESP Teacher Training Course for the students of the faculty of foreign languages of Perm State Humanitarian-Pedagogical University (Russia).

Rationale and Context: Russia has entered into new and dynamic stage of development of economic, political, cross-cultural relations, modification of values and attitudes, changes in the structure of society. All of these are now facilitated by the revolution in the storage and retrieval of knowledge (computerization of science).

This phase proclaims in Russia the need to understand complex economic, social, political processes initiated by scientific and technological progress. For effective analysis of such processes scientists have to shift from the analytical approach to the object under investigation to synergistic methods, focuses on specific aspects of the behavior of complex systems, pierced by numerous nonlinear feedback between subsystems.

As a consequence of this approach, Russian system of education has moved to the idea of convergence of the natural and social sciences, in which the ideas and principles of science are increasingly incorporated in the humanities and vice versa. The idea of synthesis of knowledge, the creation of a universal scientific picture of the world is becoming a fundamental step.

The center of such integration is a student who at the present stage of development of education is not thought of as an isolated individual. Increasingly intensive development of the processes of globalization makes the pedagogical idea of education of the citizens of a global society central to the system of education in Russia. To the scientific community this idea raises the question of the convertibility of knowledge, its accessibility and universality, which dictates the need for communication, collaboration and co-creation of specialists around the world in various professional areas.

Modern graduate of the university is expected to be a highly competent worker, willing and able for lifelong learning, creative self-development and self-improvement, perception of himself as a citizen of the global community, critical analysis, understanding and utilization of innovative technologies in the context of globalization in all spheres of activity. It is impossible to imagine a contemporary socially, culturally, professionally and psychologically adapted graduate, not only without any knowledge of a foreign language, but also without the ability to integrate it into the structure of his professional competencies.

Although it is widely recognized that English has an important role to play, in the majority of Russian institutions of secondary and higher education, ESP exists only in a very halted fashion. The courses provided have no clear design, rationale or developed syllabuses. Very few appropriate materials (especially for secondary schools) have been created or adopted from published sources. Those that do exist are usually outmoded in terms of their subject matter, content and methodology. There are very few professionals in ESP Teacher Training in Russia. ESP Teacher Education Courses do not exist in the curriculum of Teacher Training Universities and Institutes. As the result of it ESP teachers (especially at secondary schools-lyceums, gymnasiums and colleges) face considerable problems in developing and sharing the means to deal with these circumstances.

The ESP pre-service Teacher Training Course, designed at Perm State Humanitarian-Pedagogical University is a continuation of the Basic Course on Methods of Teaching English, which is offered to the second and third year students (during semesters 3-6), when they apply for the General Certificate of Higher Education. This basic course is concerned with a number of key topics of general relevance to teaching foreign languages such as language description, theories of

learning, materials design, lesson planning, use of audiovisual aids, pace and timing and testing. It is also devoted to work on the teaching of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). The course is followed by a supervised teaching practice and enables the students to teach English at primary and secondary schools. The ESP Teachers' Education Course is offered at the undergraduate level, when students apply for B. Ed. degree and provides them with the opportunity to teach ESP at lyceums, gymnasiums and colleges. Evidently, it is based on their former teaching foreign languages experience, knowledge and skills.

Aims and Objectives of the Proposed Course

This part of the article is based on the analysis of works of [5;7] and from the point of view of their relevance to the target situation in Russia. The course is intended to:

- Continue developing in the trainees an understanding (from the point of view of ESP) of the principles of language teaching, based on current theories concerning language acquisition, linguistics, pedagogies and psychology of learning and show how to apply these principals to the Teaching of ESP;
- Give the trainees the opportunity of practicing the teaching of ESP so that they emerge as confident and competent classroom teachers;
- Expand the trainee's range of academic experience and professional expertise by training them in techniques for describing and evaluating ESP teaching ideas;
- Develop in the trainees powers of self evaluation that enable them to improve their abilities as teachers once their initial training is over.

So, the trainees are expected to demonstrate:

- A sound grasp of the theory of ESP teaching;
- The ability to plan, implement and evaluate appropriate learning experiences for their ESP students;
- The ability to design materials;
- The ability to modify their teaching strategies in the light of self-evaluation;
- The ability to analyze the social, psychological and educational context in which teaching and learning take place;

- The ability to undertake independent academic work (for example research for evaluating teaching methods while writing the B.Ed. thesis);
- The ability to analyze their learners' needs and design courses that match them.

The Content of the Proposed Course: The above-mentioned aims and objectives are currently being achieved through carefully designed ESP teacher training course. As it has been mentioned above, the course is offered at the undergraduate level (semesters 7-10) and follows on from the Basic Course of the English Language Methodology. There are differences of the ESP course from the "general" English school course for which the students have been trained before:

- The type and age of students;
- The intellectual and emotional maturity and motivation;
- The ways the teacher applies basic classroom methods;
- Possibly unfamiliar approaches (the teacher notions of what is important);
- Attitude to errors.

All these differences have been taken into account while designing the teacher education course.

Having agreed, that this course takes into consideration the real needs of the participants, we divide it as [6] suggests into three areas: pedagogic ("directly connected with how to teach"), professional ("closely related to but beyond, how to teach"), academic ("information and techniques for describing and evaluating ESP teaching ideas"). "It needs to be emphasized, however, that although the... courses have been divided into different sections, this is only to help us analyze them more clearly.... They are far from independent of each other in practice. In fact, a cardinal principle underlying the design of the... programme has been to maximize interconnection between courses, so that, as much as possible, the programme forms an organic whole" [7].

The content of the proposed course and its distribution into instruction hours is as in the scheme:

Scheme: So as seen in the scheme the content of the proposed course includes.

Academic Area:

- Ways of Describing Language and ESP.
- Psychology of Language Learning.

Professional Area

- Needs in ELT.
- Course Design.

Pedagogic Area

- Teaching Vocabulary and Grammar in ESP.
- Developing Listening and Reading Activities.
- Developing Oral Communication Activities.
- Developing Writing Activities.
- Testing and Evaluation.
- Computer and Video Applications in ESP.

Research Methods Area

- Supervised Teaching Practice.
- Course Examination.
- Thesis Tutorials.
- Thesis Presentation.

As the proposed course follows on from the Basic Course of English Methodology, its aim is to expand the latter, to show the trainees the difference between the "general" English course and the ESP and help them apply their knowledge and skills to the new target situation. It is more practical than theoretical. A supervised teaching practice, oral examination and writing the B. Ed. thesis in ESP also follows the course. In the following table there is presented the proportion of contact hours for each of the three content areas in percentage terms.

Content Areas	Proportion of Contact Hours %
Academic	26%
Professional	14%
Pedagogic	50%
Research Methods	10 %

It is clear from the table where the priorities lie. It is evident that training in pedagogic skills is the priority, however, it is not the only need of the trainees. It is necessary for pre-service ESP teachers to have skills in course design and analyzing the learners' needs. These topics are included in professional area. However, the whole ESP teacher education course would be a complete failure if the trainees did not know about "the connection between ways of teaching ESP and the ideas about language and language learning they are based on" [6]. They also receive training in doing practical research for their B. Ed. thesis and their future work (i.e. for evaluating teaching methods). So, it seems to be logical to start the course with the academic area. It helps the trainees to apply the ways of describing language to ESP teachers to work out their approach to language learning strategies

and errors. However, the course on Research Methods is offered before the supervised school practice and writing the B. Ed. thesis, because gives practical application to those fields. Needs analysis and Course design are closely connected with pedagogic area. These courses are taken into consideration in the process of developing teaching materials and activities. The pedagogic area covers the development of "the four skills" and the appropriate ways of testing and evaluating results.

Evaluation of the Results: Any teacher-training course has certain evaluation requirements. This one is evaluated through:

- Semester tests;
- Course examination;
- Demonstration lessons;
- Self-evaluation teaching;
- Analyses of lessons of in-service teachers and trainees;
- B. Ed. Thesis and research.

Semester tests are computer multiple-choice tests. They evaluate the trainees' grasp of ESP theory. Demonstration lessons, self-criticism and lesson analyses evaluate the ability to plan, implement and evaluate appropriate learning experiences for their ESP students, ability to design materials and to modify their teaching strategies in the light of self-evaluation. The oral course examination consists of two parts. Part One evaluates the grasp of academic and professional areas of the course and Part Two-the pedagogical area. Both parts are supported by trainees' examples from their own experience, which they get during the supervised teaching practice. The B. Ed. Thesis evaluates the trainees' ability to unite theory and practice of ESP teaching, ability to analyze the social, psychological and educational context in which teaching and learning take place and also the ability to undertake independent academic work (research for evaluating teaching methods).

CONCLUSION

In this article an attempt was made to apply ESP methodology to home teaching situation in Russia and to present an outline of an ESP teacher training pre-service course. The materials of the article serve a model for designing in-service ESP teacher education courses in Russia. The project team however understands the need of regular improvement. Hopefully, however, the presented course serves a kind of a model for designing an in-service ESP teacher education courses, which are of great need in Russia.

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