English for Specific Purposes World Online Journal for Teachers

ESP W

ISSN 1682-3257 Indexed in Genamics JournalSeek



**Contents** 

**Resources** 

Links

**Editors** 

History

# PRESERVICE ESP TEACHER TRAINING IN AN AFRICAN FRENCH- SPEAKING COUNTRY: THE CASE OF COTE D'IVOIRE

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### Keywords

In-service teacher training, preservice ESP teacher training, ESP teacher competence, language competence, pedagogic competence, content-based instruction.

#### Summary

Confronted with the problem of recruitment of General English Teachers in Technical and Vocational schools, the Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education instructed the writer's Technical and Vocational Teacher Training Institution to train preservice English for Specific teachers. Building from his own experience and from the literature about it, he explains how he managed to implement a preservice ESP teacher-training course by providing parallel training in both technical and vocational content-based instruction and ESP/ELT pedagogy. The content course was based on learning concepts, vocabulary and jargon from the various domains such as Business and Commerce, Secretarial English, Scientific English, Technical English (English for Science and Technology, Electricity and Electronics, Mechanics, Civil Engineering, Computing, etc). The ELT/ESP course was designed for getting trainees master Language Learning and Language Teaching theories, and English teaching methods, methodology and techniques.

#### INTRODUCTION

The joint ESP project implemented by the British Government and that of Côte d'Ivoire through Overseas Development Administration (ODA) and the *Institut Pédagogique National de l'Enseignement Technique et Professionnel (IPNETP*, a higher technical and vocational teacher training institute) came to its end in July 1995. One of the National ESP Project objectives was the professional development of ESP teachers. Through this project, the Centre for Resources in English for Specific Purposes (CERESP), now named *Centre d'Anglais de Spécialité* was established in 1988. It carried about 2,000 items in course books, audio and video tapes, references books with the help of ODA and the British Council. It helped train abroad twenty-two teachers in ESP in Great Britain (In-service Teacher Training, INSETT), six teachers took their Master's Degree in Applied Linguistics and two others got their Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics. Locally its staff taught ESP in other fields of the Institute and looked after the professional development of ESP teachers by organising class visits, seminars and workshops and advising teachers visiting the centre for resources.

One of the features of the use of ESP teachers in the *Ministère de l'enseignement technique et professionnel* (METFP - Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education) was that the ministry used to recruit General English teachers for Technical and Vocational Secondary Schools called *Lycées Techniques* and *Lycées Professionnels* and *Centres de Formation Professionnelle*. Most of them have their Teaching Certificate from the Ecole Normale Supérieure after having got a *Licence d'Anglais* from the English Department of the University. At ENS they do not get any formal specific training in ESP. Later on, they develop mastery on ESP courses content on the job, advised by either a *chef d'unité pédagogique* or an *animateur pédagogique*, if they were available in the school or area.

In 2000, advised by the Centre and IPNETP's Director and in order to solve that problem of recruiting General English teachers, the METFP decided to establish a **preservice ESP teacher training** at the Institute, particularly at the CERESP. Faced with this challenge, as the Head of the Centre, I came up with an innovative idea and new path that can be labelled 'providing parallel training in Technical and Vocational content and ESP pedagogy to trainee teachers".

This article will examine how I managed to provide preservice training to ESP teacher trainees. It will particularly focus on the approach and the curriculum design and their implementation to reach the objectives.

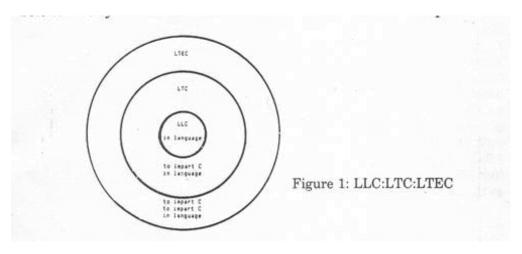
#### 1. Rationale

Training ESP teachers has most of the time been training them in areas such as needs analysis, transfer of needs analysis results into syllabus, course design, about teaching the four skills, etc. (Koné 1989: 2-5). The problem faced by the French-speaking African ESP teacher is firstly, the English language at which he/she must be fluent and accurate, secondly availability of English documents (texts, textbooks, magazines, newspapers) and thirdly, mastery of basic knowledge in business and commerce, science and technology depending on the fields he/she teaches. I remember that I was confronted with this problem when I was relocated from a Grammar school to a Technical Secondary School where content concerns business, commerce, industrial fields such as mechanics, electricity, electronics, etc. The General English teacher when transferred to this kind of institution is first confronted with the problem of understanding scientific and technical texts and delivering his course in these areas. It took about two years for me, a General English teacher in this position, to master some scientific, technical content and concepts before getting a sort of mastery of them all along subsequent years. I was always told in my in-service teacher training course at the University of Lancaster, UK, that an ESP teacher is neither a specialist teacher nor a content teacher. However, an ESP teacher without any scientific and technical knowledge meets difficulties in the classroom, for he/she faces specialist students who know the area of learning. Let us take an example. An ESP teacher in a Mechanical Engineering class faces mechanical engineering students who have practical and conceptual knowledge of the area but lack the English for it. He/she in turn, who has not mastered the notions and concepts of the area,

meets great difficulties in exploiting authentic mechanical texts either in oral or written forms. I agree with Tim Boswood and Alison Marriott (1993: 90), when they say, "As ESP enterprise essentially requires discourse competence across community boundaries, ESP Practitioner Training needs to address the intersecting modes of professional discourse which operate in a given ESP context".

Anyway, ESP is content-based and in order to launch new ESP teachers in the profession who would be competent both at the **content and professional knowledge levels**, I thought it would be necessary to teach them both.

The rationale behind is that while reading Thomas's description of layers and categories of competence such as Language Learning Competence (LLC), Language Teacher Competence and Language Teacher Education Competence (LTEC), I realized that I could add one extra layer that I called **ESP Teacher Competence** (ETC). See figure from Thomas(1987:35) below.



According to Thomas (1987:34), at the first level, there is the language learners' competence (LLC), described as what the native speaker has but the non-native speaker teacher needs to develop. The subsequent explanation of this competence remains at the level of grammatical and informational appropriateness, forgetting the message itself, which represents what the non-native ESP teacher should also develop. The second layer (LTC) related to teachers which "in order to impart this competence should themselves have language competence to a greater degree than that expected of their learners" (Thomas: 1987: 35). They should be competent in the teaching of language that Thomas categorises as 'pedagogic competence." The last layer (LTEC), according to him is related to teacher educators who will need everything that is their job to impart to the teacher, plus competence in teaching how to teach language. The ETC that I would add to this system considers the ESP teacher, especially the non-native ESP teacher, as someone who should be competent in both imparting scientific and technological knowledge to his students through his pedagogic competence. Anyway, Brinton et al (1989: 2) defined content-based instruction as the integration of particular content with language-teaching aims. In addition, they said that since they were referring to post secondary education, content-based instruction refers to the concurrent teaching of academic subject matter and second language skills. In my case, it is not the teaching of one academic subject matter but the teaching of several. Then we can consider that the approach I used could be considered content-based.

#### 2. Course Format and Approach

#### 2.1 Course format

Generally at the Institute, TT course format extends on two academic years and be held during three phases: an initial training period called Module 1/2 meant for acquisition of new knowledge and refreshing old one which was in fact a content course. Module 1/2 is one semester long and no

more used these days, except in rare cases. At the end of this module, students sit for a probation exam to move to Module 3. That module, taught in French, is meant for learning psychopedagogy (especially, the prevailing methodology 'teaching by objectives' and the basics of education, graphics (use of blackboard) and micro-teaching. The major subject course is called content course. After Module 3, students proceed to Module 4 during which they are sent for Practicum in various technical and Vocational lycées under the supervision of established teachers for three to six months and be visited by teams of Teacher Counsellors who will monitor their teaching and provide advice. At the end of this period, they sit for the final pedagogical exam which consists of one pedagogical exam during which a team of 3 Inspectors watch them teaching during two one-hour sessions. They criticize their teaching and give an overall mark obtained by aggregating their mark to the one provided by established teachers from their schools of practicum. This global mark will decide their passing the exam and their official recruitment as Technical and Vocational teachers by the Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education. The Preservice ESP Teacher course had to fit in this preset system.

# 2.2 Course approach

For Preservice ESP teacher training, I decided to have the Content course and pedagogy courses last 180 semester hours or 8 hours per week for 20 weeks each, plus 80 hours in "Research Transfer". During this phase, trainees would acquire Business and Commerce content and English Language Teaching Pedagogy. Once they reach module 3, the ESP lecturer would turn to English for Science and Technology (EST) and the remaining knowledge in applied linguistics. In Module 4, trainees would practise teaching moving gradually from 30 minute sessions to one hour ones. Teams of advisors including the ESP faculty would visit them three times a year to provide necessary advice.

#### 2.3 Student selection

Trainees were students from the Department of English of the University of Abidjan who all held the "Licence d'Anglais" diploma. They were selected after a competition test comprising a written test and an oral one. During the first one, they were confronted with multi-choice reading comprehension and grammar tests and an essay. The selection of 30 students from the first phase sat for the second test during which they were interviewed by an English lecturer and a psychopedagogy lecturer in order to determine first of all their fluency and accuracy in oral English and their reasons for taking the course and second, their ability to synthesise information. At the end of this competition test, 20 trainees were finally selected for pre-service ESP training.

#### 2.4 Evaluation

A crucial factor was the influence of the course unit system operated by the institute, which necessitated division of the training in compartmentalised units. For each component (Module), there was a separate examination or summative evaluation at the end of the course. During the course, they were required to take at least two assignments as formative evaluation.

#### 3. Action

I designed the curriculum in such a way that trainees were provided with a content course in business, scientific and technical English that I called "Specific Knowledge Acquisition Course" and here simply the "content course". The second course was called ELT/ESP teaching with a view to getting them learn Language Learning and Language Teaching theories, and English teaching methods, methodology and techniques, material design. The teaching approach used was based on lectures coupled with transfer sessions during which trainees would undergo ESP courses as actual ESP students by doing complete units from ESP course books found in CERESP Library. The same approach was used for the ELT course during which students went from theory to practice where trainees in groups would prepare a ten-minute ESP course based

on the teaching method studied, that they taught their peers, followed by critics and suggestions. Both courses were given in parallel. Another lecturer who took care of the Business content course seconded me and I taught English Language Teaching/ESP teaching (ELT/ESP) and the EST content course.

## 3.1 Specific Knowledge Acquisition Course

The Specific Knowledge Acquisition Course was based on acquiring concepts, vocabulary and jargon from the various domains such as Business and Commerce, Secretarial English, Scientific English, Technical English (EST, Electricity and Electronics, Mechanics, Civil Engineering, Computing, etc) as pointed out by Phillipson (1992) cited in Belbin (2005):

"English has a dominant position in science, technology, medicine, and computers; in research books, periodicals, and software; in transactional business, trade, shipping, and aviation, etc..."

The content course syllabus can be found in Appendix 1.

For Business and Commerce content, magisterial lectures were given to trainees. Lectures were compiled from books such as *Basic of Business* (Lewis, 1988), A *Rapid Course in English for Students of Economics* (McArthur, 1973), and Made Simple Books Series (Commerce, Economics, Office Practice, etc.) In a period, called "Research and Transfer" trainee did complete units from course books such as *Insights into Business* (Landon et al, 1996), *English for Banking* (Radice, 1992). This enabled them to use knowledge acquired from lectures as these units are based on integrated-skills communicative activities. They might later use these course books in teaching Business English classes, after their training has been completed.

When we turned to EST content, the approach was to have trainees take real English classes in selected units from course books such as:

- \* The Nucleus Series General Science and Technology (Beats and Dudley-Evans 1982),
- ❖ A First Course in Technical English Series (Beardwood et al 1978),
- \* English for Mechanical Engineering, English in Electrical Engineering and Electronics by Glendinning (respectively 1973 and 1980),
- ❖ *Interface* (Hutchinson and Waters 1984),
- Oxford English for Electronics (Glendinning and McEwan 1993),
- \* The Collins Cobuild Keywords in Science and Technology (Mascull, 1997),
- etc.

The advantages of using these books were twofold. Firstly, it provided trainees with basic concept and knowledge in EST and secondly by taking the course with them, it gave them the feel of the teaching methods underlying these materials. For example, as ELT courses and content courses were given in parallel, interesting Communicative Language Teaching materials were pointed out by the lecturer when come across. Imparted with these basic concept and knowledge, trainees were expected to build on them.

#### 3.2 The ELT/ESP Course

The specific objectives of the ELT course were the following:

- to provide trainees with some knowledge in Applied Linguistics; (ii)
- to provide trainees with theoretical and practical knowledge in ESP;
- (iii) to give trainees the opportunity to design teaching materials and evaluate them in their classrooms;
- (iv) to teach trainees how to evaluate teaching materials on the market;
- (v) to teach trainees how to assess the language needs of students in technical education and to teach them how to plan courses relevant to their needs.

The following approaches were used to teach trainees:

- a lecture introducing the fundamental principles of the topic, followed by a discussion, or a controlled workshop;
- (ii) lectures followed with short practical activities supervised by the teacher trainer;
- (iii) a lecture introducing the fundamental principles of the theme, followed by an evaluation of teaching materials in groups;
- (iv) material design workshops in group work followed by reports of each group to the class;
- (v) peer-teaching sessions recorded and discussed in plenary session as Assinder (1991 : 223) commented in her article:

The total student-centredness of this approach, where students were preparing and presenting their own materials, presented me with a unique opportunity to watch carefully my students in action, and I learnt a great deal about them: their personalities, their linguistic strengths and weaknesses, strategies for learning, other skills and attributes that they possessed (organizational skills, leadership, people management, technical know-how, etc.), and their knowledge.

These approaches had the advantage of combining theory and practice, and gave a great importance to practical activities during training. Trainees were divided in groups or pairs and were involved in activities that enabled them to get hands in and understanding the rationale behind either a teaching methodology or a teaching technique. The ELT syllabus can be found in Appendix 2.

#### 4. Results of the course

The main results of the course for both the learners and the faculty can be examined in terms of short-term and long-term results.

All trainees passed their summative exam and were recruited by the Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education. They moved from complete lack of knowledge in science and technology to possessing the requirements for teaching ESP. They acquired both content knowledge and ESP teaching skills and were operational on the spot. Moreover, they did not have to spend two years learning scientific and technological concepts and jargon on their own and on the job. Furthermore, some were sent to institutions in which they encountered fields with concepts and jargon different from those we taught them, but were able to build on the basic knowledge they possessed. It should be said that fields we taught them were those I called "umbrella fields" whose sub-division did not create any difficulties to trainees. For example, trainees were taught the English for Electrical Engineering and Electronics, they were perfectly at ease dealing with a field such as Electro-mechanics that combines both electricity and mechanics. The same can be said for Computer Repairs and Maintenance that combines Electronics (electronics spare parts for hardware, circuit diagram) and computer programming.

For the long term, firstly, the course demonstrated that it was possible to provide pre-service ESP teacher training at IPNETP instead of the Ecole Normale Supérieure where General English teachers are trained. A second cohort of 16 trainees was selected the subsequent year for

preservice training and a third one for in-service teacher training. Secondly, the approach we used for preservice training could be used for in-service teacher training depending on the content level of teachers after a pre-test.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Our preservice training of ESP teachers has indicated the following:

- 1. It is possible to design a preservice ESP teacher training course including both content-based and methodology learning.
- 2. Basic knowledge in business, science and technology is necessary in rendering an ESP teacher operational in nearly all technical and vocational fields.
- 3. Teachers trained in this way build on the basic knowledge they have acquired.

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**Appendix 1: The Specific Knowledge Acquisition Course Syllabus** 

Number	TOPICS	SUB-TOPICS
1	ECONOMICS	Basic Notions Such As:
		<ul><li>Wants &amp; Utilities</li></ul>
		Scarcety & Choice
		Cost & Opportunity Cost
		■ Economics Systems
		■ World Trade
		■ International Money
2	TYPES OF BUSINESS ORGANISATION & RELATED NOTIONS	Types of Business Organisation
		<ul><li>Types of Shares</li></ul>
		<ul> <li>Business Documents</li> </ul>
3	INTERNAL ORGANISATION OF BUSINESS FIRMS & COMMUNICATION	The Main Functions of Organisations
		<ul> <li>Organisation Charts</li> </ul>

		<ul> <li>Communication Within an Organisation (Types &amp; Methods)</li> </ul>
4	PRODUCTION	Factors of Production
		<ul> <li>Types of Production</li> </ul>
		Specialisation / Division of Labour
5	MARKETING & ADVEDTICING	Disadvantages of Specialization     Market
5	MARKETING & ADVERTISING	<ul> <li>Market</li> </ul>
		<ul> <li>Purpose of Marketing &amp; Advertising</li> </ul>
		Marketing Concept
		Marketing Research
		<ul> <li>Methods of Marketing Research</li> </ul>
		Marketing Mix
		Advertising Media
6	DISTRIBUTION & TRANSPORT	Channels of Distribution
		<ul> <li>Functions &amp; Means Of Transport</li> </ul>
7	BANKING & FINANCE	<ul> <li>Means of Exchange</li> </ul>
		■ Types of Bank & Accounts
		<ul> <li>Methods of Payment</li> </ul>
		Finance & Sources of Finance
		<ul> <li>Types of Capital</li> </ul>
		Stock Exchange
8	INSURANCE	<ul> <li>Insurance &amp; How It Works</li> </ul>
		Types of Insurance & Companies
9	BUSINESS WRITING	Presentation of The Business Letter
		Other Methods of Communication
		<ul> <li>Routine Business Letters</li> </ul>
		<ul> <li>Business Transaction Correspondence &amp; Documents</li> </ul>
		<ul> <li>Special Business Documents (Circular Letters, Personnel, Good Will Letters)</li> </ul>
10	TOOLS, MATERIALS, CONTAINERS & INSTRUMENTS	Simple Description of Objects, Their Compositions & Lleas
11	GEOMETRICAL SHAPES: PLANE SHAPES / ANGLES & SOLID	Compositions & Uses  Geometrical Terminology, Description of Shapes & Dimensions
12	FACTS ABOUT MATTER: DIFFERENT STATES OF MATTER	<ul> <li>Use of the language of elementary physics an chemistry</li> </ul>
13	LABORATORY EXPERIMENTS	Description of Laboratory Procedure
		<ul> <li>Oral Demonstration &amp; Written Reports</li> </ul>
14	STEAM ENGINES	Description of Machines & Mechanical
177	B I LAW LIGHTED	Description of Machines & Mechanical

		Processes	
15	MOTOR VEHICLES-ENGINES & FUELS	<ul> <li>Description of Types of Engines And Their Components</li> </ul>	
16	MOTORS VEHICLE MAINTENANCE	Description of Mechanical Instruments	
17	SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS	<ul> <li>Description of Different Types Of Fires An Fire Extinguishers</li> </ul>	
18	ELECTRICITY – BATTERIES, ELECTRICAL DEVICES, NETWORK	<ul> <li>Description of Devices And Processes</li> </ul>	
		Electrical Terminology	
		Electricity Network	
19	ELECTRICAL INSTRUMENTS	<ul> <li>Description of electrical instruments in operation</li> </ul>	
20	ELECTRONICS	<ul> <li>Electronic Parts</li> <li>Understanding And Describing Electronic Diagrams and Circuits</li> </ul>	
		<ul> <li>Electronic Devices and Processes</li> </ul>	
21	ELECTRONICS	Radio, Frequencies, and Wavelengths	
		<ul><li>Transistor Characteristics</li><li>Test and Repair Instruments</li></ul>	
22	PROPERTIES OF ENGINEERING MATERIALS	Comparison Properties	
23	SHAPES & CONDITIONS	<ul> <li>Description of Manufactured Articles &amp; Their Assembly</li> </ul>	
24	INDUSTRY CHEMISTRY	<ul> <li>Description of Large-Scale Industrial Processes</li> </ul>	
25	MATHEMATICAL EQUATIONS & GRAPHS	<ul> <li>Use of Numerical Parts &amp; Theirs Functions</li> </ul>	
26	CONSTRUCTION-FEATS OF ENGINEERING/BUILDING EXTENSION	Description of Construction Materials	
27	WELDING AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS	Operating and Safety Instructions	
28	COMMUNICATIONS &	Description of Different Forms of	
	TELECOMMUNICATIONS	Telecommunications & Their Uses	
29	COMPUTERS	Physical Description-Application Software	
		<ul> <li>Job &amp; Computer Related Problems</li> </ul>	

# **Appendix 2: The ESP/ELT Course Syllabus**

Number	TOPICS	SUB-TOPICS OR ACTIVITIES
1	What's English for Specific Purposes	Definition
		ESP Groups
		Task in Defining an ESP Group
2	The Context of English Language Teaching	• What, How and Why Do We Teach or Learn English?
		Some Contributions of Linguistics, Sociolinguistics &
		Psycholinguistics to Applied Linguistics
		Hierarchy of Planning Decisions in The Total
		Language Teaching Situation
3	The Grammar Translation and the Direct Method	The GTM: Its Theoretical Bases and Method
		The DM: Its Theoretical Bases And Method
4	The Grammar Translation and the Direct Method	Analysis of GTM teaching materials
5	The Audio-lingual Method (1)	Foundations of Behaviourism

		Skinner's Verbal Behaviour
		Four Assumptions on a Language Teaching Approach
		Limitations of The Method
6	The Audio-lingual Method (2)	• Analysis of Audio-Lingual Teaching Materials (done in groups and presented to the whole class)
7	The Standard Oral Lesson (1)	Presentation of the SOL
	(An audio-lingual teaching technique)	• Techniques and procedures (vocabulary presentation, grammar presentation & reading comprehension)
8	The Standard Oral Lesson (2)	Limitations of the Technique  Poor took him a dama by a twadents presenting 2
o	Practice 1	Peer-teaching done by students presenting 3 vocabulary items after group preparation followed by a plenary discussion
9	The Standard Oral Lesson (7)	• Questioning techniques for reading comprehension of
	Practice 6	a text
10	Assignment 1	Trainees are required to reflect on an aspect of the audio- lingual method in an essay and write a complete SOL teaching material (presentation of seven vocabulary items chosen in a provided text, a grammatical structure presentation and a set of comprehension questions on the same text)
11	From Competence to Communicative	• The Chomskyan Distinction Between Competence and
	Competence	Hymes's Model of Language Use  The Theory Of Communication Communication
12	The (British) Communicative	<ul> <li>The Theory Of Communicative Competence</li> <li>Wilkins's Work on Notions and Functions</li> </ul>
	Approach to language Teaching (1)	Semantico-grammatical Categories
		Categories of Communicative Function
		Limitations of the Model
		Implications for Language Teaching
13	The (British) Communicative Approach to language Teaching (2)	• Group analysis of steps in CLT materials and presented in a matrix format by trainees (with a view to showing the 'unsystematicity' of the model)
14	Developing Oral Skills – Theory and Practice in ESP	Macro and Micro-skills
	- 144400 III 202	Features of Speaking and Listening
		Pre-communicative Activities
		Communicative Activities
		Post-communicative Activities
15	The Communicative Approach to Language teaching	Peer-teaching done by students after group preparation followed by a plenary discussion
16	Teaching and Developing the	Purpose and Expectations in Reading
	Reading Skills in ESP	Reading Strategies (skimming, scanning, etc.)
		Implications for LT
		- Pre-reading Activities

		- While reading Activities
		- Post-reading Activities
		Integrating Other Skills in a Reading Material
17	Teaching and Developing the Reading Skills in ESP	Peer-teaching of reading class done by students after group preparation followed by a plenary discussion
18	Teaching and Developing the	Facts About Writing
	Writing Skills in ESP	The Traditional and Modern Writing Processes
		Writing Teaching Method
		- Familiarisation
		- Controlled & Guided Exercises
		- Free Writing
10	 	Integrating Other Skills in a Writing Material  The state of the CLT.  The state of the CLT.  The state of the CLT.
19	Assignment 2	Trainees were required to reflect on an aspect of the CLT approach in an essay and write a complete CLT integrated skill teaching based on an authentic text provided
20	The Register Analysis Movement	Definition
		Method in Register Analysis
		Implications for Language Teaching
21	The Discourse Analysis Movement	Definition
		Conversational Analysis
		Text Analysis
		Implications for Language Teaching
23	Needs Analysis	Definition
		The Scope of Needs Analysis
		Means of Needs Analysis
		Checklists and Questionnaires, etc
24	Deriving Syllabus Items From Sample Needs Analysis	• Content
	recus / marysis	Authenticity in Materials
		• Visuals
		Mono- ,Multi-, and Integrated Skills Approach
		Definition of Syllabus Design
		Types of Syllabus
25	Course Design and Lesson Planning	Application Exercise from Needs Analysis results     Course Design Format (Input-Content-language
		Task)  • A Material Design Model (H. &Waters)
		, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,

		Expansion of the Model
26	Principles of Testing	Approaches to Language Test Design
		Basic Considerations in Test Design
		Test Methods
		Formative and Summative Testing

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