Whithin this context, the idea of developing a specific course for those researchers/ teachers who need English to read academic and non-academic texts came out as an ESP course following the basic characteristics of the Brazilian National ESP Project which focuses chiefly on the reading skill. Further details on the Projects can be found in The Brazilian ESP project: An Evaluation (Celani, A. et al, 1988).

Needs Analysis

Thus, considering the real tendencies and needs of Rondônia I decided to outline and offer a course called EEP - English for Ecological Purposes, bearing in mind the University teachers who are mainly concerned whith the Ecological field.

Of course all those considerations are just part of the work teachers shoul bear in mind before developing an ESP course. We can not just rely upon our feelings and insights as "experienced" teachers ande believe that by adopting this procedure the course is fated to be a success for both teachers and students.

As Hutschinson & Waters (1987) point out we must identify what our students wants/ needs are and here we should emphasize the importance and relevance of a "Needs Analysis".

It is not always very difficult to establish what/when/who our students need at a first sight as long as you have at least a little experience in teaching English in your own country. Frequently enough, we tend to ask questions such as:

1. Who are the learners?
2. What do they need English for?
3. Who is going to teach them? before starting a new course. And as a result of this we not rarely rely upon our own beliefs to specify what our learners whould need or want. It is also true, I believe, that if the Needs Analysis is not correctly carried out, it could be seen by both teachers and students as a waste of time

There are plenty of ways in which we can find out about our students needs. Questionnaires, structured interviews, observations as Mackay (1978) points out are just some of them.

The teacher's background experience, his/her common sense and his/her context will determine which instrument/s wil best produce the information s/he needs.

Teaching Situation

Before proposing a set of instruments to find out about my student's real needs I am going to list down some of the constraints I have to deal with in Rondônia for a 60 H/course.

1. Class size: 10 - 15 students which I believe is a good number of students to work with. This number allows me to work with them in a individualized way if they need.

2. Subjects: teachers of the subject area I am concerned with. Although working in different areas such as geography, biology, chemestry, all of them are carrying out research on Ecology.

3. Students'age: ranges from 30 - 40.

4. Sex: males and females

5. Background Knowledge of the language: Portuguese speakers whith some basic knowledge of English. I assume that all of them had already had some experience in learning - English before. Therefore, they could be regarded as false beginners.

6. Motivation: I assume that all of them are going to be highly motivated since the course is not compulsory. In fact, it was something they asked me to develop.

7. Authentic Material: Perhaps, the most difficult constraint I have to face is the lack of material in the target language available in the University Library. But as I am going to work with in-house material instead of a textbook, I will ask my students to provide me with some texts which may be of particular interest to them.
Thus, the teaching situation I am expecting to face is the following:

for   against

↑ motivation
= field
= age
= background

teachess material

?   ?   ?
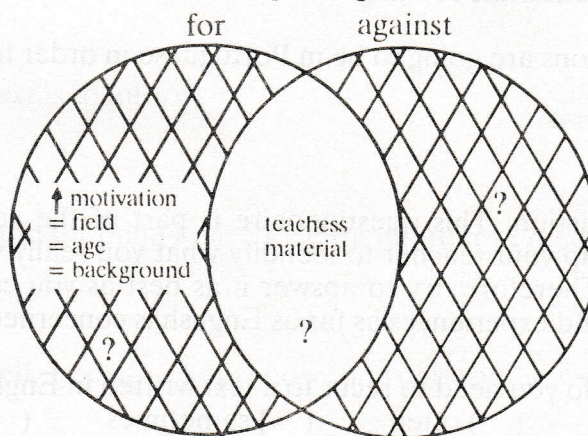
↑ = highly motivated
= = same
? = what I expect to find out with the Needs Analysis

Based on the situation described above, there are still some points I would like to make before I go on with this essay.

First, perhaps the best way to find out what my students really need would be to ask both students and their respective teachers what they actually needed/wanted from the course and then compare the results in order to avoid discrepancies between their beliefs as Mackay (1978) suggests.

In this particular context however, this triangulation will not be possible since my "students" are actually the teachers of the subject area in focus, i.e. Ecology.

Secondly, I am aware that I could also find out about my students learning strategies asking the teachers of English from my department either by means of a questionnaire or by a brief interview on the subject. Nevertheless, I am the only teacher who works within the ESP context. The others two work with literature and regular English course (Letras) and I do not know to what extent their specific teaching experience might influence or even distort what I am trying to identify.

Last but not least, as I have already explained, some of the in-house material I am expecting to use is going to be based on their actual research in the area and maybe some of the teachers will not feel confortable or confident enough to expose their piece of work to their colleagues, mainly those who are not specialized yet.

If you take then, these three points into consideration you may be able to understand why I have put them in the middle of the figure 1 (page 5). I do not know to what extent they are going to be a problem or not for me.

Therefore, bearing in mind the specificity of my context in Rondônia I propose three distinct ways of analysing my students needs:

1. By means of a questionnaire;
2. By menas of a personal diary;
3. By means of a structured interview.

The questionnaire is going to be given before the course starts, maybe at the end of September when I am planning to have an informal meeting with my students. Thus, I will be present in case they need mey help to understand it. I have also decided to add some questions concerning my students' learning strategies to find out if they already make use of them while reading.

Also, all questions are going to be in Portuguese in order to prevent misunderstandings.

Questionnaire

General Instruction: This questionnaire is part of the course you will be taking next year. It will help your teacher to idendify what you really want and need to learn in our EEP course. Therefore, try to answer it as best as you can bearing in mind your own expectations and experiences as far as English is concerned.

1. How often do you need to recur to a text written in English in your academic life?
   ( ) always   ( ) often   ( ) semetimes   ( ) rarely

2. Are there many materials (articles, papers, etc.) published in English which you would like to read but you do not because you do not know English? Explain:

3. If yes, where do you normally find them?

4. Do you believe that English could help you in your academic life? Explain:

5. In your opinion, how often should a researcher in your area of study consult something written in English?
   ( ) always   ( ) often   ( ) sometimes   ( ) rarely

6. How would you describe your own ability to read in English:
   ( ) fluent   ( ) I manage   ( ) poor   ( ) not able at all

7. Do you have to understand every word of a text in order to read it?

8. What do you normally do when you do not understand a specific word?

9. What do you expect to get from a text when you read it?
Explain:

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements. Explain:

10. In order to understand a text, I have to read it as carefully and slowly as I can.

11. Reading an authentic (non-simplified) text is a difficult task for me.

12. The main objective of a text is to inform.

13. Grammar is the most important thing I have to learn in order to read a text well.

14. In order to read a text well, I need to know how to pronouce the words as best as I can.

Questions 1 and 5 although apparently similar could lead us to a quite interesting result. The first one aims at finding out what my **students actually need** whereas the second could indicate what **they believe anyone in their position would need**. Confronting both answers I may conclude for instance, that my students do not need to read in English as much as they or even I myself think they do.

As I am going to be using in-house material, questions 2 and 3 could help me in identifying what king of texts my students need to read and where I could find them. This result may even modify my earlier expectation towards lack of authentic material in the area, identified in figure 1 page 5 as a potencial problem to my EEP course.

Questions 9 and 12 are specially meant to find out if they share the common sense view which says that the main and exclusive objective of a text is to inform. I this is true, I may need this information to set up the amount of Critical Reading I should include in my course design.

The other questions seek to identify if they already make use of some learning strategies while reading and also if they share the same misapprehensions towards the reading process. Some time then, spent working on Conscientização activities as Scott (1986) suggests might be of valuable help.

Personal diary

Once a week, after each class throughout the course I will write down in form of notes my impressions about my students development in terms of their needs/wants. I reckon this procedure could lead me to quite subjective results since is going to be based on my impressions about their necessities but it can also offer me the opportunity to include or reinforce some components of the original course design which I believe irrelevant to them.

Structured Interview

A detailed analysis of the learners' "performance deficits" is best reliable when the course is under way as Carter (1991) suggests. Therefore, a structured interview could be a good instrument to assess my students' needs in the middle of the course. The idea of doing it sometime during the course will give both students and teacher the possibility to negotiate about the aims, organisation and content of the course.

This instrument is going to be based upon the answers of 3 (three) students which I believe could well represent the aims of the whole groug (15 students). I am also thinking of making use of a tape-recorder in order to get all information they may come up with. The following questions are going to be used as a general guide but I may find out they are not enough while the interview is under way and may need to add some others too.

1. Are your goals being achieved in this course? Why/Why not?

2. Have you changed your earlier concept of reading? How?

3. As far as you are concerned, which strategies do you find most useful and which do you find less useful?

4. Is this course really helping you in your academic life?

5. How do you feel when your colleagues read your text?

6. Is there something else you would like to suggest to improve this course?

I have included question 5 in this interview to find out if they do not mind having their project works, articles or researches being read, discussed and sometimes even criticized by their colleagues. They may resent being exposed to this activity and as I am

planning to use these materials quite a lot during the course this may be an interesting question to be discussed.

There is a final point I would like to highlight before I conclude this paper. The most important aim of a language course is to achieve on the one hand what students and teachers think and actually need and want, and on the other hand what the reality they have to work in determines they may need or want. Thus, an ideal Needs Analysis should be a dynamic ande progressive process which bears in mind chiefly the real context of your students. It is the role of the teacher to consider these points in his/her attempt to help his/her students in overcoming possible obstacle to their professional lives.

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