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A Suggested Program to Enhance the ESP Course Design Skills of Egyptian English Trainers.

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Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of a suggested program (ESP-CDSP) in developing ESP course design skills of ESP trainers. The researcher used both qualitative and quantative data gathering tools to assure illustrating some descriptive and interpretive information alongside collecting more precise and statistical data free of subjectivity. Furthermore, reviewing literature and related studies along with the outcomes of the pre-posttest and piloting questionnaire showed that most EFL trainers undergo a sort of extreme difficulty in managing their challenging roles as to be course material designers due to lack of having effective assistance and the difficulty of getting involved in professional development activities and practices. Accordingly, the researcher prepared and modified a list of course design skills suggested and developed by K.Graves (2000) as a guide for the design of the program to cope up with the divergent needs of the study participants .

Keywords :

ESP, course design skills, professional development .

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Chapter One

Background and Problem

1.1 Introduction

ESP courses of optimum quality are always a principal target in the vocational organizations .However, the type of organization could affect the final production of EFL teachers (Woodward, 2009).The need of some institutional organizations to develop, design and instruct ESP courses relevant to the employees , is often seen as a short-term mission as The time provided for planning before assigning the instructors to teach ESP courses is very limited in most training organizations.(Kulik, 1994; Sivin-Kachala,1998) .

It can be argued that the experience of planning and designing an appropriate course that suits target group of learners can be very challenging and unachievable , especially for new untrained instructors (Sysoyev , 2000). As Belcher (2006), states :

"ESP instructors are often faced with various hurdles in case they lack the know-how of designing effective courses that will cover the peculiar needs belonging to learners in specific contexts and must be carefully identified "(p.135).

In addition , Graves (2000) and Gatehouse (2001) state that ESP is a need-orientated course as needs analysis is the paramount part of ESP .Furthermore, Cunnings Worth (1984) stresses that textbooks are good servants, but poor masters , so selection and adaptation of teaching materials for ESP should make use of a variety of sources, among which

the textbook is only one. Finally, Liu (2009) states that non-native learners –English get exposed to hurdles : the English language materials provided to the learners are not connected with their real life experiences.

Regardless of these constraints and obvious productivity-oriented inclinations of many business enterprises, most ESP teachers need to have persistent mindset to develop courses that are learner-centered and help to meet the English language needs of their learners , and this is clearly stated by Dudley -Evans (2001) .He notes that "the key defining feature of ESP is that its teaching and materials are founded on the results of needs analysis" . (p.131)

1.2 Context of the study

During his work as EFL and ESP trainer in a number of corporates , the researcher noticed that most EFL teachers could show positive merits when getting involved in conducting English for General Purpose (EGP) programs. However, they cannot perform similarly when shifting to do ESP courses ,which signals a number of lacks and deficiencies in their professional development background .

In addition, with surveying most of the ESP related studies in Egypt , it can be claimed that there is a scarcity in this type of research studies tackling the topic of this study as opposed to the ESP studies abroad , especially in some other countries such as Algeria, India , Iran , Indonesia and Turkey .

Finally, the pilot study performed by the researcher at a number of corporates , which allocate ESP programs as a training support for their staff , delineates that some EFL teachers performing the training tasks at these organizations lack the adequate skills for ESP programs in general and ESP course design skills in particular .

1.3 Pilot study

The researcher has conducted a pilot study by presenting and administering a pilot questionnaire (see appendix C) and Pre-post test to a sample of 30 EFL trainers working for different Egyptian companies .The results of these data gathering tools indicated the following points:

1) Needs are not defined according to the learners' learning situation, namely, the trainees' target situation , but instead it is all about the teachers' background and beliefs. Therefore, needs are not in alignment with or applicable to trainees .
2) Aims and objectives are determined by external factors mainly related to the textbooks providers, not by the students' profile .
3) Students are not involved in course design .
4) ESP trainers at these companies have a confusing perspective of the ESP course design process in terms of ESP trainers' roles , skills and steps that should be perceived and performed in comparison with those ones performed in relation to the current ready-made materials or textbook-fully-orientated module.
5) English trainers at these companies lack the vision to set applicable frameworks of ESP courses and they need to be better guided to serve the ESP field much better .

Based on the results of the pilot study, a number of ESP trainers working for these companies are mostly shifted from teaching general English to teaching ESP suddenly, so it can be claimed that most of those trainers lack ESP designing skills. Furthermore ,they point out that the textbooks of ESP courses are not to the expectations of their trainees that these textbooks are not learner-tailored.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Most of the study participants working at some Egyptian corporates find difficulty when performing their challenging roles as ESP trainers. In other words, they lack the skills that can enable them to act as material provider or developer, and course designer. To address this problem, the present study attempted to find answers to the following main question :

- How effective is the suggested program in enhancing the Egyptian trainers' skills of designing ESP courses.

In answering the main question the following sub-questions were also answered :

1- What are the requirements and skills needed for the Egyptian trainers of ESP course design according the ESP experts ?

2-What are the pertinent features of the suggested program ?

3-How satisfied are the trainees with the suggested program ?

1.5 Hypotheses of the Study

Concerning the ***hypotheses*** which the current study tried to verify , they were as follows:

1- There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the trainers of English in the pre-posttest administration concerning the overall of the ESP course design skills test in favor of the post-test mean scores administration.

In an attempt to verify the major hypothesis mentioned above , the following sub-hypotheses were also tested :

- There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the trainers of English in the pre-posttest administration in **Articulating Teacher's beliefs** skill in favor of their post-test administration .
- There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the trainers of English in the pre-posttest administrations in **conducting students' needs analysis& defining context skill** in favor of their post-test administration.

- There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the trainers of English in the pre-posttest administrations in **Organization of the content and activities skill** in favor of their post-test administration.
- There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the trainers of English in the pre-posttest administrations in **conceptualizing the content skill** in favor of their post-test administration.
- There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the trainers of English in the pre-posttest administrations in **Selecting and Developing ESP Materials and Activities skill** in favor of their post-test administration.
- There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the trainers of English in the pre-posttest administrations in **determining the goals and objectives of the course skill** in favor of their post-test administration.