

## A COURSE DESIGN FOR EAP LEARNERS A Case Study

Riyanto

English Department, Languages and Art Faculty  
Indraprasta PGRI University  
riyantongalimi@yahoo.co.id

### *Abstract*

*The success of a Language programme not only involves the act of the teaching, but also successful education programme, planning, development as well as the implementation play a crucial role. Therefore, a proper course design is regarded important to suit with the course will be conducted. This paper will draw a plan of an English course run by PUSDIKLAT setneg in collaboration with the British Council Jakarta. This group of learners need English for academic studies and their language needs relate to their proficiency in English. The objectives of this course is to prepare the learners to take up further study in English-speaking countries. The learners are graduates of different disciplines such as; economics, finance, law and social sciences. The age is between 25 and 35 and have been strickly selected and have good academic potential, high cognitive competence, systematic way of thinking and usually are very aware of their needs and strengths. Moreover, they have good sense of time and high expectations from their learning. As they are going to study for a higher degree which later will affect their career in their organizations, they usually have high motivation in learning English. These facts indicate that these learners are special, in the sense that they have certain characteristics which are different from those found in learners taking other kinds of English course.*

*Keywords: course design, need analysis, goals and objectives, course contents, syllabus, teaching materials, evaluation and assessment.*

### **Rancangan Pengajaran bagi Pembelajar Bahasa Inggris Tujuan Akademi**

#### **Abstrak**

Keberhasilan sebuah pembelajaran bahasa Inggris tidak hanya ditentukan oleh aktifitas pengajarannya saja namun program, perencanaan, pengembangan serta penerapan juga memiliki peran tidak kalah pentingnya. Oleh karena itu rancangan pengajaran yang bagus sangatlah penting agar selaras dengan pengajaran yang akan dilaksanakan. Tulisan ini menggambarkan rencana sebuah pengajaran bahasa Inggris yang diselenggarakan oleh Pusdiklat Setneg bekerjasama dengan The British Council Jakarta. Program ini diselenggarakan untuk mempersiapkan para peserta didik mengikuti pendidikan pascasarjana di negara-negara berpenutur asli bahasa Inggris seperti; Australia, Amerika Serikat dan Selandia Baru. Mengingat calon peserta didik memiliki potensi akademik yang bagus, kompetensi kognitif tinggi, cara pikirs istimewa seta sadar atas kebutuhannya sehingga diindikasikan bahwa mereka dikategorikan sebagai peserta khusus dalam arti bahwa mereka memiliki karakteristik tertentu yang berbeda dari peserta didik pada umumnya.

Kata kunci: rancangan pembelajaran, analisis kebutuhan, tujuan pembelajaran, isi pembelajaran, silabus, materi pengajaran, evaluasi dan penilaian

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

Second language teaching is often viewed from a very narrow perspective that of the teaching act. As a result, much of the literature on second language teaching deals with teaching methods or with the design and use of instructional materials. It is assumed that if students are not learning it, the fault is on the method, materials, or the teachers. Yet the success of a language programme not only involves the act of the teaching, but also successful educational programme, planning, development as well as implementation plays a significant role.

Before a course begins, a number of important approach for a successful course design must be taken into consideration. Richards (1990) identifies the stages of course design, or language curriculum development such as needs analysis, goals and objectives, syllabus design, methodology, and testing. Similarly, Dubin and Olshtain (1986) list a curriculum process includes: diagnosis of needs, formulation of objectives, selection of content, organization of content, selection of learning experiences, organization of learning experiences, and determining of what to evaluate and the means to evaluate.

Of two experts, talk about similar stages of course design though there seems to be a slight difference in the presentation. This paper will draw a plan of an English course run by PUSDIKLAT Setneg in collaboration with the British Council Jakarta. The set of criteria I drew up for designing this course is principally derived from the framework used by Richards (1990) and Dubin and Olshtain (1986) that is: need analysis, goals and objectives, syllabus, course content, assessment and programme evaluation.

## B. DISCUSSION

### 1. Need Analysis

In the course of designing a teaching programme, particularly, in the area of special-purposes, need analysis is one of the most important elements which brings a great impact. Needs analysis should be conducted not only focus on the specific communicative needs of language learners, but also on the learners' communicative needs in the target language.

Richards (1990:2) quotes Robinson (1980) comments that 'the impact of needs analysis has been greatest in the area of special-purposes programme design.' He also proposes two approaches of a needs analysis procedure, i.e. **situation analysis** and **communicative needs analysis**. For the type of questions used (see Richards 1990 p.2 and appendix 1-2)

As far as the types of questions are concerned, there seems to focus on the general parameters of language programme. Although such questions will enable us to gather a wide range of information, a more specific area should also be involved. For this case study, it might be helpful to find out the information about the detail of the learners' job and their departments' activities, their approximate language level and the terminology of their particular jobs. Apart from that, a job analysis will also be useful to be conducted. This is an account of what the participants really need English for in their jobs. This information can be gathered by questionnaire or, preferably, by constructing a sociogram on the first day. Here, the participants will have to describe their jobs, who they speak English to, who they write English to, where they speak, if they have to give presentation, how much they have to use telephone in English, if they write reports, etc.

A number of different needs analysis procedures will also bring a significant impact in this context such as selection of teaching method and allocation of resources. The former refers to the learners preference as to learning methods. Therefore, the teacher will adapt his techniques to particular skills and aptitudes of the participants. This approach might be established through discussion with the participants of their educational background and learning preferences. The latter, allocation of resources, includes putting the course materials together from a core of available material with additional material produced for the individual material. We may also invite the outside speakers to discuss relevant topics and arrange outside visit. As the course is short, it should be well-structured to achieve a maximum result in the limited time available.

a. What and Why?

There is no single or simple definition of needs analysis. West (1994:3) quotes Richterich (1983):

*The very concept of language needs has never been clearly defined and remains at best ambiguous*

and goes on to identify the main source of this ambiguity-the distinction between sponsor's demands (sometimes called objective, product-oriented or perceived needs) and learner's wants (subjective, process-oriented or felt needs). These two approaches derive from different approaches to language teaching-the former teacher-centred and the latter learner-centred, but in practice the two approaches are applied in a way that is complementary rather than conflicting.

There are several techniques available which take account of both sorts of needs. Such approaches define the first type of needs as those required in the target occupational or academic situation (hence the term target-situation analysis) and the second type as those needs which learners presently lack, i.e. deficiency analysis (West, 1994). It

is evident that neither, in itself, represents an adequate basis for course design – the second would leave the course designer with little of the learners’ destination, and the first would give no indication of their starting point.

b. When should the need analysis be carried out?

There seems to be three possible answers to this question, and the answer which is chosen in any particular case will often depend on practical matters such as access to those involved in the needs analysis procedure. More importantly, a need should not be viewed as permanent but it is a perceived need in which it might change while the course is progressing. So, in implementing needs analysis, it is recommended not only to do it once before the course begins but also at the start of the course as well as when the course is going on.

With respect to this, West (1987) suggests three possibilities: before the course or “off-line analysis”; at the start of the course or “on-line analysis” and during the course. The first involves analysis in advance of the course so that the course designer has ample time to prepare a syllabus and select and develop appropriate training materials. The second is conducted when the trainees arrive to start their course. Here the trainer or course designer has little time to prepare detail course outline, but it is possible to ensure that the information obtained is full, relevant, and accurate, although its fullness, relevance and accuracy may be short-lived. The third approach is a response to the limitations of the second and, in particular, the realisation that learners’ needs, or, at least, their perceptions of their needs will change as the course proceeds and their awareness of the demands of the target situation become more clearly focused.

In addition, their needs in the learning and immediate social situations may emerge as the course progresses. This process of continuous needs re-analysis is useful for both the learner and the teacher, for learners can identify new or short-term priorities, and the teacher now has priorities to respond to. It is also useful from a motivational point of view to have learners reformulate their objectives periodically and, perhaps most important, to have learners involved in the process of course design and review.

c. Who should decide what the language needs are?

There are three principal parties involved in what has come to be called the needs analysis triangle: teacher, learner and employer (West, 1994: 6)

The course designer (in this case the teacher) is the person who estimates the needs of learners in the light of their appreciation of the purposes for which the language is required. In this context, i.e. TESP, the other two parties in the triangle acquire a greater say in the design of the course. Partly, the involvement of such parties is a feeling on the part of the teacher that they should be involved in the process of syllabus design; partly, it is a response to an appreciation by all three groups that the more specific the purpose, the more they can and should be involved if the course is to be relevant and effective. Inevitably, the course designer will have to mediate at times between the different and perhaps conflicting perceptions of sponsors and participants. Alternatively, the professional expertise of the needs analyst has been recognized and valued, and the emergence new directions in needs analysis such as means analysis and language audits acknowledge this expertise and its value.

The learner is given more prominence to language learning as the whole educational process in more democratic and learners' wants is given greater attention. The employers (in this case the departments) play crucial role in needs analysis and course design. It is my believe that the employers have an importantpart to play in defining the uses to which the language will have to be put and so they will often be able to give valuable input to target-situation analysis.

Brown (1995) suggests four catagories of people to be involved in a needs analysis : target group (i.e. the students in the programme), the audience (i.e. the teachers and the programme administrators), the needs analysts (in this context, the teachers who will directly administer and implement the needs analysis) and resource group.

The teaches will play two different roles: audience and needs analysts. In the first role, they will need to provide information about their academic qualification, attitude towards the programme, etc. Such information is regarded crucial as they will directly instruct and provide the English training in the programme. In the second role, they will actively make use of both subjective and objective information (e.g. data from questionnaires, tests, interviews, observation). The objects of the information providers are mainly the students whom they will have to do the test, fill in the questionnaires, and be interviewed.

However, the information gathered might be effected by the philosophy adopted by a particular programme or group of needs analysts. Therefore, it might be useful to consider the approaches proposed by Brown (1995): the discrepancy, the democratic, the analytic, and the diagnostic. The first approach views needs as

differences between a desired performance from the students and what they are actually doing. The second defines needs as any change that is desired by the majority of the group. In other words, democratic leads to a needs analysis that would gather information about the learning most desired by the chosen group(s). The analytic philosophy views a need is whatever the students will naturally learn next based on what is known about them and the learning process involved. Finally, diagnostic, refers to an analysis of the important language skills required by a certain group of people (e.g. immigrants who need English to survive in their adopted country).

The four approaches view a need differently one from the others. The needs of this group of learners have clearly been defined by both the employers and the students themselves, that is English for Academic Studies. Therefore, it would be wise enough to employ democratic approach. However, in some cases, other approaches should also be considered as they will live in a new environment and they will need to survive themselves. In other words, only to prepare students to cope with English in classes in their field of interest is not sufficient but survival situation which might be faced by the students in the new circumstances should also be taken into account.

d. How ?

There are many ways of carrying out a needs analysis and, of course, anyone needs may use more than one method. Berwick (1989) quoted in West (1994: 7-8) makes a distinction between inductive (i.e. observation and case studies from which courses can be generalised) and, more typically, deductive methods (i.e. questionnaires, surveys, or other data-gathering instruments which provide various kinds of information as the basis of course design). Berwick does not catalogue

the methods for gathering data for needs analysis, but, in the earlier survey, Jordan (forthcoming) quoted in West (1994) lists six methods which cover both inductive and deductive approaches:

1) Pre course placement/diagnostic test.

This test is conducted before learners join the course. The information such a test will indicate not only whether potential participants will benefit from the proposed course but also their strengths and weaknesses/lacks. IELTS test seems appropriate to be implemented for such a course.

2) Entry test

Entry test can provide diagnostic information, perhaps in the form of a profile of participants learning priorities. Such a test could be a formal diagnostic/placement test (e.g. ELTDU Scale of Attainment test battery).

3) Self-placement/diagnostic test

This test requires learners to indicate their language level and areas of special priority.

4) Class observation

This involves a process of continuous ad hoc error analysis to observe learners' difficulties and apply remedial treatment.

5) Surveys and questionnaires

This method has widely been used. This is not only addressed to learners but also sponsors and representative users in the target situation. We can also provide questions and checklists for the course designer to answer in order to gather the necessary information. Munby (1978) is the example of such questionnaires which might be employed for a survey.

6) Previous research.

Considerable research can be conducted into the needs and deficiencies of certain categories of learners, notably EAP students, and this research can provide useful input for the new course.

Nonetheless, there is always constraint in conducting such analysis. The choice of method will depend on circumstances - whether sponsors or participants are accessible to the course designer, time available, what previous research is available, the detail of the specifications provided by the sponsors, the previous experience of the teachers and their knowledge of the target situation, etc. From such variables and constraints, it is clear that there is no one approach to needs analysis.

## 2. Goals and objectives

Goal is defined by Brown (1995) as 'general statement concerning desirable and attainable programme purposes and aims based on perceived language and situation needs'. Nunan (1988) distinguishes between goals and objectives. According to him, goals are general statement of the intended outcomes of the programme presenting what the planner believes to be and attainable, objectives are a particular way of formulating or stating contents and activities.

It seems quite clear that the most distinguishing characteristic between goals and objectives is on the level of specificity. Objectives are the subunits of the goals that will help to clarify what it is that the students should be able to do by the end of the course. In other word, one way to classify the objectives is by breaking down the goals into smallest units and classify them into a set that might work well together.

The goals of this group of learners is to provide them with the basic language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking and study skills (notetaking, reading strategies, seminar techniques) to equip them with their academic studies. The extent to which each skill is important will be briefly described below:

a. Reading

It is assumed that students will have quite a lot of reading to do during their course, and they will need to get it done as quickly and efficiently as possible: after all, they will not have an unlimited amount of time. Therefore, it is very important to develop the specialised reading skill needed for studying successfully in a second language. Oneway to do this is to equip them with the techniques of how to read efficiently, that is by facilitating them with the technique of scanning and skimming, note taking strategies (for taking notes from textbooks of their subjects, authentic texts, etc) and reference skills (how to refer to academic books, encyclopaedia, etc) as well as library skills.

b. Writing

Nowadays, many universities and colleges emphasise more on writing as the basis of assessment. Therefore, it is considered very important to equip students with the writing skills. The writing skills will not only include those concerned with the development of more formal writing skills (essay, report writing, writing business letters, note taking from lectures and books, etc) but also those which relate to basic functional language skill (writing notes to one's teacher, completing post cards, etc)

c. Listening

The listening skills will also be divided into those focusing on general listening, for example, understanding spoken media, and those for specialised listening such as understanding university lectures.

d. Speaking

Experience also indicates that a lot of teaching in colleges and universities is done with small group of students. These small-group

sessions are usually called tutorials or seminars. A successful seminar depends not only on how the individual members of the group (participants) behave and how the group as a whole behave, but also the fluency of their language play a significant role in presenting the topics.

So by the end of the course, students are expected to be able to :

- 1) Read authentic materials, reference materials and textbooks in their subjects as effective and efficient as possible
- 2) Develop oral language skills that will prepare them to participate in class seminars, make oral presentations, and respond to questions.
- 3) Develop the study skills which includes note taking, reference skills (e.g. how to refer to text books, encyclopaedia, etc) and
- 4) Write adequate essays, report writing, writing business letters and note taking from lectures and text books.

The goals above are defined in terms of both language and general learning skills to equip the students with their academic studies. For some reasons because adult learners in higher education also have dual needs (Dubin and Olshtain, 1986), that is, besides they must cope with English in classes in their field of interest, they also often have strong needs to acculturate and socialise in the new community. So, apart from the academic professional that have been set up, survival situation which might be faced by the students is also taken into account. In other word, both needs incorporately be set up.

### 3. Syllabus

A syllabus is defined by Robin (1991) as ‘a plan of work for the teacher, as a guideline and context for class content. Widdowson (1984 cited in Nunan, 1988: 6) states ‘...the syllabus is simply a framework within which activities can be carried out: a teaching device to facilitate learning.’ Breen

(1987) claims that a syllabus is not only regarded as a guide in the contexts of teaching and learning, but also as a basis for evaluation in learning. He summarises:

*“syllabus is primarily a plan of what is to be achieved through teaching and Learning”*

A great number of syllabus types have been identified by different ELT practitioners. For example, Nunan (1988) distinguishes syllabus between ‘a product syllabus’ and ‘process syllabus’. Ullmann (1982 cited in Stern, 1992) distinguishes them into language syllabus, communicative syllabus, and cultural syllabus. Whereas Breen (1987) groups syllabus into formal, functional, task-based and process syllabus.

The syllabus designed for a certain group of learners is not necessarily strictly on certain type of syllabus mentioned earlier. This is because each syllabus has its own strengths and weaknesses. One may complete the others. Take for example, in the functional syllabus, the functions are selected and sequenced according to their usefulness to the learner, the extent to which they meet the learner’s communicative needs. So, the earliest items in the syllabus will be those that the learner will need most in the situation in which he will use English.

The advantages of such a syllabus are that the learning goals can be identified in terms which make sense to the learners themselves. To the average student, ‘making request for information’ means more than ‘interrogative form of modal verbs followed by infinitive’. Also, by using the criterion of usefulness rather than grammatical factors, the syllabus designer ensures that the learning process has an immediate practical result in that the students can use what they have learned outside the classroom. Moreover, students who do not complete a course will still take away with

them something useful in the form of limited communicative ability in English.

The structural syllabus, on the other hand, has a little concern for the functional meaning that the forms can be used to express. The strength of structural syllabus is that it can account for all the forms of language and relate them to each other in a coherent and finite system. The functional syllabus, on the other hand, lists various functions and gives examples of how those functions can be expressed in English. Widdowson (1979 cited in Cunningsworth, 1984) points out that a functional syllabus is still only an inventory of units, functional rather than structural, and there is no relationship between the form and function. Further he says that functional syllabus does not account for communicative competence because it does not contain the strategies for using linguistic elements for communicative purposes.

However, it seems that between structural and functional syllabuses do not seem to be opposed to each other, as they have sometimes come to be seen, but are better considered as complementary. The functional perspective of a functional syllabus develops the structural syllabus by incorporating it into a component which is sensitive to the learners' communicative needs and provides them with units of communication as well as with units of linguistic forms. Below is an example of syllabus for one unit of lesson.

Unit	Function/ topic	Grammar point	Language pattern	Time/ duration
1	Describing organisation and responsibilities	Simple present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be+responsible for+v-ing (noun)</li> <li>• Be+in charge of +V-ing (noun)</li> <li>• Deal with+V-ing (noun)</li> <li>• Be+concerned with + V-ing (noun)</li> </ul>	6 hours

#### 4. Course content

##### a. Materials

Brown (1995) defines material as any systematic description of the techniques and exercises to be used in classroom teaching. Materials include such a great number of elements as books, packets of audiovisual aids, games, or any of the other myriad types of activities that go on in the language classroom. The key in developing materials is to ensure that they are described and organized well enough so that teachers can use them with no confusion and with a minimum of preparation of time.

Materials can be distinguished between teacher-prepared materials and commercial sponsored textbooks (Dubin and Olshtain, 1986). Non-commercial material or teacher-prepared material usually are aimed at a more specified, local audience. Commercial materials, on the other hand, for as wide an audience as possible.

In the classroom, materials are considered more prominent than any other elements in the curriculum. Nunan (1988b, 1991) explains that materials are the tangible manifestation of the curriculum in action. Therefore, it is not possible for a class without some kind of materials as books, pictures, filmstrips, realia, games, and so on. Even the most austere classroom usually has some sort of materials. The Community Language Learning class usually has a tape recorder, whereas in the Silent Way classes usually focus their attention on rods and charts.

There is no doubt that all sorts of materials have a significant role in the classroom not only for students but also for the teachers themselves. Inexperienced teachers can use materials for assistance in planning their courses and for teaching ideas, while experienced

teachers can exploit materials in a variety of ways to make them more useful.

It seems obvious that materials are an essential element within the curriculum, and do more than simply lubricate the wheels of learning (Nunan, 1988b). Materials also provide concrete models of desirable classroom practice. Materials act as curriculum models and they fulfil a teacher development role. Good materials provide models for teachers to follow in developing their own materials.

Materials can be distinguished from their shapes and formats. The most obvious distinction is between local materials produced by a teacher (teacher-made materials) for his class, and those which are commercially produced.

This course is regarded as specified, local audience, and, therefore, teacher-made materials will be more appropriate to be used though this may lack of face validity. According to Dubin and Olshtain (1986: 167), the tangible element that gives a language course face validity to many learners and teachers is the textbook.

However, the face validity of the materials used is less important for this group of learners as they are adults and have had a practical way of thinking. The most important for them is that the materials used should be familiar with their needs, their age, level of proficiency, degree of motivation, culture learning styles, etc.

With regard to this, materials will be prepared locally in order to meet the course needs. Besides from selected course books available in the resources centre, authentic materials will also be included. This will

include written and audio visual materials from the media, e.g. newspaper, material used in the various professions such as: books on principle of business or finance, and textbooks of other subjects related to the learners' field of studies. The reason of using authentic texts is that, they have been written for a communicative purpose and if they are carefully selected, they are likely to be more interesting than texts which have been invented to illustrate the usage of some features of the target language (Little and Singleton, 1988: 1). Thus, in that respect, learners are more likely to find authentic texts more motivating than invented texts.

b. Task and activity

'Tasks are what the learner will do in the classroom...' (Nunan, 1988; 6)

According to Nunan (1989: 47) a task requires specification of four components: the goals, the input (linguistic or otherwise), the activities derived from such input, and the roles implied for teachers and learners. Candlin (1987 cited in Nunan, 1989) agrees with this idea but expands his specification by including settings, actions, monitoring, outcomes and feedback.

However, this has presented a disagreement, for example, Wright (1987 cited in Nunan, 1989: 48) who rejects the notion that objectives or outcomes are obligatory on the ground that, with certain tasks, a variety of outcomes might be possible and that these might be quite different from the ones anticipated by the teacher. He suggests that tasks need minimally contain two elements. These are input data from the materials, teachers or learners and an initiating question which instructs learners on what to do with the data. I definitely agree with Nunan (1989) who finally simplifies learning task with three

components: goals, input and activities. This is because these three components have implied certain roles (i.e. teacher and learners)

In designing learning task for this group of learner, framework used by Nunan will be applied. A wide range of activities will be included in the materials to foster language use and there will be a balance between controlled practice and communication activities. This will enable learners to use the language independently. Richards et.al. (1986) quoted in Nunan (1989: 6) say that the use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching is said to make language teaching more communicative.

Following is one example of one unit material for 6 hours class instruction. The materials are compiled from business textbooks and authentic texts.

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	INPUT	ACTIVITIES
Describing Organisation and Job Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable learners to describe organisational structure in their work place</li> <li>• Enable learners to explain their job responsibilities.</li> <li>• To encourage learners to negotiate information between each other to develop</li> </ul>	Expressions on job responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transferring oral information to charts and texts</li> <li>• Summarising written information in the form of charts</li> <li>• Interpreting audio visual communication</li> <li>• Talking about different occupation</li> <li>• Discussing the organisational structure related to their work place.</li> </ul>

	their interactional skills.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explaining the structure of one particular bureau in their institution</li> <li>• Giving and getting information about job responsibilities among class members.</li> </ul>
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A variety of different kinds of tasks will be employed such as: from controlled practice to free ones, from closed to open-ended types of activities (e.g. gap-filling kind of task to letter assignments). All four language skills will be presented integratedly in one unit lesson.

#### 5. Assessment of learners

Assessment is defined by Nunan (1989) as ‘the process and procedures whereby we determine what learners are able to do in the target language (TL). Assessment in education context is always connected with a test as a means of measurement. According to Bachman (1990), a test is a type of measurement/assessment – that is a procedure designed to elicit certain behaviour from which one can make inferences about certain characteristics on an individual.

Moreover, a test can provide a wealth of information about the general ability levels of the students, about possible ability grouping that will make sense within the programme, about specific problems that students may be having with the language, and about their achievement in previous programme. There are various type of tests may be implemented during the programme. Different type of tests usually have different purposes. Hughes (1989) and Brown (1995) distinguish tests into proficiency tests, achievement tests, diagnostic tests and placement tests.

Despite many different types of tests suggested above, not all can be implemented in the course. For some reasons because tests cost time and money – to prepare, administer, score and interpret (Hughes, 1989: 8). Furthermore, tests used should be relevant with the purpose of the assessment. Thus, the tests should measure/assess not only how successful individual student but also whether the course itself has achieved the objectives or not.

With regard to this, achievement tests seem to be in line with our purposes. Hughes (1989) states that ‘achievement tests are directly related to language courses, their purposes being to establish how successful individual students, groups of students, or the courses themselves have been in achieving objectives.’ Additionally, the information gained in this type of testing can also be put to good use in reexamining the needs analysis, in selecting and creating materials and teaching strategies, and evaluating programme effectiveness (Brown, 1995). Thus, the development of systematic achievement tests is crucial to the evaluation of a systematic curriculum.

There are two types of achievement tests that are likely to administered, i.e. progress achievement test and final achievement test. The former is intended to measure the progress that the students are making. Such a test has come to be called ‘formative’ that is conducted in the half way of the course. However, as this test is the first test in the course, the information gained will not indicate the progress made. One way of measuring progress is by comparing what students have made in the earlier stage. So, to meet the purpose of this test, earlier progress test will be conducted, i.e. quizzes. Such tests may be given at every end of a single unit of lesson. Although this test is not a formal test, the information can be used as the basis of comparison to the immediate more formal progress achievement tests. The latter, final achievement test, is administered at the end of the

course of study and has been called 'summative test'. The measurement of the student progress will be based on the result of the tests administered periodically during the programme. Brown (1995) states that the decision can be made effectively if based on tests that are administered periodically during the programme – perhaps at the beginning, middle and end.

## 6. Programme Evaluation

### a. Evaluation

Whenever any learning programme is set up, it is important to evaluate whether it works as expected or not. Thus, evaluation is one of the most important aspects in setting up learning programme.

Brown (1995) defines evaluation as 'the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of a curriculum and assess its effectiveness within the context of a particular institution involved. White (1988) states that evaluation is used to improve the course while it is still fluid, contributes more improvement of education. The purpose of education is to collect information systematically in order to indicate the worth of merit of a programme and to inform decision making. Thus, evaluation has two characteristics: description and judgement.

### b. Purpose of evaluation

Rea-Dickins and Germaine (1992) separate the purposes of evaluation into two types: (i) general purposes and (ii) specific, topic-related purposes. General purposes concern accountability, curriculum development and betterment and self-development of teachers. In other word, they are talking about both formative evaluation which concerns development and summative which deals with accountability. The idea of summative and formative evaluations are also advocated by Weir and Roberts (1994), who suggest the integration of formative

evaluation with summative evaluation. They argue that there is an association between two major types of evaluations: formative and summative.

c. What should be evaluated and how?

A number of local points can be evaluated amongst other are, the objective, students language achievement, materials, teaching, customer satisfaction (Weir and Roberts, 1994). Brief explanation of each point will be given below:

1) Objectives

After a course is established, there should be documentation, course records and description, which can be used as a means of evaluation. Such documentary evidence would help identify the course objectives and other possible focuses for evaluation. Through documentation or a feasibility study, one should be able to produce a document model, an account which outlines the components, outputs and expected effect of the programme. This might be used in discussion with the stake holders to check the validity of the initial analysis. Interviews and questionnaires are also useful methods for establishing stake holders' perceptions of what they think the programme is aiming to achieve.

2) Student language achievement

After instructional periods, we normally expect the changes of student performance. The amount of student language improvement is the 'bottom line' for all stake holders in a language programme (Weir and Roberts, 1994). To measure these changes, one has to assess the student language proficiency over these periods.

A number of methods can be used to measure the student language achievement such as test data (i.e. proficiency test, IELTS, course book tests), continuous assessment, questionnaires, interviews, etc.

Test data can measure language gains by developing parallel tests at the beginning and the end of the course. This kind of tests has usually been done by British Council which are used to determine the EAP proficiency of overseas students.

Continuous assessment/profiling of achievement-in the form of teachers' progress reports might be used to enable the programme to provide an early warning to the institution about any students who may not make the 'threshold' point in terms of language proficiency. We may also use the students end-of-course report in which it contains the reports from all teachers on continuous assessment like quizzes, tests and marked work and profiles of achievement for oral presentation and written work including project.

Questionnaire is another effective way to gather data about student language achievement. The provision of data on the degree of perceived improvement in the various skills areas across the whole population attending the courses is very useful for determining, for example, where the balance of activities in the course might need to be adjusted. Additionally, it might bring to light areas where students feel their needs are not met. For example, if the questionnaire data indicate that a number of students would like more attention to pronunciation and grammar, we may make provision for the former in a self-access mode and the teachers can tailor this work to the specific needs of individual students. In the sense of students' perceptions of grammar, we can set up extra weekly optional grammar classes to focus on grammar.

Interview is also feasible to be conducted either formally or informally. This will allow for the individual, regular, informal feedback on the course.

### 3) Materials

Materials, as source of teaching and learning, play a very crucial role determining the success and failure of the programme. However, very few teachers work mechanically through teaching materials without a thought for their usefulness or worth. At the minimum, teachers usually exercise judgement on the length of time to spend on particular tasks.

There are a number of checklists can be used as a criteria for evaluating materials, for example Breen and Candlin (1987), Cunningsworth (1984), Hutchinson and Waters (1987).

Different kinds of methods will also be constructive and give useful contributions for evaluating materials such as questionnaires, record sheets, interview, student feedback, teachers' materials (supplementary materials developed by the teachers can be used to identify possible shortcoming in the existing materials).

### 4) Teaching

The classroom performance of teachers is a vital factor in the climate of the whole programme. In order to learn what goes on in the classroom, there are a number of means might be used such as: observation, minute staff meeting, group feedback and other documentation such as lesson records, lesson pro forma and student work book.

### 5) Customer satisfaction

Clients' sense of current satisfaction with the course is of important to providers. Students' satisfaction level can be assessed through end-of-course questionnaire, tracer studies (Alderson, 1985) and interviews. Such a means of evaluation can be used to assess the linguistic performance and needs of the students once they are engaged in the programme.

d. Who conduct the evaluation?

In an internal evaluation, it is important to involve the insiders (students, teachers, director of studies) to freely participate in the evaluation. This will not only make them confident that their views will be attended to, and used for the purpose initially agreed but more importantly, insiders have an experience and a knowledge of the programme that can be valuable to the evaluation. However, to involve them in the evaluation, there is a need for a climate of trust and commitment. Unless, the rel experiences and perceptions of teachers and learners may never be voiced to improve the programme.

Alderson and Scott (1992 cited in Alderson, 1992) suggest that both insiders and outsiders should be involved collaboratively in conducting evaluations. The reasons for involving the outsiders are that objectivity can be guaranteed, they have greater credibility, and they may offer fresh perspectives which will be vary valuable to insiders.

However, it is hard to believe that objectivity is guaranteed, because the decisions involved in conducting an evaluation require judgements to be made, and these judgements are inevitably subjective. Moreover, not every institution can employ outsiders to conduct evaluation – because there are usually particular sensitive and confidential documents which ought not to be revealed to outsiders.

### C. CONCLUSION

It seems clear that in setting up an English course, particularly a specific purposes course, it cannot be viewed from a very narrow perspective. In order to achieve the goals and objectives set up at the very beginning of course design, a great deal of components must be taken into consideration. Knowing who the learners are, their academic potencies, competencies, way of thinking,

their age as well as their strengths will determine what type of course is most suitable for them. Moreover, the teachers and employers will also play very crucial role in determining what the language needs are in addition to the learners. Therefore, such triangle principal parties should establish a solid collaboration to determine the course contents such as materials, tasks and activities, etc. Each party (in this case the learners, the teachers and the employers) have equal role in determining the success of the overall course. While the learners and employers determine what they need with the English, the teachers will need to modify the course as such in order to meet the requirements. There are a lot of aspects that the teachers should do after gathering information as part of need analysis such as designing syllabus, developing teaching materials which includes determining tasks and activities, and assessment and evaluation. Assessment will not only focus on the learners' progress but also the teaching as well as the course itself. Therefore, It is a worth trying to implement the above criteria in setting up an English course.

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