

DESIGN A PRODUCT AND AN ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

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Abstract. *One of the main goals of teaching a foreign language is its application and usage in real, everyday life. Task based learning is an approach in teaching English which gives students the opportunity to learn by doing while a teacher has a complex task to help them master variety of language and professional skills. As students experience different roles in accomplishing their task, and as it is authentic and true to life, the results of students' work can be used in real life.*

Key words: *bridging the gap between the classroom and reality; task based/ topic centred learning; ESP.*

‘To learn something effectively, learners need to know what to do. They need to know how to do it. They need to know why it is important. They need to know how it relates to who they are – their role....’

Robert Dilts

1. INTRODUCTION

I have been teaching as an ESP lecturer at Faculty of Technical Sciences in Čačak, Serbia for 19 years now. The question which has always bothered my mind was how to help my students bridge the gap between the classroom and reality, how to help them be ready for everyday life usage and application of the foreign language knowledge and skills as future managers, engineers, teachers.

In order to learn and acquire different skills and knowledge you have to learn about yourself and the world around you.

2. EFFECTIVE LEARNING IS A MULTI-LEVEL PROCESS

Effective learning is a multi-level process. As a teacher, you need to ensure that all the levels are working to support the learning of your students. Make sure:

1. **ENVIRONMENT** – Where? (When)

- That the environment is as conducive as possible to learning and that adequate time is allocated for key activities.

Most of us live our lives in many different environments: at home, in the classroom or training- room, in the staffroom, at the gym, at social events.

2. **BEHAVIOUR** – What?
 - That classroom behaviour and activities are relevant, interesting and useful. In different environment, we do different things.
3. **ABILITY** – How?
 - That learners develop abilities and skills, and that they learn how to learn. How do we do things we do? What skills do we have to enable us to do the many and varied activities that we do in our life?
4. **BELIEF** – Why?
 - That learners believe that they can learn, and that they develop confidence. Why are we able to do the things we do? What beliefs do we have that enable us to have those particular things and that support us in what we do?
5. **IDENTITY** – Who am I?
 - That learners have a sense of themselves as proficient learners and users of language at the level of identity. What is my sense of myself? Who is the core self at the root of all the many selves or roles that I play in my life? What is my essence?
6. **SPIRIT** – What else?
 - That learners have a sense of spirit, of their learning being worthwhile in a much wider sense. What is my life about? What does it mean? Why am I here? Where am I going? What do I want ultimately?

Fulfilment comes from having all the levels in alignment.

So, if I am in a place I like, doing things I enjoy, using skills I am good at, sustained by positive and empowering beliefs, having a strong sense of all this being a part of who I am and connected to a higher sense of purpose – then that is wonderful.

I am centred, connected, congruent and content.

“Help students take responsibility for their own learning. Incorporate -learning to learn- strategies and self-evaluation into your lessons. Encourage your students to take initiatives.”

Teachers should direct students’ attention and hope they will learn from exploring and noticing.

In order to achieve all this, my choice is – **TASK BASED LEARNING**.

3. WHY TASK BASED LEARNING?

Task based learning (TBL) and teaching in ESP is an approach which gives students the opportunity to learn by doing, and us to teach in an engaging, dynamic and interactive way.

It has also enabled me to divide groups of students into smaller, more manageable sizes, and the number of lessons which is insufficient is extended in the way that students meet not only in the language classrooms, but in the library, computer rooms, discuss the assignment with ‘content teachers’ in order to accomplish it.

As students experience different roles in completing their tasks – the teacher has the opportunity to bridge the gap between the classroom and reality because task based learning is authentic in a sense that it allows time for variety of activities and it also gives students opportunity to show how skilful they are in searching, compiling and presenting data dealing with a certain task/project they have been given.

Task based learning has also helped me assess their reading, writing, speaking, listening – all four language skills in a new, more realistic – true to life way and thus more objective way. This model is especially appropriate for combining professional knowledge with knowledge of a foreign language. A small, self-directed group of students is faced with a real-life assignment to be accomplished in the professional context. Students explore the possibilities; identify what they already know and what they need to learn, do self-study and search for knowledge in a systematic way using modern technology. In the last step, they integrate their ideas and present their achievements. The model combines social and individual learning processes, putting emphasis on active participation of individual members – just like in real life situations. That is why students need more content-based teaching, more topic-centred lessons which are components of a task based learning.

In order to tackle and deal with all these demands I try to help my students learn out of the classroom as well, I try to find and use activities which are focused and task based so they include content/subject teachers as well as media sources as much as possible. In that way students use the foreign language in discussions and preparations of material with content teachers and needless to say, when they search the Internet or watch satellite/cable TV channels looking for specific pieces of information. (All these activities are IN and OUT of the classroom.)

TBL is organized in series of group project meetings during which the following seven steps need to be taken:

STEP 1 – Making the case clear

The group is given a task. The teacher clarifies anything the students do not understand. Each group chooses a chairperson and a secretary, to co-ordinate the work and to take notes. Students take these roles in turns. In that way teacher is in a better position to monitor the group work and give guidelines or whatever the group needs.

STEP 2 – Formulating questions and queries

The teacher asks each group to discuss the task in more depth. Students start a brainstorming session about the topic. Students write down the questions addressing the task.

STEP 3 – Identifying current knowledge

Each group has to find out how much its individual members already know about the questions from STEP 2. At this step students are allowed to use their mother tongue in order to show their existing professional knowledge. If this occurred in English, some knowledgeable students would tend to remain silent because they would not know the right words in English.

STEP 4 – Structuring ideas. Identifying learning needs

Students decide which ideas belong together and group ideas around the questions from STEP 2. Students also identify what has to be learnt or would require further research.

STEP 5 – Formulating learning aims

Distribute assignments among group members

Each student is assigned the task he/she is most knowledgeable about. The secretary writes the names of students and their tasks.

STEP 6 – Individual activity/research

Students use various sources for their research. This can either be library, Internet, lecture notes or textbooks on professional subjects or content teachers. At this point there is a lot of exchange of information among the students and content teachers.

STEP 7 – Discussion and evaluation of information. Presentation

In this step students have to use target language only. After they have discussed and evaluated the gathered pieces of information and completed assignments by all members of the group, they start preparing the presentation. The final step of this project is delivering a presentation when evaluation of the whole task is carried out by both teachers and students as well.

The selection criteria used for choosing a task are:

- The activity is interesting,
- There is a task,
- The task is authentic,
- There is an element of risk,
- They have to meet deadlines,
- There is emotional involvement,
- There is a multi-media input/output,
- The outcome is true to life,
- The students practice all four language skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Here is one example of task-based projects:

- Each group is given the assignment which is the same for all groups. They have to compete in order to ‘get’ a job.

READ

You belong to an advertising agency which specializes in marketing new products. You have just received a ‘rush’ project: General Foods has decided to create a new mouthwash (product). It is your responsibility to design the product and plan marketing campaign.

CONSIDER

1. Try to design your product to appeal to the greatest number of people.
2. As always, the chief goal of any large business is making money. Therefore, try to get the most for the corporation’s money.

DECIDE**New Product Design**

1. Name of new mouthwash _____
 2. Color of new mouthwash _____
 3. Taste of new mouthwash _____
 4. Type of container _____
 5. Shape of container (draw) _____
 6. Quantity of mouthwash in container _____
 7. Color of container _____
 8. Design the label to appear on the front of the container
- A – Size
B – Fill in the label as you want it to appear

At this point groups hold their first meetings. They plan and organize work, discuss problems and literature, and present ideas and suggestions. The meeting is successful if students stick to what has been decided; complete their tasks in due time, and take proper actions. All this is recorded. Therefore, the secretary takes minutes of meetings and thus everybody is clear about what has been decided and what tasks should be completed by whom and when.

The teacher should give some helpful hints to the students when they discuss design of the product reminding them not to forget that apart from other characteristics, the product should be user-friendly, that the container should be made of material which can be recycled, the cost of the product should be competitive, it should be attractive, etc.

It is pretty obvious that here the teacher should explain to the students how to run/chaire the meeting and give them a list of useful phrases for expressing their opinions, agreement, disagreement, raising a point, etc. The students should be taught expressions useful for chairing meetings as well. The teacher should also give examples of taking minutes of meetings because they have never experienced something like that before. Negotiating is the skill which is needed throughout this activity, so the teacher should give the students a list of ten golden rules of negotiating with all the necessary explanations.

TEN GOLDEN RULES OF NEGOTIATING

1. Information is power
2. Be rational
3. Use your feelings
4. Negotiation is a joint-problem solving
5. Help your opponent to succeed
6. Never give an inch – trade it!
7. Signal and spot signals
8. Label what you say
9. Summarize
10. Be assertive and not aggressive

Finally they have to make decisions. The decision making process involves:

- Establishing what the options are,
- Weighing up the pros and cons of each option,
- Agreeing on and committing to the best option.

Next meeting usually starts with discussion on authentic materials brought into the classroom because the students want to check which and how similar products appear on the market. So they bring the products themselves, magazines and newspapers, photographs, and there is a lot of stuff from the Internet – ads of the similar or the same kind of products. They have to learn how the labels appear on products, their form, content and the language used. After some time spent on analyses they set out and create their own products and labels.

This is usually a stage when we have to deal with a new, maybe unexpected problem – digital literacy. Students are quite good at finding information about sports, cinema, and news; however, locating information for academic needs represents a problem. From millions of web pages on the Internet they do not know how to draw useful information, how to set search profiles, narrow them down, select information, and look at this information critically.

It seems that information literacy is yet another field where ESP covers those ‘grey areas’, or no man’s land. The modern world has accepted the paradigm of student-centred

learning where teachers should become a 'guide on the side' rather than a 'sage on the stage', thus fostering the so called inquiry-based or active learning. This process includes language teachers as well.

The following step is:

➤ **MARKETING CAMPAIGN**

1. Create a catchy slogan for your mouthwash/product
2. Type of market aimed toward – young, middle-aged, old people, all ...
3. What percentage of the advertising budget will you spend on:
 - Newspapers
 - Magazines
 - Radio
 - Television
 - Free mailing samples
 - Internet
 - Other (specify)
4. What types of magazines will you advertise in?
5. What types of radio and TV programs will you buy advertising time on?
6. Create and perform a 30-second TV commercial for the mouthwash.

All these points should be parts of a well-prepared presentation!

The next question students have to answer is – **What makes a good advertising campaign?**

In order to be able to answer this question students usually choose to go and talk to their subject teachers – teacher of Marketing and Psychology teacher. They also use the library, as well as sources from the Internet.

All members of the groups come back with some answers and the next meeting can begin. At this meeting they also bring examples of ads and commercials they like and dislike. The students watch video presentations of some commercials and comment on them pointing out their positive and negative sides. They also listen to and analyze the language of the commercials and slogans.

While viewing the commercials they are supposed to complete the following analysis:

Creative Strategy: Verbal Message

Visual Image

Musical Association

Language Analysis: Positive Reinforcement Words

'Buy' Words

Slogans/Catchphrases

When the groups complete all the analyses, find the answers to all the questions, they start preparing presentations of their marketing campaign. However, the teacher has one more very important task to complete as well – to help them learn as much as possible about delivering a good presentation. As it is also a very broad topic, and it is not the aim of this paper, here are just a few hints.

Language teachers have to teach the students to use appropriate language for the presentations. 'Try to remind yourself over and over again throughout the presentation that presentation also means you are giving a present/a gift. Gifts are selected with care and are appropriate for the receiver.'

The students prepare an outline of the presentation in POWER POINT.

The final meeting is run by a GENERAL FOODS BOARD OF MANAGERS (each group gives its representative to form the Board and preferably all the teachers are present and take part in estimating students' work, thus creating a good atmosphere to be more objective and help students see their strong and weak points compared with other students' work and decide which design and advertising campaign they are going to 'buy'. While listening and watching the presentations they are filling in the evaluation sheet on the presentations because they are going to make a decision according to how successful each presentation has been.

PRESENTATION ASSESSMENT SHEET

Team _____ Date _____

A. PREPARATION AND CONTENT

Yes, definitely	Yes, to some extent	No, not really
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- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Topic – well researched,
relevant to the audience | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Organization | | | | | |
| Clear introduction | | | | | |
| Clear conclusion | | | | | |
| Good use of 'signpost' words | | | | | |
| 3. Main and Supporting Ideas | | | | | |
| Main ideas/points clearly explained? | | | | | |
| Good supporting statements, enough examples, details? | | | | | |

B. PRESENTATION STYLE

1. Delivery
 - Good use of eye-contact/body language?
 - Voice – audible and varied tone?
 - Good use of notes? (not read)
2. Use of Overhead Transparencies/Slides?
 - OHP/LCD used effectively?
 - OHP/Slides well prepared – easy to read?
3. Visual aid(s) relevant/appropriate and language correct?

C. LANGUAGE

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| Appropriate to audience and topic? | Yes | No |
| Accurate grammar structures? | Yes | No |
| Clear pronunciation? | Yes | No |
| Qs from the audience effectively dealt with? | Yes | No |

Start time _____

Sub total _____

Finish time _____

Timing penalties

(one mark per minute deducted if talks are less than 13 or over 17 min.)

Total mark: /50

Pass: 32/50

As I teach students of Management, Computing, Electrical Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering, the content teachers could/should be included – teacher of Psychology, Marketing, major subject teacher, teacher of Computing and language teacher.

Roles of Subject Teachers

As adviser and tutor, the subject teacher should make sure that students can contact him/her when needed (by e-mail, or during consultation hours). As mentor, he/she should direct students in their information search and guide them through their research. The roles of the subject teacher could be summarized as following: facilitator, adviser, case designer, provider of literature and assessor.

The language teacher and the subject specialists can act as assessors; the language teacher will assess the linguistic aspect of the written report and/or oral presentation while the subject specialists will assess the contents of the written report and/or oral presentation.

Language teacher has the most important role here as he, or better to say she, has to tangle everything smoothly, wrap it up in a foreign language and help students while giving presentations to really give a present – a gift and gifts are selected with care and they are appropriate to the receiver. Language teachers have to give an enormous language input, both in oral and written language. They have to teach students how to use professional literature written in English, which phrases to use when they are having a meeting, negotiating, that some words are powerful, some others are not, what the language of ads is, the language used on the Internet, the language of presentations. Language teachers have to teach the students to use appropriate language for each of these situations. Language teachers also have to help their students master the skills of professional writing – writing summaries, abstracts, presentations, visual aids, minutes of meetings, etc.

Language teachers are supposed to have these roles:

- Leader and organizer of discussion
- Manager of group/pair work
- Facilitator
- Motivator - it is very important to give learners all the encouragement you can. There are two basic ways of doing this. First you should be positive as you reasonably can in the feedback you give to learners. The second important way to enhance motivation is to highlight progress.
- Language ‘knower’ and adviser – helping learners with meanings. It is useful to try to think of yourself as conversing with a group of friends rather than being the teacher.
- Language teacher – there are, however stages at which you adopt the traditional teacher role, explaining, demonstrating, and eliciting appropriate language forms. In a task-based approach this focus on form normally comes at the end of a task sequence. It is an important role, and also a difficult one which demands careful thought and preparation.

It is important to be aware of the richness and variety of teacher roles in the classroom and to take account of this in your planning.

As it can be seen, many different kinds of requirements have to be met. Obviously, this cannot be achieved without a team work of both teachers and students, (there is no Mr. Know It All) which is another good example for the real world our students will enter tomorrow.

(The final step is evaluation where all the teachers are present and take part in estimating students' work, as well as other students who also take part in giving their opinion, thus creating a good atmosphere to be more objective and help them see their strong and weak points compared with other students' work.)

4. CONCLUSION

One of the main goals of teaching a foreign language is its application and usage in everyday life situations (bridging the gap between the classroom and reality). Task based learning is an approach in teaching English which gives students the opportunity to learn by doing, while teachers have a complex task to help them master a variety of both language and professional skills in order to be ready to meet the demands of the real world.

So, keep it real as much as you can and whenever you can!

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