

The Process and Effectiveness of Needs Analysis at Private School

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Abstract: In order to meet students' needs and to get expected results after teaching for any level of English, language instructors and teacher should gather specific information about students' weak points, purposes and their expectations from the course program that they are applying for beforehand. Consequently, based on the results of students' reports appropriate curriculum or syllabus should be designed. In this article, each step of Needs Analysis is described with real samples conducted at private language center. The report consists of the description of the teaching context, learner profile, main part and conclusion.

Keywords: needs analysis, triangular approach, data collection, Maslow's Hierarchy of needs.

Introduction

Description of the teaching context.

Current Needs Analysis was conducted at a private language center called 'Big Ben school', with three students from General English group. In this institution each classes last for hour and a half, three times a week and required number of students in each room is 12. As it was recently opened, now, we are with my colleagues are working on designing appropriate curriculum based on international standards. In my little research I tried to rely on Richards (2002) triangular approach of gathering information in three steps, using three types of analysis tools. Johns (1991) stated that, the needs analysis is the starting point in course design, which provides effectiveness and appropriateness for designing all activities of the course. This information must contain the desired results and assumption of a premier quality program.

Learner Profile.

There were three male and two female students aged from 15 to 17, who participated in this analysis. All of them are pre-intermediate students. Male students Bahrom, Miron and Komron study at 9th grade at Russian school №1 in Navoi city. They are from bilingual family. Three of them have been learning English for 5 years. From their performances I made some observations during our classes which showed some general ideas about my learners. For example, Miron is interested in listening to English Rep and Hip-hop songs, Bahrom is mainly eager for sports, except for learning languages, like football, swimming and tennis and Komron adores programming and IT skills, that he learns about it by frequently watching YouTube videos. What is more, their purposes are similar, taking IELTS for studying at the most prestigious international universities in different faculties based on their interests. Coming to ladies, Melanie and Rose ho study at 11th grade, are also from bilingual family, they sound like natives both in Uzbek and Russian. Melanie is planning to move to New York for studying and working, so she tends to improve her grammar and vocabulary in order to be able to fluently speak with native speakers. Simultaneously, taking English classes she is also an independent learner, she always watch English talks with subtitles and listens to English songs with lyrics and tries to imitate them and their pronunciation. Melanie started to learn English when she was 10 years old. Rose is uniquely smart girl with many talents, she could play the piano, attends dancing club and preparing for exams to enter to the Medical

University. As she is planning to continue her study in Germany, she wants to acquire English thoroughly and be fluent in all four skills, such as speaking, listening, reading and writing. Rose has 4 years of English language learning experience at school.

Main part.

Brown (2009) says that the systematic collection and analysis of all information necessary for determining a sustainable curriculum” (p. 16). That means that for developing appropriate syllabus or curriculum for any type and level of L2 learners, needs analysis should be taken before, while or after the teaching process, by identifying learner’s background knowledge, their interests, purposes, outcomes and effective activities for them. So, the information for this Needs Analysis report was gathered through three needs analysis tools: 1) Multiple choice questionnaire; 2) questionnaire 1; 3) questionnaire 2. In the first activity learners were given four questions with multiple answer choices. For example: what are your goals for the future? What is the most difficult for you now? Rank your strongest and weakest skills with numbers. Which activities are most helpful for you? These kind of questions helps to explore students’ future intentions, like for working, studying or moving abroad. The second part of this survey defines challenging abilities of learners’, like speaking, reading, watching, the knowledge of vocabulary etc. Additionally, clarifying the grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation level of students and their preferred activities for learning was quite beneficial for choosing materials for their development. This activity also helps to determine learners’ strategies and styles, as well as, makes it clear about learners’ personal characteristics, which is crucial for designing and conducting the lessons based on learner’s choices. Second questionnaire checks learners’ current state and priorities for improvement of their speaking and reading skills with the connection of writing accuracy and vocabulary range, where they revealed excellency level by putting numbers from 1 to 5. It helps instructors to check students’ fluency, comprehension, grammar accuracy and the usage of English words in processing different skill, which were mentioned above. The third activity is an adequate supplement to the second questionnaire, and continues analyzing students’ expectations in acquiring the target language. There are given certain types of formal and informal contexts where students want to use English after completing the course, and learners should rank them with sequenced numbers, saying *never, rarely, sometimes, frequently, a lot*. This form is really helpful to analyze more concise implementation purposes of English language in specified reading, writing and speaking contexts, such as, reading reports, conversation in informal and formal meetings, writing business letters, emails, traveling and etc.

The data collection started with my observation notes taken from the class, identifying basic information of learners. However, the first part of formal testing started with multiple choice questionnaire worksheets, the aim of which was to find out learners’ needs and challenges with their preferred learning styles.

The second stage of the needs analysis observation process included questionnaire 1 and 2 in the same paper. In this survey learners were given handouts and were clearly instructed on how to complete these forms. There were some challenges for students in terms of translation of some unfamiliar words and they were given specific definitions and meanings to those words. Every stage was clearly explained and was accomplished with the help of the instructor.

While analyzing learners’ answers I tried to refer Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs, Maslow (1943) stated that people should satisfy lower levels of deficit needs, before moving up to the next higher level growth needs. That explains, that individuals’ needs must be accomplished step by step, from the bottom to the top.

Overall, the Needs analysis results revealed immensely valuable results. According to the first matching activity, **students' goals for the future are:**

- ✓ Being confident in speaking English
- ✓ Being able to watch English TV and movies
- ✓ To do a volunteer work
- ✓ To move abroad
- ✓ To enter the university
- ✓ To take IELTS certificate

Language aspects and skills that should be improved are:

- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Pronunciation
- Listening
- Writing

Activities preferred by learners as being helpful to English learning are:

- ✓ Working in pairs
- ✓ Reading activities
- ✓ Going on excursions
- ✓ Debates
- ✓ Pronunciation drills
- ✓ Watching videos
- ✓ Vocabulary practice

The results demonstrated that 4 of the students out of 5 are extroverted who have not inhibition or anxiety, always ready to speak, share their ideas and ambitious and one girl is introverted as she feels shy in front of her peers, however she is open-minded and positive. According to their desired activities it can be concluded that they are visual and auditory learners rather than kinesthetic, as they are teenagers. They like more activities with some visual aids and listening tracks (songs, conversation, audios). They are fancy about using digital tools to revise, explain and check their language learning skills. Students actively utilize memory strategies, that make the instructor apply some images and sounds. Moreover, they frequently ask questions, prefer cooperative work with others shows their social strategies for the development of their communication skills.

In conclusion, this needs analysis gave me some guidelines how to meet my students needs for preparing my General English group students gradually for IELTS learning level. Well, first of all I am going to implement Grammar-translation method with the direct method to improve both their grammar competence and speaking skills. As they are interested moving and travelling abroad I will use audio-visual materials to improve their comprehension on new vocabulary and speaking skills based on certain topics (Tourism, Environment, Mass-media, Technology...). Furthermore, I am planning to apply to Krashen's input hypothesis of 'i+1', which means we will move from previously acquired linguistic competence (i), to i+1 extra-linguistic knowledge of the context.

Needs analysis plays crucial role in determining students levels and wishes under which it would be easy do design appropriate curriculum.

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