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3rd Year Students

Didactics of Teaching ESP

First Term

All Groups

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The role of the ESP teacher

Most scientists admit that the ESP teacher's work involves much more than just teaching. Dudley Evans and St. John (1998) prefer the term 'ESP practitioner'. They distinguish the following key roles of ESP practitioner:

- Teacher;
- Course designer and material provider;
- Researcher;
- Collaborator;
- Evaluator.

The ESP practitioner as teacher:

The first role as 'teacher' is synonymous with that of the 'General English' teacher. It is in the performing of the other four roles that differences between the two emerge. In ESP classes the teacher is no longer a 'primary knower'. In the case of very specific courses, the students themselves are frequently the primary knowers of carrier content of the material. The teacher's main role is to generate real, authentic communication in the classroom on the grounds of students' knowledge.

The ESP practitioner as course designer and material provider:

The role of the ESP practitioner as courses designer and material provider is to provide the most suitable materials in the lesson in order to achieve a set of goals.

The ESP Practitioner as researcher:

The ESP practitioner needs to make research about the field he teaches, the strategies and the methodology to be adopted.

The ESP teacher as collaborator:

Dudley Evans and St John (1998) also see the ESP teacher as a collaborator. By this term they mean cooperating with subject specialists. In their perspective, it could be a simple cooperation in which the ESP teacher gains information about the subject syllabus, or tasks the students have to carry out in their professional environment or collaboration when there is integration between specialist studies or activities and the language. When team teaching is not a possibility, the ESP Practitioner must collaborate more closely with the learners, who will generally be more familiar with the specialized content of materials than the teacher himself or herself.

The ESP practitioner as evaluator:

An evaluator is not a new function, and evaluation is actually performed in General English classes also, but in the case of ESP this role seems to be significant. All teachers should be involved in various types of evaluation: the most popular is testing students. Tests are conducted to evaluate the students' progress and teaching effectiveness. However, in the ESP classes, an additional kind of testing should take place, it is the evaluation of course and teaching materials. As ESP courses are often —tailor- made, their evaluation is crucial. General English courses have been well studied and improved by a group of methodology

specialists. On the other hand, ESP courses are unique, as it is not possible to create one ESP course that would satisfy all ESP students; therefore, the evaluation of such a course is a must. We agree with Dudley Evans statement that the evaluation should be on going: while the course is being taught, at the end course, and after the course has finished. Hence constant evaluation is an important factor to create a successful ESP course.

The role of the ESP teacher is more complex and his responsibility is greater than solely teaching General English. The ESP teacher is more than a teacher, he/she is rather a 'practitioner', who in addition to teaching, he should provide materials, designs a syllabus, collaborate with subject specialists, conduct research and evaluate the course and the students. The teacher's role is also to organize the class: to be aware of the class objectives, to have a good understanding of the course content, as well as to be flexible and willing to cooperate with learners and at least have some interest in the discipline s/he is teaching because nothing is worse for learners than a teacher who is bored with his/her lessons.