Session A
Key Input Lecture 1
Material design: Needs Analysis
Lecture Transcript Presented by Dr Carole MacDiarmid

Hello, and welcome to Module 2 on developing materials. I'm Dr. Carole MacDiarmid , from the University of Glasgow in session We're going to look at needs, analysis, factors involved in selecting and adapting materials and resources, balancing language and content, and then there's a final materials analysis task.

Lecture one is an introduction to needs analysis. So by the end of this section you should be familiar with different approaches to needs analysis, information and types of data you can collect for it, both as an EMI subject to EAP specialist lecturer. The principle of constructive alignment in course design and benefits of collaboration between EAP and EMI lecturers.

So needs analysis is the systematic investigation of needs for the design of a language course and optimization of language teaching and learning. It is not exclusive for language learning, however, the process is useful in any course design.

The key points are that it's systematic, and that there is triangulation of different research methods. So we're collecting information, the data, different types of information, from different sources, we have multiple approaches and multiple sources.

Other key terms include wants, necessities and lack, set out by Nation and McAlister. Wants are the subjective needs or wants of learners, or, for example, someone asking for a specific course. The necessities are what's required in order for someone to be successful in that situation, for example, what's involved in successfully listening to a lecture and the lacks are the gap between where a learner is now and what is required of the task. This might be connected to developing a subject area. What do students need to do in order to successfully pass? And where are they at the moment? What we do in between will be part of our course design. We can think about target situation analysis, where we're thinking about preparing and exploring what students need to be able to do. This can be offline, in which case, it means that it can be done in preparation. It could be a present situation analysis during and ongoing through a course. Where are our students now, what do you need to do to develop their skills and knowledge?

What does this mean in practice then? Well, we need to think about the learners. But first we need to think about what do we need to know when we're thinking about course design. As an EMI lecturer and an EAP teacher. What information do we need? For example, we need to know about the students. what's their linguistic background? What's their knowledge of the academic subject? And academic language?

 Take a moment now to make some notes of things that you need to think about when you're designing a course, you can pause the video.

I've put together different examples here. We need to think about the students: the course and the learning approaches and activities students. We need to think about their learning background. L 1

means their first language, L2 their second their educational and cultural background. How familiar are they with the learning approaches, their language proficiency level, particularly for important in the EAP courses and the size. Are you going to have students all from the same language background, different language backgrounds, different cultural backgrounds. What are the aims of the course, the intended learning outcomes comes and assessments.

How long is the course, how frequent are the classes, how much time to students have to prepare, is it face to face , online. How might you change your learning activities and approaches? What are the most common approaches in the subject area?

For example, do you do problem or project based learning? Is it seminar based? How do we prepare students effectively for these? How do we scaffold the learning tasks and activities, both as a subject lecture, and in an EAP course, what resources do we have available? These are all factors we need to consider, and some of these we will look at later on in this module and other modules. Specifically in an academic context, we need to think about students needs for academic communication and the genres they interact with. What do students need to process? What do they need to listen and read? Is academic research for articles? listening to lectures? What do they need to produce ? Essays, scientific reports, presentations, and seminar interactions. Is it for learning, part of the learning? So, for example, a seminar is a common approach to learning and teaching? Is it for assessment?

Is the essay assessed? Is it an exam? Disciplinary conventions and expectations and subject areas are really important to learn about, and the EAP lecturer can learn huge amounts by speaking to the subject area. Similarly, looking at the linguistic and rhetorical features. What makes an academic article an academic article in the sciences, in arts. How are they organized? What are the linguistic features? An EAP specialist can use their expertise to help unpack these and also think about what is the best way to help students learn and understand.

So we want to get information. We want to use multiple sources and multiple methods.

There are a range of different ways. It could be interviews past and current students, lecturers,

EAP specialists who've taught students before in the groups, subject lecturers, maybe professionals. If you're an EMI lecturer preparing students for future professional needs.

We can do surveys, for example, of academic skills they nee, strategies they use, self evaluation tasks. We can ask lecturers. The EAP lectures can ask academic lectures, and so on.

We can collect documents and analyze these, what are the assessment tasks, what do students need to be able to do. What does good student work look like? What's a good presentation? What's a good seminar interaction? A good essay? What sort of things do we find on reading lists?

These.. approaches can be ongoing, and in course, collecting information. It might be part of a course, or it might be part of an EAP course. So we have multiple sources and multiple methods. This is an example of a course we made for applied linguistic students.

The students are on a postgraduate masters, the academic subject area wanted a specific course to support students in their critical engagement in seminars and essay writing, so the needs analysis included multiple sources. We had the lecturers and the students. different approaches different methods. We had interviews, we explored student genres. We looked at past students written work. We looked at what they are reading, the types of text. They need we collected information on materials and reading lists. From the students and from the lecturers, also we observed classes. What were the common learning and teaching practices in the subject area, so that we can reflect these in the course design. We also had, an analysis of learning journals. This was 2 parts. One connected to the actual EAP course that we developed and also learning journals students kept on their actual course. So we collected lots of information

For us, we are making a new course. We might be also developing existing courses. We use the information to help frame our course, aims and learning outcomes, think about the teaching approaches and the assessments. This meant that the course was informed by and reflected the needs analysis data. And by doing so we hope that it's engaging.

It also helps us develop constructively aligned courses. Constructive alignment starts with the notion that a learner construct his learning through relevant learning activities. We want active engagement in learning activities. The teacher's job is to create the environment that will support learners in achieving the learning outcomes. We have the learning ..intended learning outcomes, the activities and the assessment.

Ideally , this, then, helps make sure the course is relevant and motivating, facilitates learning and engages students

To make a really good course, we ideally collaborate, or at least collaborate with specialists and stakeholders. The applied linguistics, example, for example, asked EAP specialists to develop the learning and teaching course that will help develop academic learning, language and literacy skills. We use the subject lecturers to find out the types of texts, the expectations, and the learning approaches.

So specialist knowledge can come from EAP specialists and the EMI subject area.

We can think about approaches to teaching, learning assessment in the discipline so we're developing our knowledge. Approaches to facilitating, understanding and engagement. How is that done in a subject area. What can the EAP specialists bring to help ensure students can effectively process and produce academic texts?

What do we know about the content and linguistic features and challenges. Again, we need both EAP and EMI subject specialists. And then we've working together, we can develop the expertise of both specialist groups.

So in summary, we've looked briefly at the importance of needs analysis to ensure we collect relevant information and data on learners and what they need to be able to do. We looked at different ways and types of information we can collect this data

briefly talked about the benefits of collaboration. And when we put these together we get, we hope, constructively aligned courses. In the next part, we're going to look at principles for selecting and adapting materials.

References here that may be of interest.

References

Biggs, J.B. (2003). *Aligning teaching for constructing learning. Higher Education Academy.* https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/aligning-teaching-constructing-learning

Bocanegra-Valle, A. (2016). Needs analysis for curriculum design. In K. Hyland and P. Shaw (eds.) *The Routledge handbook of English for academic purposes*. Abingdon, Oxford: Routledge, (p. 560-576).

Brown, J. D. (2016). *Introducing needs analysis and English for specific purposes: Vol. Routledge introductions to English for specific purposes*. Routledge.

McGrath, L., Negretti, R., & Nicholls, K. (2019). Hidden expectations: Scaffolding subject specialists' genre knowledge of the assignments they set. *Higher Education, 78*(5), 835-853. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00373-9

Nation, I. S. P., & Macalister, J. (2010). *Language curriculum design*. Routledge.

West, R. (1994). Needs analysis in language teaching. *Language Teaching*, 27(1), 1-19. doi:10.1017/S0261444800007527

Wingate, U. (2016). Academic literacy across the curriculum: Towards a collaborative instructional app6oach. *Language Teaching, 51*(3), 349-364. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444816000264