1 TEACHING ESP WITH THE 6 PRINCIPLES

Kendra works in a private language school in Buenos Aires, Argentina. One of her classes is a group of four managers from the same company that she has been teaching every week for the last two months. She has assessed their language skills, shadowed them at work, and learned about their jobs. The course outline was agreed with the participants at the beginning of the course, and covers a variety of business communication skills. This week the focus is on presentation skills. She starts the class by asking the learners to think about recent meetings with clients and suppliers, and share the types of presentations they have seen or given. She then asks them to list what made the presentations particularly good or bad. The list is wide ranging, from business issues such as content and accuracy of information, to presentation skills such as rapport with audience and use of visual aids, to specific language issues such as pronunciation, spelling, and the ability to handle questions.

Kendra explains that these are all key issues which the class will examine over the next few sessions, and emphasizes that everyone's contribution will be critical as they have far more experience in their own context than she does. The aim is for everyone to have a chance to do at least two presentations on topics related to their workplaces (ideally a presentation they must give as part of their jobs), and then receive constructive feedback from the group. The criteria for success will be based on the list the class has just produced. She adds that each presentation with teacher and learner feedback can be recorded and sent to the individual concerned if that person is comfortable with this process.

She then shows the class three short videos linked to the textbook on presentations, which focus on language aspects of presentations, namely introductions, summarizing and concluding, and dealing with questions. After a brief discussion she gives out a worksheet for practicing some of the key phrases they have just heard, and which they might like to use in their own presentations. She splits the class into pairs and instructs each pair to select and practice appropriate phrases for use with their own content. The worksheet then becomes a personalized resource which can be used the next time they have to prepare a presentation, or for extra practice for outside the class.

She ends the class by asking the learners to consider what they saw on the videos and reflect further on the criteria for successful presentations. The class agrees that it would be useful to add two more items to the list: successful presentations have a clear structure, with the introduction and conclusion being particularly important, and successful presentations use signposting language to guide the audience. The learners agree that they will email Kendra the topics of their presentations before the next class.

Kendra makes notes about what happened during the class in her own personal diary. She also discusses the class with a colleague over a cup of coffee, which helps her think more carefully about what she has achieved and what she should do next time.

English for Specific Purposes

The aim of this book is to share TESOL's vision for exemplary teaching in ESP (English for Specific Purposes), and to show how useful The 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners are in such contexts. The principles discussed in this book provide a solid framework for teachers like Kendra to use in their day-to-day work, enabling them not only to make informed decisions about what they are doing, but also to reflect critically on their practice.

What is unique about ESP courses? Perhaps a good place to start is to suggest that, unlike learners in many "general" English courses, ESP learners have a specific purpose in mind when they enroll in an ESP course. They may need to improve their English so that they can take a higher education course where English is the medium of instruction (EMI). This means that they will be focusing on EAP (English for Academic Purposes). Or they may want to practice the specific language of their profession or occupation in order to increase their employability, meet the requirements of their workplace (English for Occupational Purposes, or EOP), or become better able to participate in professional activities on the international level (English for Professional Purposes, or EPP). Whatever the reason, the teacher's key role will be to understand each learner's needs and goals and help all learners develop their proficiency in order to narrow the gap between where they currently are and where they need and want to be.

There are two important issues here. First, unlike "general" English teaching contexts, where the teacher is probably familiar with the target discourse, ESP teachers may find that they themselves are not experts in that discourse, and so learning about the characteristics of the language they are teaching becomes part of the job. This is not only about language, but also about understanding the ways the target community of practice operates (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Here the concept of community of practice is particularly useful for ESP teachers because it helps to explain how groups of people who have a common domain of interest not only interact with each other and share experiences and resources, but also learn from each other and develop their own ways of doing things. Chapter 3 will demonstrate in detail the pivotal nature of this concept within The 6 Principles framework, which emphasizes the importance of teachers engaging and collaborating within a community of practice. But the point here is that for anyone working in ESP, gathering and analyzing evidence, rather than relying on intuition, is critical. Indeed, one way to think about ESP might be to say it can involve the teaching of language or communication patterns that even speakers with advanced proficiency may not know. So ESP practitioners may need to

- Use corpus tools to look at the lexico-grammatical features of the target discourse
- Interview supervisors and other stakeholders to understand the tasks types and the linguistic and cultural expectations that characterize the target context
- Interview subject specialists in order to develop appropriate role-plays and simulations
- Select and adapt authentic texts for their classes
- Observe members of the community of practice in action
- Provide explicit instruction, practice and feedback on the types of tasks learners will be expected to deal with in their target contexts

Second, criteria for measuring success will depend very much on the learners' context. There is a big difference between the criteria set for international English tests, for example, which typically have considerable research supporting descriptions of what it means to be competent, and criteria in an occupational or professional context, where the uniqueness of the situation might require

teachers to determine what it means to be competent through observation and interaction with various stakeholders. As we shall see, The 6 Principles provide a very useful framework to deal with these sorts of issues.

Types of ESP Courses

ESP is an overarching term that can be divided into different areas, as noted in the Preface. EAP, which is a major focus of this book due to its growing importance in universities around the world, focuses on developing language proficiency and study skills for post-secondary studies (Hyland & Shaw, 2016). EAP course types range from general courses, which typically attend to the language proficiency, analytical skills, and intercultural competences needed across academic disciplines, to more specific courses that focus on the language of a specific discipline or subject area. This range is much more complex than it sounds. Research shows that different disciplines use language in quite different ways and that developing appropriate intercultural communicative competence can be central to successful EAP instruction, so adopting a general approach may not be the most efficient way of doing things (Douglas & Rosvold, 2018; Hyland, 2012). For instance, compare a typical journal article in literature to one in engineering or mathematics: the differences are not only with terminology and phraseology, but also with how findings are presented, discussed, and analyzed. In brief, disciplines see the world through different lenses.

Nonetheless, there are plenty of language-related skills which are pertinent in any academic discipline, from listening skills (useful in lectures and discussions) to skimming and scanning written texts for information. Some EAP classes are aimed at university admission, with many learners needing to pass tests such as IELTS, TOEFL, or the Pearson Test of English–Academic. These types of tests all focus on generic language and skills rather than subject-specific ones. Within a university context, a general approach does not require teachers to become subject specialists; rather, the subject content can be integrated by subject specialists working with the language specialist as required. The issue is tricky, however; there is much debate around the world on how best to teach academic English (Hyland & Shaw, 2016). One solution adopted by many institutions is to provide general classes for first-year students, and more specific classes for those at later stages of their studies.

EPP can include business English, legal English, English for banking and finance, and English for medical research, to name a few, while EOP can be aviation English, English for the hospitality industry, maritime English, English for medical technicians, and so on. Many of these can also be subdivided, so aviation English might partition into English for cabin crews and English for pilots and air traffic control, and English for banking and finance might split into English for corporate finance and English for international banking. The divisions might not only have to do with specialized terminology or phraseology, but also with the way the language is used. Both EPP and EOP focus on language for specific work contexts; the differences between the two have to do with genre, register, vocabulary, and task types. Written EOP course materials primarily include task-focused documents such as instructions, forms, charts, and short reports, and the oral communication needs of EOP learners often include ability to interact with customers and peers using high-frequency vocabulary with some job-specific technical terms. In EPP, written materials may include journal articles, research reports, briefs, and analyses. Oral communication tasks may include presentations and meeting management as well as basic interpersonal interaction, and both oral and written language functions may involve negotiation and persuasion (Lesiak-Bielawska, 2015).

Many ESP courses, depending as always on the needs of the learners, will also address other transferable skills, such as intercultural communication, relationship building, teamwork, critical thinking, and leadership talk. Likewise, subject matter knowledge will almost always influence an ESP course–it is hard to read a text on engineering, for example, without knowing anything about engineering. Here the teacher will often rely on the learners' own experience and knowledge.

ESP courses are very often viewed along a continuum. At one end of the continuum are what are sometimes described as narrow-angle courses, focusing on learners with very similar language needs for a particular context. At the other end are wide-angle courses, focusing on learners who have identified a shared focus, but perhaps have less similar needs than those found on the narrow angle course (Basturkmen, 2006). So managers from different companies attending a class which focuses on general business communication skills, such as giving presentations, handling negotiations, or writing emails, would be attending a "wider-angle" class than a group of managers from one company who are learning those skills within the context of their own company's salesforce needs. Likewise, managers from one department in that company would be able to focus much more on their specific needs, so they might only look only at certain types of presentations or negotiations or emails rather than at skills more relevant to other departments. In ESP, the term "specific" is relative, rather than absolute, but provides a useful way to describe what a course is about.

It is important to remember that the distinctions between EAP, EOP, and EPP are not always clear cut. Consider a university course in legal English; much of the language covered will be just as useful when the learners have left the university and are following their profession. However, it is also worth remembering that some of the academic language needed at university might never be used in professional life. For example, most automotive engineers will never have to write an academic article once their university training is over, and the communication skills they do need (such as for supervising technicians and negotiating contracts) may never have been part of their academic English course.

Key Factors in Teaching ESP

Needs Analysis. The concern with specificity means that needs analysis is a fundamental feature of all ESP courses. Of course, all English teaching should be aimed at meeting learner needs, but what makes ESP different is not "the *existence* of a need as such, but rather an *awareness* of the need" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Brown (2016) describes needs analysis as "the systematic collection and analysis of all information necessary for defining and validating a defensible curriculum." Dudley Evans and St John (1998) say it is what is needed to establish "the *what* and *how* of a course." Huhta and colleagues (2013) see needs analysis as taking "account not just of the individual, but also of how that individual interacts in the contexts and situations of his or her field of action."

Keep the following points in mind when conducting a needs analysis:

- First, the information ESP teachers collect and analyze is used to find the gap between what learners already know and what they need to know in order to function effectively in their target context. It may include information about the learners, language use in that context, and information about a wider social context.

- Second, a needs analysis typically involves many people, from the teacher and the learners in the classroom, to a potentially wide range of other stakeholders who have some interest in what is happening or who can provide useful information which helps to describe the gap mentioned above. All these people will influence what happens in a course.

- Third, a needs analysis is ongoing, not something that happens before a course begins. A teacher will always have to adapt to new information and new perspectives as the course progresses.

- Finally, for any needs analysis, it is never possible to collect and analyze *all* the information that is available, so a needs analysis is very much a compromise between an ideal world, where we have as much information as we need, and the real world, where we are dealing with what is realistically possible. (Friedenberg et al., 2014)

Vocabulary. An important part of any ESP course design is vocabulary, with a particular focus on the specialized use of words in a specific context. Researchers have produced countless word lists of technical vocabulary in different fields of expertise, ranging from medicine to engineering to general academic vocabulary. Such lists can be useful when designing ESP courses, but it is always important to remember that every context is different, and the vocabulary taught in an ESP course will always depend on the specific needs of the learners. One of the key challenges is working with vocabulary that has a specific meaning in a particular context. For this reason, many teachers and materials developers in ESP contexts use an applied corpus linguistics approach that draws on directly relevant authentic materials. This allows them to identify the frequency with which specialized terms are used; more importantly, it allows them to move beyond thinking about vocabulary as individual words to thinking about vocabulary in terms of word combinations, words related to a concept, or bundles of words (Chung & Nation, 2003; Coxhead, 2013; Hyland, 2008).

Genre. Within ESP, John Swales has been particularly influential in developing a focus on genre, seeing it as "a class of communicative events" (Swales, 1990). In this sense a genre is much more than a type of text—it is about understanding what language use is conventional and acceptable in a particular community. As Flowerdew (2011) notes, "Someone participating in a genre who does not have a command of these specific patterns and the limits to their possible variability is quickly recognized as either incompetent or an outsider." Bhatia (2008) argues that anyone analyzing genre in an ESP context also needs to look at the relevant professional and disciplinary practices and cultures.

Genre was in evidence at the beginning of the chapter, in the example of Kendra and her teaching of presentation skills. Flowerdew's observation is particularly pertinent here: Kendra's aim is to make sure her learners are not seen as incompetent or outsiders. Presentations can be seen as an example of one type of genre, but it would also be correct to think more discretely—sales presentations, academic talks, technical briefings, and so on. Genre is merely a label for certain communicative events, and the label's definition depends entirely on the context. An EAP course might focus on essay writing, but could teach different sub-genres, such as argument essays or problem-solution essays. A business English course might look at types of small talk, from office gossip to storytelling, but a course preparing German business people to work in the United States might approach small talk differently from one preparing them to work in China.

Methodologies. Teachers can use different approaches and methodologies to teach language in an ESP context, and the decisions they make often depend on the type of ESP they are teaching. For example,

- in a class for MBA students, a case study approach might be particularly appropriate (see the vignette in Chapter 5);

- in an EAP class focusing on argumentative essay writing, a scaffolded approach might be the best way forward, where the learners might be required to deconstruct a text, analyze key ideas, focus on linking language, and then produce a short text themselves;

- in a one-to-one workplace context, the teacher might be shadowing the learner as they go about their daily work, giving advice and feedback as necessary; or
- in a business English class, role plays reflecting the types of situations the learners will meet might be more useful, so the focus might be on giving presentations, taking part in meetings, and so on.

This last approach is an example of task-based language learning, where the aim is to focus on meaning rather than form, and where success is measured by whether the learners achieve their goal in the task, rather than on accuracy of language production. So, for example, in a course teaching English for the workplace, a task may be to role-play a conversation about a problem with a supplier, with success being measured on whether the nature of the problem is fully understood and communicated by the learners, rather than on whether the grammar used was accurate. ESP learners can easily identify with and see the relevance of using such activities, and such an approach can be highly motivating.

Content-based instruction (CBI) and project-based instruction (PBI) are related in many ways to task-based learning. In CBI, subject matter and language learning are integrated. Learners focus on the subject matter, and language learning is approached holistically, rather than being broken down into discrete items to be analyzed and learned. PBI typically involves the learners working in collaboration and using a wide range of skills and knowledge in order to solve a problem or challenge or complete a project. Again the focus is on meaning rather than form. In these contexts, it is common to see the teacher take on different roles, such as facilitator or coordinator, in order to be most effective.

Global Englishes. English is used all over the world, which means that there is no one "standard" or "correct" English, but rather many Englishes. Researchers have looked at this phenomenon in different ways.

- A "World Englishes" perspective basically sees English in terms of varieties, such as American English, Singapore English, and so on.
- Kachru's three-circle model, which sees English in terms of inner circle countries (e.g., United States, United Kingdom), outer circle countries (e.g., India, Tanzania, Philippines), and expanding circle countries (e.g., China, Japan, Korea) has been particularly influential.
- An English as a lingua franca (ELF) perspective sees English more as context specific, with the participants adapting and using their language to suit the setting, using communication strategies like code switching, accommodation, and creative use of language to facilitate understanding and negotiate meaning (Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2011). This perspective on English makes error correction particularly challenging, because deciding what is and is not correct depends on the context. This is not only about spelling or grammar, where even major varieties like American or British English may disagree. "Non-American" pronunciation, for example, does not require correction if it does not interfere with communication; indeed it may be seen as an important factor in a person's identity. Having an Indian English accent may be perfectly acceptable in India, but may be less acceptable if the learner works in a call center speaking to clients in North America. These sorts of issues are very relevant to teachers of ESP, who need to be aware of what is and is not acceptable in their learners' target discourse communities.

Profiles of ESP Learners

To illustrate some of the differences between the types of courses that can be offered in ESP, here are six profiles of ESP learners.

Johanna is a German computer programmer. She has recently finished her degree in computer science and is just starting her first full-time job. Because much of the computer science literature is in English, she is very comfortable with most English texts in her chosen profession, and she can also converse in most social situations. She is joining a team that is writing code for a turbine factory in China, and her specific role will be to liaise with other members of the team (mostly Indians) as well as representatives of the client (mostly Chinese) and ensure that change requests are handled efficiently. She has just had her first conference call, however, and realizes she has a major problem—although she can understand the discussions about the coding, she has discovered that her vocabulary related to turbines is very limited, and she is not sure she has understood the clients' feedback. Her boss understands the situation completely, and gives her permission to do a crash course in English.

Guan Lee is very excited. He has just graduated from high school in Singapore, and has been accepted in an undergraduate program at an American university to study physics. Because the course will be delivered in English, his acceptance is conditional. He must pass a pre-sessional EAP course run by the university's intensive English program (IEP) at the university in the summer months. This will be a big challenge, as he feels he is not good at English. After all, he wants to be a physicist, not a language expert. However, the IEP course will help Guan Lee acclimate to living in a new environment, as it offers many bridging activities to university life. He will learn about campus services, clubs, and events while he is improving his language and study skills in order to enter undergraduate study in the fall.

Yu Yan is in Vancouver, Canada, hoping to earn her PhD in Pharmaceutical Sciences in three years and find work as a research assistant. So far, she has done very well, and although the course is in English, she has been able to understand lectures and discussions without too much difficulty. However, her written work has been more challenging, and she is worried that she will struggle when the time comes to write her research dissertation, which she will have to complete before she graduates. Her university offers a course in English for medical purposes, and she now feels that it might be a good idea to enroll. However, having had a quick look at the course content, she is not sure if the course will offer what she is looking for. She decides to find a language instructor and ask for advice.

Yulya has finished her PhD in Mathematics (in Ukrainian, her native tongue) and her academic career is progressing well. She is a popular lecturer at her university, and she has already published three articles in Ukrainian peer-reviewed journals. So far, she has resisted learning English—she has never really needed it and has preferred to focus on Russian as her main second language. However, she has just had an interview with the dean, and two things she heard made her realize that she will have to change her strategy. The first was not surprising—the dean mentioned that if Yulya wanted to progress in her career, she would have to start presenting at international conferences and writing articles for English language journals. The second was that the university had decided that starting next year certain courses would be offered in English, the aim being to attract international students and keep the university solvent. Her courses were on the list, and she now has three months to prepare.

Abdou has worked as a sales engineer in a company in Cameroon for nearly his whole adult life. The company specializes in the repair of turbines, and Abdou's job was to sell the company's services to various clients across Central Africa. He is looking forward to his retirement and a well-earned pension in five years' time. He has already identified a small plot of land near his house and has nearly saved up enough money to buy it. He is really looking forward to spending hours on the plot and knows exactly which crops he will grow. However, today he has had news which concerns him greatly. The factory he works for has just been bought by an American competitor, and staff

cuts are almost certain. He knows that his experience as a sales engineer will stand him in good stead, but he also knows that his lack of English will not work in his favor. His new supervisor will be American, and he has heard that all communication will be in English from now on. Abdou has never spoken a word of English in his life, and now his whole future may depend on it. He has no chance of getting another job as well paid as this one. The good news is that the new company is organizing English language courses. He has already signed up.

Fuying *is a middle manager in a small company in Taiwan. She is good at her job, knows everybody, and is considered an asset to her boss and the company. She is very pleased that the company is so profitable, although she realizes that her company is facing fierce competition in the marketplace and that the comfortable situation will not last forever. She is already thinking about her future and her options. In order to be more employable, she will need to improve her English skills, and maybe even pass a test. Getting a high score on a TOEIC test seems her best bet. She has checked the websites of local language schools, and she has also looked at some online courses. Many TOEIC preparation courses are available on the market, and she knows that one benefit will be that she may meet others in a similar position as herself. She is looking forward to starting, but cannot decide which course to choose. She decides to take a trial class at a school and make her decision later.*

As is evident, the types of courses these learners will need vary, even though they can all be described as English for a specific purpose. Guan Lee's course is clearly EAP, but much more general than the specific courses that Yulya and Yu Yan require. Note that EAP courses are not only aimed at university students—they may be targeted at faculty too. Both Johanna's and Abdou's needs involve the learning of "turbine" English, but their backgrounds and contexts will mean that the courses are completely different. Johanna knows nothing about turbines, but her English is already quite good. Abdou, on the other hand, is well versed in turbine technology (at least in his own specific area), but has no English at all. Fuying is looking for a general business English class, and will have no problem finding one, but there is no guarantee that the course will enable her to meet other middle managers, or that the language she learns will be useful in the future.

The 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners

The 6 Principles presented and discussed in this book are based on well-established research and experience in all aspects of teaching and learning. Together they present a framework which can be used in any language teaching context. Figure 1.1 below provides a brief explanation of each principle, with later chapters offering much more detailed discussions of how each principle can be used in the different types of ESP classrooms.

FIGURE 1.1   The 6 Principles
The 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners
Exemplary teaching of English learners rests on the following 6 Principles:
1. **Know your learners.** Teachers learn basic information about their learners' academic or professional goals, languages, cultures, and educational backgrounds to engage them in the classroom and prepare and deliver lessons more effectively.
2 **Create conditions for language learning.** Teachers create a classroom culture that will ensure that learners feel comfortable in the class. They make decisions regarding the physical environment, the materials, and the social integration of learners to promote language learning.
3. **Design high-quality lessons for language development.** Teachers plan lessons that are meaningful for learners and promote language learning, and help them develop learning strategies and critical thinking skills. These lessons evolve from the learning objectives.
4. **Adapt lesson delivery as needed.** Teachers continually assess as they teach—observing and reflecting on learners' responses to determine whether the learners are reaching the learning objectives. If learners struggle or are not challenged enough, teachers consider the possible reasons and adjust their lessons.
5. **Monitor and assess learner language development.** Language learners learn at different rates, so teachers regularly monitor and assess their language development in order to advance their learning efficiently. Teachers also gather data to measure learners' language growth.
6. **Engage and collaborate within a community of practice.** Teachers collaborate with others in the profession to provide the best support for their learners with respect to programming, instruction, and advocacy. They also continue their own professional learning.

A Look Back and a Look Ahead

This chapter started with a short vignette about Kendra. Take a moment to reread the vignette, and think about how Kendra applied the six principles to her course. Now read this summary:

1. Kendra has certainly spent time getting to know her learners, and within an ESP context she understands this includes developing a good understanding of their needs and goals.

2. By recognising her learners' expertise, and encouraging them to contribute to the course content, Kendra has created an atmosphere which is appropriate to an adult learning context.

3. Her lessons are clearly related to the needs of her learners, and she has broken down the language content into manageable chunks which the learners can relate to.

4. Kendra is prepared to adapt as necessary, and indeed changes her plans after receiving feedback from her learners.

5. Her decision to use personalized worksheets is an excellent way of monitoring her learners' language development, as is her decision to allow the learners to choose their own topics for the next class. This will make her feedback very relevant to each individual.

6. Briefly discussing the class afterward with a colleague allows Kendra to reflect on the lesson and collect peer feedback, and contributes to her own professional development.

This chapter has looked at what makes ESP different from other types of teaching contexts and suggested that the teacher's role in planning lessons requires much more of a focus on using evidence rather than intuition and on working with experts (including the learners) to fill gaps in knowledge or experience. The chapter has discussed different ways of thinking about ESP, considered the range of courses, and outlined some common approaches. It has also presented several learner profiles and shown how critical it is to understand where learners are coming from and what their purposes for learning English are. Even when the subject matter is similar, the specific needs of the learners make each course unique. Finally, the chapter has discussed some of the challenges and some of the decisions which need to be made, and argued that The 6 Principles framework is ideally suited to teaching these types of classes.

ESP teachers need to understand that these contexts affect the language development of learners, the dynamic nature of classrooms, and the way teachers communicate because adult learners have different reasons for acquiring English. One aspect of making choices related to ESP teaching methods and techniques is knowing how learners learn and what inhibits or facilitates their achievement of their academic or professional/occupational goals.

Chapter 2 builds on the content in Chapter 1 by looking at the main concepts of second language development specifically in ESP contexts. It covers topics such as tapping into preexisting resources that learners bring to the classroom, features of academic and professional English, and both essential and beneficial conditions for language acquisition. The chapter will help all ESP teachers make informed decisions for lesson planning, so they knowledgeably apply The 6 Principles with the learners' needs and interests in mind, propelling the learners and the teacher to success.

Additional resources for this book are available at www.the6principles.org/eap-esp.