



**UNDERSTANDING THE METHODOLOGY AND TECHNIQUES TO
TEACH ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES IN PUBLIC TECHNICAL
HIGH SCHOOLS**

ESTUDIANTE

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Understanding the methodology and techniques to teach English for Specific Purposes in public Technical High Schools

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Abstract

This paper describes that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a new tendency suggested by the Ministry of Public Education of Costa Rica for the curricular transformation in all the specialties that the system offers in the country. This transformation seeks, through a diverse, innovative, and creative learning environment, to endow students with the linguistic competencies to solve problems in the competitive and globalized environment with critical thinking. In addition, it contributes to the country's growing economy with qualified citizens that work in many companies that offer services in different areas. Understanding the methodology, the roles of teachers and students, and the techniques applied in ESP classrooms facilitate the language acquisitions and technical skills for each major.

Resumen

En este trabajo se describe que el inglés para Fines Específicos (ESP) es una nueva tendencia sugerida por el Ministerio de Educación Pública de Costa Rica para la transformación curricular en todas las especialidades que ofrece el sistema en el país. Esta transformación busca, a través de un entorno de aprendizaje diverso, innovador y creativo, dotar a los estudiantes de las competencias lingüísticas para resolver problemas en el entorno competitivo y globalizado con pensamiento crítico. Además, contribuye a la creciente economía del país con ciudadanos calificados que laboran en muchas empresas que ofrecen servicios en diferentes áreas. Comprender la metodología, los roles de profesores y estudiantes, y las técnicas aplicadas en las aulas de ESP facilitan la adquisición de idiomas y las habilidades técnicas para cada especialidad.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, method, student, skill, techniques, major
Inglés para propósitos específicos, método, estudiante, técnicas, especialidad

Introduction

The use of a methodology and techniques of English with the complementation of technological resources allows the interaction of students to have a vision of the technological situations that might happen in a real context when they will develop their major. That makes it possible for students to be close to a changing and demanding society, with huge challenges. The philosophy of one integral methodology with skills in educational technology. Thus, it might be reflected in better results of a prepared society in a bilingual atmosphere. Elements such as methodology and techniques are essential in the organization of ESP courses. In addition, the

students, as the center of the learning process, play an important role in language acquisition; however, they could not reach their goals without the teachers' intervention. Finally, Information and communication technologies (ICTs) must be an interactive complement to incorporate in the classrooms and create an innovative, educative English classroom. Although it is possible to talk extensively about English for specific purposes, this time, the focus will be on the elements mentioned above. These are the methodology, techniques, students' role, teacher's role, and the use of technology as a didactic complement.

Integrated education seeks a proposal in which the Costa Rican public education system provides the technical skills to be used in a future company. The students in Costa Rica, when they think of a technical education, undoubtedly choose a technical high school. These public institutions, which are 137 in different areas around the country, are responsible to instruct the students in a certain specialty to obtain a technical major at the end of the diversified cycle of education. The technical system offers 57 technical majors around the country. In addition, the technical majors are under the national qualification framework of education. The National Qualification Framework is a rating of the quality and standardized education that seeks to position technical education at a high level (Arias et al., 2018). Moreover, this rating is part of the Organization for Cooperation and Economic Development (OCDE, for its Spanish acronym). Costa Rica has a special interest to be part of this entity because it looks at how to maximize the economic growth in the country and the region. This rating is from 1 to 5 levels, technical education being in the 4th level in the country (Arias et al., 2018). It is possible to look at the technical specialized disciplines that the Ministry of Education in Costa Rica offers when talking about a quality education. To continue with the rank of a good education, people can think of an approach such as English for Specific Purposes which has an interesting view in which the students can improve their skills thinking professionally.

English for Specific Purposes is one of the highest branches that are available in English Language Teaching (ELT). It is subdivided into two specific categories: on one hand, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and, on the other hand, English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). English for Academic Purposes is also sub-divided into three specific areas, Science and Technology (EST), English for Business and Economy (EBE), and English for Social Science (ESS). English for Occupational Purposes has different areas to be developed, such as English for medical purposes, hotel purposes, construction purposes, and many more areas (Brown, 2016). Based on that information, the heads of the Ministry of Public Education of Costa Rica and English teachers could identify the main needs for each population. Also, they can establish the aims of every major and shape the course methodology and techniques to be applied during the process of learning the target language.

In English for Specific Purposes, students learn technical skills in one particular area, human development skills, general and specific abilities. They are going to be the center of the process. For that reason, it is essential to understand the principles of ESP, which are identifying the students' needs first; second, making use of a specific methodology and techniques to reach the expected goals for the population; third, emphasizing on the language appropriate to these actions including grammar, lexis, syntax, study skills, discourse, and genre; and fourth, relating the content to a specific discipline or occupation.

Metaphorically, ESP might appear in our minds as a boat in the sea. There are different essential elements to arrive at the port and disembark. The boat is the means of transportation, the captain guides the boat along with the marines with his/her wise decisions, the marines are the hard workers, and the nautical instruments are indispensable to achieve the goals during the journey. The boat can be compared with the methodology that is applied to achieve the goals proposed for the specific course. Like the boat, the methodology must have determined structures with clear and concrete ideas. These ideas have to be thought of from the students' needs through

which the journey will implement innovative techniques that might be interesting for the learners. The methodology must go in one direction in ESP; the direction is to help the students to have technical and linguistic competences to work in a specific area and be available for the companies that request bilingual employees to cover their vacancies with qualified people.

Besides, it is necessary for the captain to guide the boat and for the marines to believe that that person is the most trustworthy and who makes the best decisions to arrive at the ports. The teacher will represent the captain that guides the learning process. He or she is going to be in charge to teach the students, manage the course, and list the most relevant needs for the students. ESP teachers play an important role in the learning process because they are the ones who understand the best way the students can improve in their daily tasks; in general, teachers have to have a communication bridge to connect with each pupil and, in general, with their communities.

A relevant element during a nautical journey are the sailors; they are essential to do every task. Marines could represent those students who have to work hard to achieve their specific goals. The students are the center part of the ESP lesson; their active participation may enrich the learning process, and with their effort, the aid of the course may be significant. Like sailors, the students have to skip many obstacles. Some examples are: first, fearing to communicate in a foreign language; second, managing extensive technical vocabulary; third, learning the ways to deal with a common situation in their field, which is a skill that is not easy to develop; and fourth, socializing with people from different cultures, which can cause a cultural shock. During the process, the students take their ship's rudder (their learning process) in their hands and learn their ways to learn, how fast they can learn, how autonomous they can be, and what strategies are convenient and effective to improve in their learning.

The compass, nautical chart, radar, and radio are just some instruments that sailors use in their daily journey; however, these tools are elemental to complete their tasks. In education, the use of educational tools is significant to achieve goals. Thus, the strategies and activities are tools in ESP classrooms. With them, teachers facilitate the students' learning process and reach the pre-select aims. For that reason, it might be crucial for teachers to have to present the strategies that are going to be implemented in the classroom and innovate activities that motivate students to be active through different platforms that use Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). It is essential to innovate with interactive educational tools, let aside the traditional educational strategies. One reason is that the current student populations have easy access to technological resources, so teachers can take advantage of them and make them more productive during every lesson.

This paper proposes to analyze aspects related to English for Specific Purposes that are strongly linked to technical public education in Costa Rica. The Ministry of Public Education has explained that ESP is "an enterprise involving education, training and practice, and drawing upon three major realms of knowledge: language, pedagogy, and the students' / participants specialist areas of interest" (MEP, 2020, p. 177). Even though ESP is a broad topic, this paper is going to analyze the methodology suggested by the Ministry of Public Education that is the Task-based Language Teaching Approach. Then, the teacher's role is an essential element in the learning process. Also, the student's role is important because they have particular characteristics to follow during their language acquisition process. Lastly, the technological resources that are the main strategies that teachers implement in ESP to help students to achieve the goal of the program. Every element in TBLA has a relevant function in the classroom. MEP affirmed that "The role of task-based language learning is to stimulate a natural desire in learners to improve their language competence by challenging them to complete meaningful tasks" (MEP, p. 2010).

Methodology is a systematic action that teachers consider to achieve the goals of a course. Teachers, as designers of their course, have to organize and pre-select the steps necessary for each course taking into consideration the particularities of each major; they also have to take into consideration aspects such as the students' age and socio-economic status, the real context in which is the school, and the students' educational background. For Kenny, "Every learner has a different attitude towards learning. The most important key is to find the appropriate method rather than a specific one" (2016, p. 259). For Al-Rawi (2013, p. 100), "Teaching method is the mechanism that is used by the teacher to organize and implement several educational means and activities to achieve certain goals." Both methodology and techniques are related one to another to have significant learning outcomes in our students. For that reason, it is indispensable to understand them and identify in which ways teachers could use for the language acquisition, the benefits that students can have, and how the methodology and techniques can be applied in the lesson. Al-Rawi also has affirmed that "Teaching techniques are the means that reflect the success of the learning process and the competencies of the teacher" (2013, p. 100).

English for Communication is the English sub-area that students receive in their technical field. According to the new programs for English for Communication, it should be taught by applying different tasks. The Ministry of Public Education defined a task as "The purposeful actions performed by one or more individuals strategically using their specific competencies to achieve a given result" (MEP, 2020, p. 172). Thus, in other words, tasks are the vehicle to achieve the aims proposed by the teachers based on a specific program. In this case, the programs are designed to obtain a major in a specific field and are taught through the English for Specific Purposes principle; for example, the process of teaching and learning is hybrid because it seeks active participation by the teacher and even more from students in the learning environment. In addition, the teacher is the facilitator of knowledge and predesigned

tasks. He or she encourages his or her pupils to communicate, to express ideas, and to search for relevant information that nourishes their learning process. Besides, the tasks have been designed to simulate real contexts to put in practice formal communication and deal with specific problems in possible scenario(s).

Garro et al. (2016, p. 2) affirmed that “The ESP courses could use Task-Based Language Teaching, in which tasks are at the center of the learning process, as its methodology.” Regardless, many authors have discussed what is the correct method to use in English for Specific Purposes in the real classroom. Teachers face significant challenges; first, English teachers have to understand the role that they have in the classroom; second, they have many majors in charge, such as Computer Science, Accounting, Tourism, Electronics, Executive for Customer Service, Mechanics, among others that make it impossible to master one specific field. Even though those limitations the center of every activity designed must be thinking on the task as the center of the process of language acquisition “The ESP course in question uses Task-Based Language Teaching, in which tasks are at the center of the learning process, as its methodology” (Garro, et. al., 2016).

Another methodology that might work well for English for Specific Purposes is the Cooperative Learning Approach. This methodology is a collaborative approach and is characterized by working in small teams. Every student, as a member of a team, is responsible to contribute to the process. The students have the same goals to achieve when working on the tasks; thus, they have to understand the activity and complete it. This approach promotes socialization skills, conflict resolutions, active participation through their personal opinions, and it improves conversations in an atmosphere of creativity. Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 192) argued that “Cooperative learning is an approach to teaching that makes maximum use of cooperative activities involving pairs and small groups of learners in the classroom.” This approach focuses on developing positive relationships between students. Also, it improves the

communicative interaction between peers that work together in particular tasks. Besides, students can learn between them, and that promotes a warm classroom environment; that makes students feel comfortable and motivated to use the target language as much as possible.

The students' role is to be active. They have to be part of a small group and work collaboratively. Students are responsible for monitoring their learning process. Students should therefore develop teamwork skills. This is essential for English for Specific Purposes courses because companies request students with these soft skills. On the other hand, the teachers' role is designing an organized learning atmosphere and assigning the students' roles and functions in the group. The teacher is a facilitator of learning and constantly monitors the students' work.

Moreover, the focus on the teachers in ESP classes indicates that they play an important role in the learning process. For that reason, this paper describes the role that they have in the classes. Teachers of ESP are leaders, and a leader is a person who can influence others encouragingly. Additionally, a leader is an innovative person, and when teachers have these characteristics, they can influence their students significantly in language acquisition. The innovator teachers create environments that are out of the traditional strategies, and they are willing to face the changes that could happen through any adversities. The innovative teachers cannot be static people; they seek to construct new mechanisms to achieve the educational goals.

Additionally, teachers of ESP have the role to be investigators. It is relevant to understand that teachers of ESP are not experts in all areas; however, they could reach relevant information that meets the students' needs, cover the contents that the syllabus requires, and be creative with the activities that are implemented in the classes. Teachers of ESP have the responsibility to look for additional opinions from the specialized teachers in the

field; in other words, they have to be willing to accept help. The collaborative assistance helps to integrate specific topics and contents with the foreign language.

Besides, ESP teachers have chores to organize the classroom as a space for learning. The classroom could be a physical place or a virtual classroom from any platform. In this particular point, it is indubitable to take into consideration the virtual lessons or the hybrid tendency of education in Costa Rica because during the pandemic circumstances, many teachers migrated to this type of modalities. Teachers have to be prepared to deal with any situation that could happen during the learning process. Moreover, teachers have the responsibility to update their knowledge in the use of technological platforms if their abilities are lacking.

Some others roles of ESP teachers are to encourage intercultural communication because students have to improve this skill when they have to face, in the near future, a globalization environment; in fact, students should respect the diversity in many areas, such as religions, traditions, ways to communicate, political positions and accept that diversity takes different forms. Also, teachers of ESP have to create a comprehensible channel of communication to give explanations, to give the students the information to understand the tasks, and to help them complete a final product. Moreover, ESP teachers are motivators that always push their pupils to talk in the target language, encouraging them to learn the subject matter for their life and not just to obtain a grade. Teachers motivate students to be autonomous learners because they are also responsible for their process, and through their strategies, they might improve in their linguistic skills.

Specifically, about the course, the teachers must organize the time available for it. Based on that, teachers have to distribute the content through the weeks available for the course. Additionally, teachers have to identify the particular necessities for students and the didactic material available in the high school to cover the content that was organized at the

beginning of the process. The plan that they design has to be made thinking about the objective that the students need. Teachers have to design didactic material that is innovative, significant, and includes the linguistics aspects needed by the students. Finally, teachers have to evaluate the students' learning process during the time that the course is taught. In the beginning, the first evaluations might help to set up the objective of the course and the students' level in the language. During the course, evaluation might help teachers to analyze if they are going in a good direction or need to modify any aspect. Finally, at the end of the course, evaluation shows if students reached the goal and how significant it was for them.

About the students' role, it is important to distinguish that English for Specific Purposes is an approach centered on them; for that reason, students are a relevant element in this equation of learning based on a particular area. The role of the student changes whether it is compared with other types of courses, such as General Specific Purposes (GSP). In the case of ESP, students assume an autonomous role in the learning process. Also, they are responsible to search for specific information and produce final projects in which they demonstrate the use of different techniques and which prove a significant understanding of the linguistic content.

On the other hand, students should demonstrate a transformation in the educational environment through teamwork, effective communication, interaction with the members of the community and other people outside of their communities. Moreover, they constantly seek to solve problems, have an active participation, give their personal opinion concerning others, accept the diversity that could be in their communities, and learn from other different aspects. In summary, the role of the students is active, and they must be capable of being autonomous people, willing to construct knowledge by themselves and their communities; they are responsible to develop their abilities, such as comparison, analysis, assimilation, syntax, and experimentation. Students have to look at and evaluate the significant information from confidential sources. Then, they have to organize the time to reach their goals, scopes, and do

the tasks that the teachers suggested. They have the responsibility to develop interpersonal aptitudes, develop soft and hard skills, and have the technological abilities to develop their tasks in the current time first, because the pandemic put us in that position and second, because the global companies require possible candidates with good skills to use the technological resources available. Students have to be aware of the constant changes; they have to learn to adapt in front of many situations and rhythms of learning. Lytovchenko et al. (2019, p. 70) have affirmed that “an adult learner shows the close relationship between the education of an adult person and his / her practical life needs, which urges an adult learner to be an active participant of the learning process.”

Another element to understand in ESP is the techniques. Techniques could be defined as the tools implemented to reach specific goals. This set of actions are previously thought to do a task and to determine the different techniques which can accurately complete a task in a correct way. Educational techniques should work closely with Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in ESP classrooms because they facilitate the communication between teacher and students, integrate the different skills in language acquisition, help students to be in contact with different platforms, and allow them to be more active in the digital era through diverse tasks that they have to complete.

ICTs have been transforming education in Costa Rica. For that reason, the implementation of different educational platforms has become necessary in the daily life of many teachers and students. Through many innovative strategies, teachers can take advantage of these tools and help students to achieve the goal in their particular field. ICTs have many positive aspects: They help students to increase their interest in the subject, they can create the visual material that powers their work through different applications, and they allow watching recorded or real-time videos to see what happens in other parts of the world. Then, ICTs facilitate communication between students and teachers, which makes these students have an

active role; as a result, they have more channels to ask questions, share ideas or give comments. Also, ICTs encourage cooperation in the community. Students learn easily when they can explain their ideas, exchange opinions, or debate a particular topic. These actions make students increase their creativity in the classroom and also increase the opportunity to socialize with their peers. Finally, ICTs promote the digital literacy that is necessary for the current globalization era and in which it is needed for students to develop skills in different technology platforms.

Even though ICTs may have great advantages in the educational field, teachers have to use them correctly; a bad use of them can turn into a boring strategy and does not motivate the students to engage in the active participation that is sought in an ESP classroom. In addition, the students are not always open-minded to use the technological tools as the teachers suggested; the reasons for that could be different, the scenarios are diverse, and the access to these digitalization strategies are unlike.

One of the goals in English for Specific Purposes is to increase the technical vocabulary that is essential to manage in a particular community. The technical vocabulary differs from the nursing field to the engineering field and is different from the accountant field, for example. However, the strategy to learn and practice the vocabulary in each field might be the same. Students could develop a glossary, for example. Then, students can design the glossary in different platforms or applications, such as Canva, PowerPoint, Exia, Wordfast Pro 5, Moodle, among other options.

Moreover, for speaking skills, there are different interactive applications that students may use; some examples are Hello Talk, in which students can talk with people around the world. The application helps translate the audio into text and also has the opportunity to say the correct pronunciation for the difficult words. Busuu is another application to improve their speaking skill, and students can interact with native speakers of English. The application is

suitable and secure and does not share personal information with others. The last one that could be mentioned, even though there are many more options, is a musical platform called Bussu in which students can practice pronunciation, specific vocabulary, or do a particular practice in a verb tense. Kirkgoz and Dikilitaş (2018) suggested different types of material for English Specific Purposes (ESP) as resources to be used in the course. Some of these examples are technical vocabulary, video sources, reading texts, multitask worksheets, discussions, glossaries about technical material, summaries related to the field, and oral presentations. Designing materials are essential strategies to engage the students in the learning process for a specific field. Regardless of what strategy teachers consider is the most convenient for the students, it is important to highlight that every activity has a specific objective; the activities have to be designed thinking about meeting students' necessities and reaching their goals.

Language Used in the ESP Classroom

To investigate the characteristics of ESP applied in some technical majors, it was necessary to collect some data from the actors in the learning process; first the students gave details about the technical lessons that they have received. This information was obtained through a questionnaire sent to them. As was mentioned in this paper, the student's role is essential in the learning process, and from them, teachers could analyze important details to improve in the daily work. The questionnaire was answered by a group of 70 students (See Appendix A). The first question was addressed at which language the ESP teacher usually speaks in the class. The students said that 75.7% affirmed that the teacher speaks in English all the time, 20% said that the ESP teacher usually speaks in English, and just 4.3% said that the teacher hardly ever speaks in Spanish. That question shows that EFL teachers work hard to motivate the learners to use the target language during the whole class from the beginning of the lesson until the end of the class. Using the target language as much as possible is one of the suggestions in the ESP

approach. However, the use of the student's native language is part of the process implemented in certain situations. The Spanish language could make a context understandable; for example, to catch some vocabulary meaning, or a short explanation could be a strategy on some occasions when all the other teachers' strategies in English were applied and were not comprehensible by the learners.

The second question in the student's questionnaire was "In which language do they communicate with the teacher? and which one is the reason?" Most of the students demonstrate that they are conscious of their learning; many of them point out the importance of ESP courses and the importance for their future in their upcoming jobs. They understand well that the main objective is to develop technical skills, but they have to improve their linguistic skills to be competitive in the labor market. Students believe that it is important to speak in English because it is practically the only place in which they can practice the target language; some of them mentioned that they occasionally use both languages, especially when they cannot express a particular idea or cannot say a specific word; however, if possible for them they ask questions or comment.

The following question was related to whether they consider it necessary to have a basic English level to have better results in ESP courses and understand well the instructions to complete the tasks. Students' criteria were that 95% of them believe that it is necessary to have a basic English background because the topics and content in the ESP courses are a little bit complex to develop the assignments well. Students consider it necessary to comprehend the instructions to reach the goals. If students have clear guidelines, that will diminish the frustration in the learning process and students could reach the specific goals easily. The other 5% believe that it is not necessary to know English because the teacher usually reviews basic topics at the beginning of every school year.

ESP Major Content

The next question was related to whether the content was associated with the major that students have chosen. Students affirmed with 62.9% that the content in every class is linked to their specialty. 24.3% said that most of the time it is to their major, 11.4 indicated that usually the topics have little influence in their major, and just 1% said that the content is not correlative to the specialty. The content studied in ESP class should be related to the specialized field. This content illustrates the students the main characteristics in the field; also, it helps students to analyze the relevant topics, and then students could give their criteria when they internalize the information that they received.

Authentic Material in ESP

Also, the students answered a question about the different activities that they complete in their ESP classes. The common activities that students complete in their ESP classes are reading comprehension related to their mayor (80%), oral presentations or role-plays (92.9%), small research projects (52.9%), writing essays (62.9%), listening exercises (78.6%), and fill-in-the-blank exercises (78.6%). The least common tasks are debates (15.7%). Tasks are developed in both modalities of education, face-to-face and distance education.

Additionally, students were asked about how interactive and innovative the tasks were. 52.9% of students believed that teachers are innovators and interactive professionals, 28,6% said that most of the time they work in that way, 17.1% said that sometimes teachers are innovators and interactive, and just 1.4% said that teachers are not innovators or interactive professionals. "Innovative teaching is the process leading to creative learning, the implementation of new methods, tools, and contents which could benefit learners and their creative potential" (Rus, 2019, p. 339). Thus, to motivate students to be active, the tasks should

be interactive and innovative; in this way, students can develop the tasks with a significant process of the project assigned by teachers.

The following question for the students was about the common technological tools that they used in ESP classrooms. They said that cell phones, tablets, and computers with 41.4% are the most common devices used in the ESP lessons; then, they chose multimedia presentations with 27.1%, educational platforms such as Zoom, Teams, and Google Classroom with 22.9%. This information shows that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are indispensable for the development of the content for ESP students. Teachers, students, and parents have to understand that ICTs are a new way of teaching, and they have come to stay for a long time. Students have to be active and willing to use them as part of the learning acquisition.

Teachers' Perception about ESP

On the other hand, the teachers' perception about their daily praxis in English for Specific Purposes was taken into account (See Appendix B). Forty-nine teachers answered the survey, all of them are active teachers in the Minister of Public Education. Teachers in certain cases doubt their role; however, English teachers in Costa Rica are creative people that most of the time are open to re-learn to help the students. For Barrantes (2008, p. 138), "The instructor's role includes providing the language for students to perform efficiently and accurately in English."

In this opportunity, the teachers that answered the questionnaire are current professionals that work in the public system. The first question asked which academic degree they have. 81.6% of the teachers answered have a bachelor's degree, 8.2% have a master's degree, 8.2% have a licentiate degree, and 1% have an undergraduate degree. These answers showed that the majority of them have the minimum requirement to teach in Costa Rica.

Also, the following question was about how many years of experience they had as teachers. The highest percentage of experienced teachers are those between 11 to 20 years with 44.9%. Then, 38.8% of the teachers have experience of 6 to 10 years. 14.3% of teachers have between 1 and 5 years, and just 2% with more than 20 years in the teaching field. Teachers' experience is pertinent to analyze because, through time, they are gaining more expertise; in fact, teachers have more facility to learn or re-learn a new teaching trend.

The next question for the teachers was if they know what English for Specific Purposes is. 61% of the teachers affirmed that they know what ESP is; the other 10.2% of teachers said that they do not know what ESP is. Finally, 28.5% said that they heard about it or know a little bit about ESP. These answers show that even though the teachers are in the public system, they have a lack of ESP knowledge, and although the percentage of teachers that admitted the lack of this relevant branch of English is low, this might be a sign of alert that indicates that the employer needs to give training to the teachers, and that could be part of a transformation the Ministry of Public Education wants to project in a new future. Rus has stated that "Language instructors teaching ESP are thus confronted with a series of professional challenges surpassing the regular requirements of a general language teacher" (2019, p. 338).

The Ministry of Public Education has modified the programs of English for Communication sub-area since 2020; the first programs were electronics and Configuration and Support Program in Communication Networks and Systems. According to its position regarding curricular transformation, technical education must establish a reference of education centered on the students and their learning process. Besides the program changes, teachers must be trained to be ready to teach according to the transformations that employers want. When teachers receive the correct training, the students have a high probability to receive better technical education through a significant process in the ESP courses. Based on the data provided by the teachers that answered the questionnaire, 75.5% of them indicated that they

never received ESP training during their years as teachers in the Ministry of Public Education, and 24.5% said that they received training in ESP.

The next question was open and was “What method do you apply in your ESP classrooms?” Most of the teachers mentioned that they do not have a specific method. Some of them mentioned that they mix approaches. The most common approach was the Communicative Approach as a general methodology applied in the classes because they can practice different skills; in fact, diverse tasks are addressed to improve in different abilities.

Additionally, teachers who answered the questionnaire affirmed that they are willing to receive training from the Ministry of Public Education, and all of them considered it necessary to be part of one homogeneous transformation. Teachers have to re-learn concepts, practices, and techniques to have fresh air and not fall into a monotonous learning process. 44.9% would like to receive training based on the methodology and techniques that match with ESP and the new programs and MEP’s current transformation. 26.5% of the teachers would like to receive pronunciation training because the new programs are part of the new contents. 24.5% would like to receive training in designing authentic material for ESP. Finally, just 4.1% would like to receive grammar training. Barrantes (2008, p. 142) stated that “methodology is quite similar to GSP. The learners-centered approach is what makes the difference. The instructor needs to be creative enough to develop class activities following the method he knows but focusing on the aims of the ESP course.”

Teachers also provide data about the strategies that they use to innovate in ESP classrooms. First, teachers commented that multimedia presentations are the most common technological tool they use (46.9%), then, web pages (38.8%), next, social media applications (6.1%); additionally, the use of English blogs was mentioned (2%), and finally, the teachers that never use technological resources as an innovative and interactive strategy were 6.1%. In this particular point, teachers can make an emphasis because the pandemic period has shown the

lack of technological knowledge that some teachers have. Regardless, this could be a small number to think about what techniques those students use to be closer to the globalization world that looks for competitive citizens in the linguistic area but also in the use of the technological resources.

Although teachers and students face many adversities in ESP classes such as the limitation of training for the teachers, the lack of the TICS by many of them, the limited access that students have to have a good internet connection, the inequality that many of the learners have, between many others aspects, they could be considered to be on the right track, working hard to reach the goals. Every lesson will be perfected; although, it is a challenge for the teachers' journey to fix and improve aspects that could be wrong or do not have the expected results. Probably in the near future, society could consider the citizens with technical and linguistic abilities prepared to be part of a demanding globalized community. The obstacles are diverse, ranging from the lack of training for teachers, uncertainties to teach ESP courses because teachers are not experts in all the fields, the students' lack of basic English skills in EGP, the unequal accessibility to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for all the students in the country, the deficient management of ICT by some teachers, among many other negative aspects that might be listed; however, the positive aspect that could be mentioned is that both teachers and students have to play their corresponding role in the ESP classrooms. Everyone assumes responsibility for their journey to reach the goals that every major demands.

Additionally, teachers indicate that continuous training is an important aspect to give ESP students a quality and integral education, and if it is true that MEP is responsible for their professional growth. However, the Ministry of Public Education is responsible to provide the appropriate coaching to all the teaching staff. That might be demonstrated by a congruent transformation not just in the new programs suggested since 2020 in the technical majors, but

also in the methodology and techniques. Moreover, teachers have to be conscious that they do not work alone. ESP is a branch of English education that has the vision to work parallel with other colleagues. English teachers that have more experience and also the technical teachers who are specialized in their subjects could provide recommendations and feedback to improve in the daily work, this help might be significant especially for those teachers who are beginners in ESP. Most of them are teachers that are in the same institutions; in fact, they could provide relevant information to guide the students not just in the linguistic part but also in the technical and humanistic abilities. If teachers work collaboratively, they could integrate all the sub-areas of the major into the same process to reach the objective of the specialty.

Despite this, students are a young population in technical high schools. They demonstrate a mature understanding of the main objective that technical education has and the positive aspects that this might have at the end of diversified education. In addition, students comprehend the impact that technical majors have on socio-economic growth. Students are the center of the ESP classrooms; every aspect, method, technique, and activity related to education are thought to meet their necessities. Motivation could play an important role for students to internalize the reasons to be active in the classrooms, the importance of being responsible with their decisions, and their active role in the ESP classes. Finally, the most important point is to understand that ESP is a technical branch of education that provides abilities for the rest of their life and closes the students in the labor market that demands qualified people to obtain a job position in a company.

English for Specific Purposes is an approach that seeks, through its appropriate methodology and techniques, to provide the students with the integral competencies to be developed in a changing globalized world. Innovative and dynamic activities pretend to promote an approximation to a real-world in which students demonstrate the linguistic and technical competence to solve problems in a discipline. In the current time, ESP has come to bloom in the

educational system as a refreshing paradigm in which the Ministry of Public Education expects to have qualified citizens. These capable citizens contribute to the growth of the country's economy through the abilities that the technical system gives them in different fields during the three years in the diversified cycle providing them vocational training.

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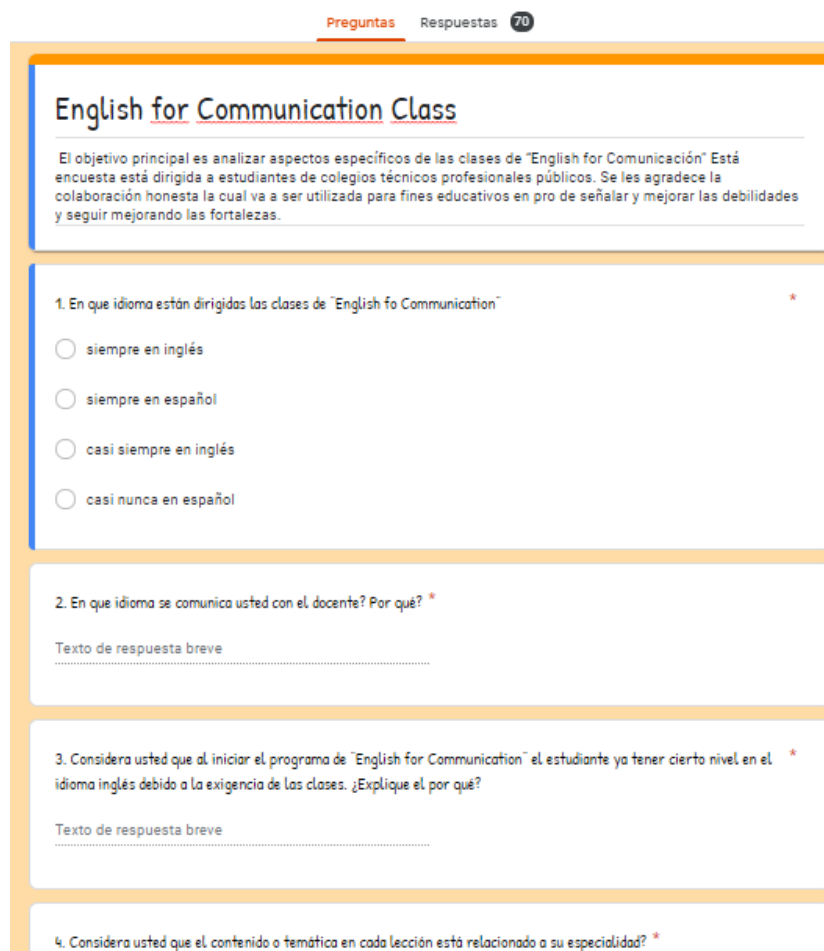
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Appendices

Appendix A

The students' questionnaire was an instrument addressed to current students that study a major at a technical high school in Heredia, Costa Rica. The students are from 16 to 19 years old. They are studying a technical specialty and understand the sub-area called "English for Communication." They contributed with the questionnaire using a link that directed them to a document of google form. The link was facilitated through different platforms, such as WhatsApp and Teams. Seventy students answered the instrument that was used to write this paper.

<https://forms.gle/E8pqRfN2rdXKdrzb8>



Preguntas Respuestas 70

English for Communication Class

El objetivo principal es analizar aspectos específicos de las clases de "English for Comunicación" Esta encuesta está dirigida a estudiantes de colegios técnicos profesionales públicos. Se les agradece la colaboración honesta la cual va a ser utilizada para fines educativos en pro de señalar y mejorar las debilidades y seguir mejorando las fortalezas.

1. En que idioma están dirigidas las clases de "English fo Communication" *

siempre en inglés

siempre en español

casi siempre en inglés

casi nunca en español

2. En que idioma se comunica usted con el docente? Por qué? *

Texto de respuesta breve

3. Considera usted que al iniciar el programa de "English for Communication" el estudiante ya tener cierto nivel en el idioma inglés debido a la exigencia de las clases. ¿Explique el por qué? *

Texto de respuesta breve

4. Considera usted que el contenido o temática en cada lección está relacionado a su especialidad? *

Appendix B

The teachers' survey was an instrument answered by a group of 49 English teachers in Costa Rica. They answered relevant information through 12 different opened and closed questions. The instrument was sent to the teachers using different WhatsApp groups that are available and which include teachers of different parts of the country. They receive the link to answer the questionnaire; the link redirects the teachers to a Google Form document.

<https://forms.gle/WEs87FcNKhzTyJKL7>

The image shows a screenshot of a Google Form titled "English for Specific Purposes". At the top, it indicates "Preguntas" (Questions) and "Respuestas 49" (Responses 49). The form includes an objective statement and three multiple-choice questions.

English for Specific Purposes

Objective: This is a survey that seeks information about the teachers' training in the technical area, basically in the management and current knowledge about English for Specific Purposes that teachers have. The information collected is going to be used as part of the final work for a Master Degree at Universidad Nacional. All the information is confidential and just for educational purposes.

1. What is your current certificate degree as an English Teacher? *

- Bachelor degree
- Licenciature degree
- Master degree
- Other

2. How many years have you been teaching in the public system? *

- 0 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 11 to 20 years
- more of 21 years

3. Do you know what is English for Specific Purposes? *

DECLARACIÓN JURADA

Yo, Wendy Vanessa Piedra Pérez, cédula de identidad 1-1090-0550, estudiante de la Universidad Nacional, declaro bajo fe de juramento y consciente de la responsabilidades penales de este acto, que soy autor intelectual del Trabajo Final de Graduación Titulado "Understanding the methodology and techniques to teach English for Specific Purposes in Public Technical High Schools", para optar por el grado de Maestría en Educación con énfasis en el aprendizaje del inglés.



Firma

Heredia, a los 16 días del mes de setiembre del año 2021.

Refrendo

Los abajo firmantes avalamos el Trabajo de Graduación de la estudiante Wendy Piedra Pérez, cédula 1 1090 0550, que lleva como título **Understanding the methodology and techniques to teach English for Specific Purposes in public Technical High Schools**, dado que cumple con las disposiciones vigentes y la calidad académica requerida por el posgrado.

Firmado por JUAN PABLO ZÚÑIGA VARGAS (FIRMA)
PERSONA FÍSICA, CPF-04-0182-0569.
Fecha declarada: 22/09/2021 03:56 p. m.

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Tutor
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