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THE ROLES OF THE INSTRUCTORS IN AN ESP-TASK BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING COURSE

EL ROL DE LOS INSTRUCTORES EN UN CURSO DE INGLÉS PARA FINES ESPECÍFICOS BASADO EN LA ENSEÑANZA DE LENGUAJE POR TAREAS

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Abstract: The graduate program in Teaching English at the University of Costa Rica offers yearly English courses to satisfy the language learning needs at different departments, research centers, or similar institutions. The objective of this article was to analyze the extent to which a group of student teachers fulfilled the roles of the instructors in the Task Based Language Teaching method used in the graduate program. The study used a mixed-methods approach and the subjects were three instructors during their teaching practicum. The roles of the instructors were assessed by the practicum supervisors, fellow students in the practicum, the students in the course, and the instructors themselves through rubrics, observation sheets, surveys, and teaching journals. The results from the different instruments using different scales pointed to the instructors fulfilling the roles of sequencing tasks and motivating the learners a majority of the times. The roles of preparing the learners for tasks and raising consciousness were fulfilled to a lesser extent, which indicated that the instructors needed to work further on these areas. The study concluded with recommendations for improving the roles that revealed weaknesses, notably aimed to provide a manageable numbers of vocabulary items and grammar structures in the pretask, as well as to provide prompt feedback, and to elicit students' knowledge for the development of lessons.

Key words: HIGHER EDUCATION, ENGLISH TEACHING FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES, TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING, COSTA RICA.

Resumen: El posgrado en la Enseñanza del Inglés en la Universidad de Costa Rica organiza anualmente cursos de inglés para satisfacer las necesidades de aprendizaje del idioma en diferentes departamentos, centros de investigación de la universidad, o instituciones afines. El objetivo de este artículo es analizar en qué medida un grupo de docentes de estos cursos cumplieron con los roles definidos para los instructores en el método de Enseñanza de Lenguaje por Tareas utilizado por el posgrado. La metodología del estudio utilizó un abordaje mixto y los sujetos fueron tres instructores estudiantes del posgrado durante su práctica docente. Los roles fueron evaluados por los supervisores de la práctica, otros estudiantes de la práctica, los estudiantes del curso y por los mismos instructores por medio de rúbricas, hojas de observación, cuestionarios, y diarios de clase. Los resultados de los instrumentos según diferentes escalas apuntaron a que los instructores cumplieron con los roles de secuenciador de actividades y motivador de los estudiantes en la mayoría de las ocasiones. Los roles de preparador de tareas y desarrollador de conciencia se cumplieron en menor medida, lo cual indica que los instructores debían de trabajar más en estas áreas. El estudio concluyó con recomendaciones para el mejoramiento de los roles que mostraron debilidad, notablemente dirigidas a proveer cargas manejables de vocabulario y estructuras gramaticales en la fase de preparación para las tareas, así como a ofrecer pronta retroalimentación, en caso de dificultades y considerar el conocimiento de los estudiantes en el desarrollo de las lecciones.

Palabras clave: EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR, ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS CON FINES ESPECÍFICOS, APRENDIZAJE POR TAREAS, COSTA RICA

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1. Introduction

In order to cope with the needs of a steadily growing economy, the University of Costa Rica has developed English for Specific Purposes courses for the multiple populations inside and outside campus. The Master's in Teaching English as a Foreign Language has led this process since 1998. Every year, the graduate students plan and evaluate a course for their graduation project. The aspects included in the evaluation involve the methodology utilized in the course, the performance of instructors, the learning outcomes, and the principles guiding materials design. This research will focus particularly on the performance of the instructors.

In the process of establishing the rationale for the course, the students in the program are required to conduct a rigorous analysis of the linguistic and pedagogical needs of their target population. Through this analysis, a series of tasks are identified for which the population needs English. Later, these tasks become the core units in the course and from there everything is set in motion. This study is mainly based on the instructors, and not on the process of course designs, because even if the syllabi are well designed and the tasks are carefully selected, it is the instructors who are in charge of launching the learning process and of making decisions as conditions change to guarantee the success of the program.

The ESP course in question uses Task Based Language Teaching, in which tasks are at the center of the learning process, as its methodology. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), instructors functioning under the principles of this method must fulfill the following roles: selecting and sequencing tasks, preparing learners for tasks, and raising consciousness. In addition, Van Avermaet and Gysen (2006) have proposed the role of motivating learners. The fulfillment of these roles was the object of study in this research. Following these clearly prescribed roles may seem a simple thing to do, but when engaged in classroom interaction, instructors face emerging challenges that tend to deviate their attention from the performance of these roles. Here is where the most fruitful learning experiences take place and where the study of specific cases brings valuable insight into the field of teacher training.

As seen through the eyes of the multiple agents involved in the evaluation of the instructors, this particular paper attempts to provide recommendations for improving performance based on successful and unsuccessful practices that emerged during the course. In short, this study aims to help students in the Master's program and, on a larger scale, the field of ESP and Task Based Language Teaching to strengthen their knowledge base through the experience of their peers and practitioners.

2. Review of the Literature

2.1 Task-based language teaching and English for specific purposes: theoretical principles and course design

The course was created under the tenets of Task-Based Language Teaching and English for Specific Purposes (henceforth TBLT and ESP). These two approaches see language primarily as a means of making meaning, and they resort to real-life based tasks to develop instructional activities. Crookes and Long (1992) have explained that the syllabus in TBLT is built around the tasks and from there the teachers choose the vocabulary, structures, notions, functions, and topics for their classes. In ESP, the tasks are selected based on the students' needs for language instruction. These are identified during the first stage of course development: the needs analysis. The other steps in the course are influenced by these findings. Brown (as cited by Ducker, 2012) has described the steps as follows: needs analysis, objectives, development of tests to determine achievement of course objectives, design of materials to help the students achieve the course objectives, and finally the teaching of the course.

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) have pointed out that the information collected during the needs analysis mainly deals with students' tasks at work, previous learning experiences, lacks in language use, and reasons for learning the language. These data help the language instructors come up with a rationale for the course that corresponds to the demands of the population and to the context where it is implemented. Regarding this, Hutchinson and Waters (1989) have pointed out that "[...] the course design process should proceed first by identifying the target situation and then carrying out a rigorous analysis of the linguistic features of that situation (p. 12)." The identified features will later be used to develop learning tasks that enable students to function effectively in a specific context-usually a job-related scenario.

Tasks in ESP make use of context specific information to teach the language content. The linguistic content (grammar, lexis, genres, and register, among others) should be appropriate for the activities in the course and presented as it would normally occur in real life. Tasks have become such an essential concept in both ESP and TBLT that their characteristics should be explained in detail. Tasks are essential units in TBLT. Ellis, an advocate of TBLT, (as cited in Van den Branden, 2006) has asserted that a task has to fulfill the following description:

A workplan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate prepositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills, and also various cognitive processes. (p. 8)

In this attempt to come up with a thorough definition, Ellis (2006) has drawn our attention to several characteristics of a task. He has pointed out that tasks should be designed with a practical purpose in mind, that emphasis should be given to meaning rather than form, that activities must resemble the real world, that assessment has to be based on the achievement of a specific outcome, and that different language skills must be integrated in order to accomplish the task. These criteria have to be met for an activity to be considered a task. As a matter of fact, there is a large corpus of literature on TBLT that supports the aspects mentioned before as essential components of tasks (Nunan, 2006; Van den Branden, 2006; Willis, 1998; among others).

Of all the characteristics aforementioned, the one with the strongest impact on course design is that tasks are assessed in terms of the achievement of specific outcomes which are real-life oriented. This is the reason why TBLT has been extensively used in ESP.

Besides the use of tasks as vehicles for language learning, there are other principles of language acquisition that these two approaches have in common and that are pertinent to the understanding of this course. Richards and Rodgers (2001) have claimed that in TBLT meaning plays a central role in instruction and form is subordinate to meaning. Along the same lines Hutchinson and Waters (1989) have asserted that language learning is not only a matter of linguistic knowledge; it deals with the cognitive capacities of the students and their background knowledge. Richards and Rogers (2001) also have pointed out that lexical units are central in language use and language learning. In other words, accurate use of vocabulary facilitates task completion, and therefore, language acquisition. This is the same for ESP in which the knowledge of target vocabulary facilitates functioning in a specific context. Lastly, conversation is the central focus of language and the key to language

acquisition. TBLT is of a communicative nature, which implies that conversation should be an essential component in all classes. Similarly, Hutchinson and Waters (1989) have asserted that language learning is an active process and that language processing requires negotiation of meaning, which in turn makes a necessity.

In TBLT and ESP, the instructors play a key role leading students to task achievement. Even if the syllabi are well designed and the tasks are carefully selected, the instructors are the ones in charge of launching the learning process. For this reason, the two approaches have clearly stipulated roles for the instructors to follow. The roles, discussed in the coming section, correspond primarily to TBLT; however, the frequent overlap of TBLT and ESP makes them also applicable to ESP in many cases.

2.2 The role of the instructor in launching the TBLT curriculum.

Instructors have the primary responsibility for teaching and assume different roles during instruction. They spend time monitoring students' learning, managing students' behavior, and promoting a positive learning atmosphere, among others. In the case of TBLT, the roles are determined by the task and aimed at fulfilling the students' needs. In this regard, Van Avermaet et al. (2006) have suggested that tasks are cognitively demanding, and therefore, instructors should motivate students to invest significant energy in task completion and also support task performance and negotiation of meaning on the part of students. TBLT requires instructors to support the students not only as they engage in learning activities but also at the moment of planning the language and learning tools that students need to tackle the task.

In this method, instructors assume a more passive role in the classroom. Students are the main focus of attention while instructors act as facilitators of meaning. According to Choudhury (2011) "...teachers perform an important mediational role co-constructing learning with the students instead of simply disseminating the information" (p. 34). In other words, what is expected of the instructors is to work side by side with the students and monitor their weaknesses and strengths. In addition, instructors are expected to create activities that are interesting and challenging and that help students learn by doing.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) have proposed these and other additional roles for the instructors including:

1. Selector and sequencer of tasks: The sequence of activities should be conducive to task performance in order to comply with the principles of scaffolding. Tasks are

purposeful and real-life oriented. Post assessment is conducted thoroughly in order to plan future lessons.

2. Preparing learners for tasks: Interventions during the planning stage reflect most possible linguistic and cognitive problems that students may encounter in the task. If it is needed, the instructor can provide explanations focused on form in order to prevent sources of misunderstanding.

3. Consciousness raising: Interventions foster the learner's curiosity and problem solving skills, instead of giving the answers away. The instructor's attitude should be that of asking for clarification in order to lead students to self discovery of concepts. (p.236)

Further, Van Avermaet et al. (2006) have proposed a conception of motivating learners that involves positive feedback. They assert that interventions should raise students' enthusiasm to perform the tasks and that explanations should be clear and contextualized. In their view, TBLT is actually a very "simple" and "natural" thing to do, at least as long as teachers keep in mind the guiding principles stated above (p. 176).

2.3 Program evaluation for course improvement

Once all these theoretical aspects have been put into practice, the need arises to gather data about their implementation. The program evaluation model outlined by Barrington (1986) has stressed the description of program objectives, environments, activities, and accomplishments, as well as the judgment of program congruence with goals and external standards. This model, as Barrington (1986) has explained later, makes program evaluation look for "multiple realities, checking and re-checking value perceptions, involving relevant interest groups in the definition of specific issues, and negotiating solutions with those most likely to be affected by them" (pp. 41-42). Program evaluation can be metaphorically compared to an onion with many layers; all the layers being essential for a complete view of the object. This comparison is reflected in the interaction of a variety of perspectives in the evaluation.

Program evaluation implies reflecting critically upon action and highlighting key aspects in order to make decisions. Dudley and Evans (1998) have explained that evaluation involves making judgments about the effectiveness of course aims and objectives in order to nourish the curriculum (pp. 128-129). Evaluation will then look at divergences between the originally

stated needs and goals and the needs and goals that emerged during the process. This allows curriculum designers to offer alternatives to enhance a program. Notably, in the "improvement focused model" proposed by Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen (2004) for this purpose, evaluators must look for gaps "between the program objectives and the needs of the target population, between program implementation and program plans, between expectations of the target population and the services actually delivered, between the outcomes achieved and the outcomes projected" (p. 29).

Along the lines of services delivered and program objectives, the roles of the instructor represent a key component in the achievement of quality expectations, and thus, should be submitted to evaluation as well. For this reason, we aim to look at discrepancies between expected teacher roles and actual performance in a TBLT course designed as the graduation project for the Master's in Teaching English as a Foreign Language at the University of Costa Rica. The research is aimed at determining to what extent the expected roles of instructors were performed.

3 Methodology

This study was a mixed method research involving both quantitative and qualitative methods to determine the quality of the performance of the instructors and to be able to integrate different perspectives in the triangulation of information.

3.1 Participants

The data for this study were obtained from three major sources: the students in the course, the student-teachers, and the observers. The first group consisted of eight staff members at INBio, four females and four males. Their ages ranged from 20 to 40 years old. They were studying an ESP course designed upon a needs analysis conducted by the student-teachers. The three student-teachers in charge of the ESP course were enrolled in the Master's program in English Teaching at the University of Costa Rica and working on their final practicum. They were two females and a male, aged 26 to 31. The last group consisted of two female professors from the Master's program who supervised the course and three classmates, one male and two females, who were also regular students working on their final practicum and required to observe other practicum classes. The professors were aged 33 and 45 and the classmates observing the course were 29 to 33.

3.2 Instruments

3.2.1 Observation forms for Roles of the instructor

This observation sheet included teacher's roles in TBLT and expected practices in each role. The instrument was designed for the colleagues to determine the extent to which these roles and practices were fulfilled by the student-teachers (see appendix B). The observation sheet contained the four roles of teachers in TBLT and a scale with four different levels of achievement of the roles. The observers had to indicate the level of achievement for the roles as observed in the class. Additional space was given for the observers to write their comments in order to support their choice.

3.2.2 Teaching journal

The student teachers wrote a reflection after receiving feedback from the supervisors. Every student teacher wrote at least five reflections. All the reflections were compiled in a single document. This served to provide additional input about teaching practices and the roles expected of the instructor. No specific template was required by the professors for the journal. The student-teachers were free to choose the format of the reflections, which in this case was a response in prose form to the feedback received from the professors.

3.2.3 Course evaluation survey

The course evaluation survey served to assess the effectiveness of the course. The survey was divided into six sections as follows: 1. Course content and organization, 2. Teachers' performance, 3. Students' commitment in the course, 4. Students' perception of improvement during the course, 5. Effectiveness of materials, and 6. Free feedback (see appendix C). For the purpose of this research project, only section 2 was analyzed. It consisted of a series of seven behaviors expected from the teachers and a four-category Likert scale for students to assess the frequency with which the behaviors occurred during the course.

3.3 Procedures

The supervisors observed the classes at least once a week over a period of 15 weeks. Their input was collected and the scores obtained were averaged. As for teaching journals, a reflection was written by the instructors after every feedback session with the supervisors. The mid and end-of-the-course evaluation surveys were filled out by the students in the eighth and in the last week of classes. The scores were compared to identify weaknesses and improvements. Three fellow colleagues, whose opinions were also included in the report, visited the class three times. They rated how well instructors fulfilled the most representative characteristics of TBLT. Their scores were also averaged. The interpretation criterion was that through triangulation of results the instructors fulfilled the expected characteristics.

4. Results and Discussion

The results are presented in the following order input from the students in the course, feedback from supervisors, and comments from classmates in the Master's program. After each section, key issues are discussed and later compared to gain an understanding of how expected roles were met.

4.1 Students' perceptions of Instructors' performance

This aspect was triangulated with information from three different sources: the students, the supervisors, and fellow colleagues. The students' input was obtained through the mid and end-of-the-course-evaluation survey. These results are illustrated in Table 1. The teachers' expected behaviors are listed on the left column. The other columns indicate the frequency with which those behaviors were present. Each frequency column is divided into "M," which stands for "Mid Evaluation Survey," and "F," which stands for "Final Evaluation Survey." Six students in the midterm evaluation indicated that the instructors always gave clear instructions, whereas in the final evaluation seven students chose that option. In addition, eight students in the midterm pointed out that the instructors always provided clear feedback, while seven students said so in the final evaluation. Concerning helping students improve their language performance and be willing to receive feedback from students, eight students chose "always" in both evaluations. For the other three behaviors, the students pointed out in the two surveys that the instructors were always interested in their students' learning process, were always willing to answer students' questions, and always selected appropriate topics to improve students' second language learning.

The results are rather consistent even though the number of students is different in the mid and end of the course evaluations. The students agreed that the instructors fulfilled the subsequent criteria completely: showed interest in students' learning process, showed willingness to answer students' questions, and selected appropriate topics for the class.

Although the overall results indicated that the students' perceptions of the accomplishment of teacher roles were positive, the results also revealed the instructors' areas of improvement for the instructors. In the mid-of-the-course survey, the instructors found that the students felt they needed additional support to develop their language skills. This suggestion was approached immediately by adapting the activities to the different proficiency levels in the group. Moreover, the instructors improved at giving instructions. By the end of the course, most of the students agreed that the instructions were clear and appropriate for the learning tasks.

One aspect that remained equal in both evaluations was providing feedback. When asked, the students and supervisors had similar opinions about this topic. They both claimed that some of the explanations were more complex than was necessary. In this case, additional pedagogical mediation was needed.

Table 1
Instructors' performance midterm and end-of-the-course-evaluation survey

The instructors...	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1. Gave clear instructions.	6	7	3	1				
2. Were interested in their students' learning process.	9	8						
3. Provided clear feedback.	8	7	1	1				
4. Helped students improve their language performance.	8	8	1					
5. Were always willing to answer students' questions.	9	8						
6. Selected appropriate topics to improve students' second language learning.	9	8						
7. Were willing to receive feedback from students.	8	8	1					

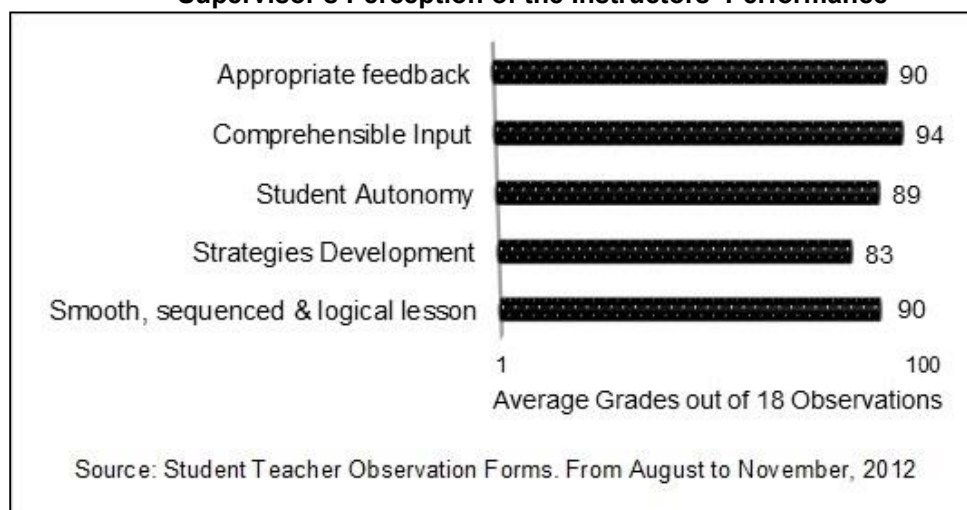
NOTE: M stands for Midterm Course Evaluation and F stands for Final Course Evaluation.

Source: Midterm & Final Course Evaluation. September & November, 2012

Figure 1 contains the information provided by the supervisors. The results showed that instructors met the expectations of the course. The input the supervisors provided regarding these aspects is described below. The supervisors used a scale from 0 to 100 to grade the student-teachers' performance. In addition to the numerical evaluation, the supervisors included comments on aspects that needed improvement. The grades obtained for each criterion throughout the course were averaged to obtain the medium grade per each behavior observed. On this scale, a grade below 70 is considered "unsatisfactory", and a grade between 70 and 79 is considered "satisfactory". A grade between 80 and 89 corresponds to the evaluation "good", and a grade above 90 corresponds to "very good".

The average grades showed that the supervisors' perception of the student-teachers' performance was between "good" and "very good" on average throughout the semester. As stated above, the additional feedback focused on areas for improvement. The comments below correspond to the additional feedback given by the supervisors.

Figure 1
Supervisor's Perception of the Instructors' Performance



Appropriate feedback: On many occasions, the student teachers waited until the language focus to provide feedback about language use. The supervisors suggested addressing students' errors throughout the lesson with more frequency. They also pointed out that the student teachers needed to be better prepared for the classes in order to answer all the students' questions satisfactorily. These two aspects improved gradually throughout the course.

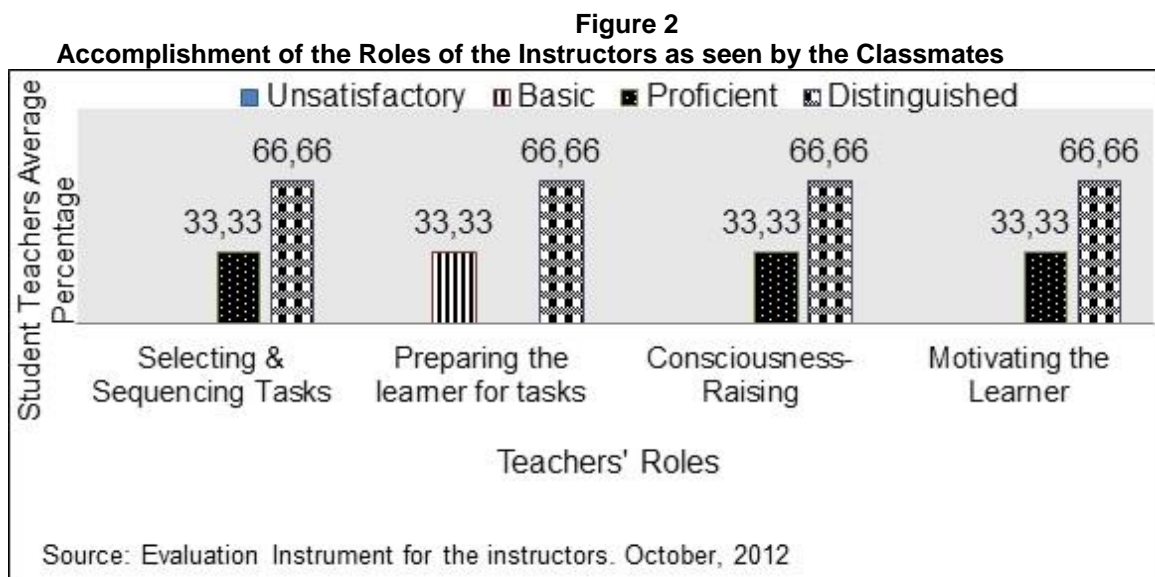
Comprehensible input: The information provided by the teachers resembled real-life use of language and the examples were clear and well contextualized. The feedback obtained in this section related to the amount of vocabulary introduced in the class. The supervisors suggested that the number of words introduced in one lesson was overwhelming at times.

Student autonomy: This aspect is related to the previous one in the sense that tasks were too difficult for the students. The supervisors expressed that the student teachers were expecting too much from the students by filling the activities with large numbers of new words. This input motivated the reduction of the number of vocabulary items and simplification of the materials so that the students could cope with the demands of the task. Their idea was to make the students less dependent on the handouts and notes when reporting the task. This was one of the greatest challenges for the student teachers.

Strategies development: Communication strategies were present in almost all the lessons, but the student teachers failed at activating them, which is reflected in the results in Figure 1. The supervisors suggested drilling and modeling and encouraging the use of such strategies until the students got them right. The student teachers did not reinforce learning of communication strategies enough during the course.

Sequence of activities: The supervisors pointed out that the activities were conducive to task performance and that the level of difficulty increased progressively during the cycle of activities. They highlighted that the student teachers were able to integrate different language skills in the lessons.

This information is complemented with the feedback obtained from the classmates. They observed the instructors with a focus on the fulfillment of roles and characteristics described in the review of the literature. Their input is illustrated in the Figure 2.



The numbers showed that two thirds of the total number of answers for each criterion (66,66%) described the accomplishment of the roles by the instructors as distinguished, that is, thorough and nearly always or always conducive to task performance. For the criterion "preparing the learner for tasks", one third of the total number of answers (33,33%) described the accomplishment of this role as basic, meaning that few teacher interventions anticipated task requirements. For the other three criteria, one third of the total number of answers respectively (33,33%) described the accomplishment of the roles as proficient. This means the performance of the student-teachers was often conducive to success in tasks.

The classmates pointed out several aspects to be improved in each of the roles. In regard to selecting and sequencing tasks, they suggested including fewer activities in the preparation stages and creating simpler task cycles. Similarly, for preparing the learners, they suggested reducing the amount of input in order to facilitate task performance. In the case of consciousness raising, their comments were oriented towards eliciting the answers from the students instead of giving away the answers.

The student teachers largely fulfilled the expected roles in TBLT according to classmate-generated feedback. Particularly, they succeeded at sequencing tasks and motivating the learners. The results show that some work is still needed on the roles of preparing the learners for tasks and raising consciousness. Regarding sequencing of tasks, the input obtained from the different sources revealed that the preparation stages clearly led to achievement in the performance of the task and that the activities were purposeful and real-life oriented. This was accomplished by decomposing real-life activities in order to

replicate the steps needed for their completion from a linguistic point of view. This, in turn, helped the students discover the language embedded in the task and helped constructing learning in a student-centered fashion.

The role of motivating the learners was achieved by providing learning tasks that were clearly contextualized according to the students' areas of expertise, which was noted by the supervisors. In this sense, the choice of topics for classes played a key role. Another strategy that was used to motivate the students was to personalize learning activities by including the names of the students in the exercises. This made the students feel identified with the situation presented in the materials and helped them anticipate the language they would need to participate in different events. In addition, individualized attention was provided to the students given that the group was small. This allowed the student-teachers to provide positive feedback to the students and also to challenge them in a non-threatening way.

The role of preparing the learners was not completely accomplished due to the amount of input introduced in the preparation stages. The number of new words often made learning tasks more difficult. Although the selection of language aspects was pertinent to the task, the instructors could have worked more on simplifying the activities. The increased difficulty also had an impact on learner autonomy given that they needed to rely on previous handouts and notes to perform the task successfully. This created a gap in performance when the level of difficulty was too high.

Lastly, the role of consciousness raising was mainly affected by the following two practices: providing the answers directly to the students after a task and not correcting errors immediately. The first practice changes the classroom dynamics from student centered to teacher centered. In this sense, the student teachers needed to develop more skills to obtain the answers from learners, for example, by giving hints about the answers or by asking more questions. Regarding error correction, the student teachers corrected errors mostly at the end of the class. This may have led some students to believe that their production was fully appropriate and needed no improvement. The repetition of errors throughout entire lessons could be seen as evidence of this. However, the rationale for this approach was that some students may feel threatened by direct correction and that the focus of TBLT is typically on meaning and the construction of a task rather than only on language accuracy.

5. Conclusions

The instructors are the engine of a program given that they set a language course in motion and they provide the necessary impulses for students to engage in learning and spend their class time meaningfully. Clearly stipulated roles, such as those prescribed in TBLT, appear simplify the work of instructors and provide a clear path for teaching and evaluating the achievement of program objectives. However, when following these prescriptions, instructors are expected to take on a less central role. This often poses a challenge for teachers used to the traditional teacher-centered class. Knowing when to step back is the key to fulfilling the expected roles in TBLT and it requires practice and awareness.

From the input provided, a series of recommendations have been drawn to fine-tune the performance of instructors. To guarantee the role of the instructor as task-sequencer, the authors recommend that classroom activities and work-related tasks be made to resemble each other as closely as possible. In doing this, however, the instructors must carefully preselect the content they want to teach and make sure the expected outcome matches the proficiency level of the students. When task demands are higher than the students' actual ability, performance and motivation are likely to decline, especially for less proficient learners. This decline may also result from overloading the content of a lesson. When there is too much to learn in one class, students' react more passively and become more dependent on the material provided than on their own abilities.

Along the same lines, content overload can be a drawback when it comes to preparing learners for tasks. Instructors must make sure to introduce a manageable amount of vocabulary and/or grammar content per unit so that students are capable of handling it. Another suggestion to prepare learners for tasks is to provide clear instructions, if possible divided into steps to make sure students understand explanations and follow the necessary procedures to perform the task. Extra information can only confuse the students and deviate their attention from the objective. To compensate for gaps in performance, the instructors can include communicative strategies in the materials and activate them as they present the tasks. Modeling of these strategies is necessary to guarantee that students use them.

As for the role of consciousness-raising, the authors recommend to elicit the answers from the students and only provide the answers when students don't really know them. Further, instructors should avoid delayed feedback. When students make mistakes, feedback should be provided at the moment, or else they could forget about their mistake and eventually think that their performance is flawless.

Lastly, a drawback affecting the fulfillment of all roles was the dense syllabus of the course. In the attempt to complete what turned out to be a very ambitious program, the instructors filled the lessons with large numbers of vocabulary items and structures. This took away from the goal of stepping back and allowing the students to act more independently. For future programs, the authors recommend limiting the scope of course design to a more realistic list of objectives, which allows the instructors to perform their roles with less pressure. As for further research, the authors recommend examining intrinsic factors in course design that interfere with instructors' achieving their expected roles and conducting a larger scale study to identify possible patterns in the fulfillment of instructor roles during the practicum.

6. Acknowledgement

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8. Appendices

Appendix A Evaluation Management Plan

Evaluation Question	Information Required	Design	Information Source	Method for Collecting Information
a. What was the students' rate of success performing the tasks assessed?	Students performance in: *Introducing themselves to an English speaking visitor * Talking about job related tasks * Writing a description of an insect * Helping a visitor find his way in the institute * Writing emails to arrange a meeting and to report progress on a project * Report progress on a project orally	*Internal evaluation	*Students own perception of their learning process *Teachers grading students' performance	* Written quizzesX4 *Oral presentations X3 *Self-assessment instruments X7
b. To what extent did the instructors perform the roles expected in the different stages of TBI?	*Teacher's roles according to TBI. Roles: *Selector and sequencer of tasks * Preparing learner for tasks *Conscious raising of language use *Motivating the learners	Internal and external evaluation	*Students in the course *Student teachers *Fellow colleagues * Supervisors	Mid and end of the course evaluation survey for the students Teaching journal for the student teachers Teacher assessment form for the supervisors Peer assessment forms for the colleagues
c. To what extent did the materials fulfill the principles of ESP instruction?	* Materials are appealing and enjoyable *Materials do not rely too much on controlled practice. *Materials are easy to use. *Materials are as authentic as possible. *Materials resemble what people do at work.	Internal and external evaluation	*The students in the course *The supervisors *Fellow colleagues	*Mid and end of the course evaluation survey for the students *Materials and lesson plan form supervisors *Materials form for the colleagues

Sampling	Information-Collection Procedures	Schedule	Analysis Procedures	
a. All the quizzes and oral presentations taken by all the students	*Quizzes at the end of each unit (Orally and in writing)	From August-November 2012	*Calculate the mean grade in all the quizzes.	
b.* Survey 8 participants * 19 observation forms filled out by the supervisors * 3 observation forms filled out by the colleagues	*On-going observations (by supervisors and colleagues teachers) *Survey at the mid and end of the course	From August-November 2012	*Analyzing observers' comments in terms of teachers' performance. * Midterm and end of the course survey application	
c. *Survey 8 participants * Survey two observers * Survey three colleagues	*Samples of in-class activities *Follow up interviews with some of the stakeholders *Midterm and end of the course survey application	From August-November 2012	*Analyzing observers' and students' comments in terms of materials creation * Midterm and end of the course survey application	
Reporting Procedures				
Interpretation Procedures	Audience(s)	Content	Format	Schedule
a. Rate of success is 70 or more in all the tasks assessed	* Stakeholders * Director of INBio * Committee members at the UCR	* Tasks and language use	* Technical reports	* February 2013
b. Rate of success is 70 or more in all the roles assessed	* Stakeholders * Director of INBio * Committee members at the UCR	* Roles proposed by TBI	* Technical reports	* February 2013
c. Rate of success is 70 or more in all the materials assessed.	* Stakeholders * Director of INBio * Committee members at the UCR	* ESP theory behind materials creation	* Technical reports	* February 2013

Appendix B. Peer Feedback Evaluation

Universidad de Costa Rica

Sistema de Estudios de Posgrado

Maestría en la Enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera

II, 2012; Garro, Moya, & Vargas



Evaluation Instrument for the Instructors

Instructions: While observing you fellow student teacher's performance, choose from "unsatisfactory" to "distinguished" for each component. If you have further comments, feel free to write on the observations lines below the chart.

Component	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Selector and sequencer of tasks	The sequence of activities does not conduct to task performance. Tasks lack a real purpose. Post assessment is not conducted.	The sequence of activities poorly conducts to task performance. Tasks are somewhat purposeful, but not real life oriented. Post assessment is conducted superficially .	The sequence of activities is often conducive to task performance. Tasks are purposeful, but not real life oriented. Post assessment is conducted in order to plan future lessons.	The sequence of activities is always conducive to task performance. Tasks are always purposeful and real life oriented. Post assessment is conducted thoroughly in order to plan future lessons.
Preparing learner for tasks	Interventions during the planning stage do not reflect possible linguistic and cognitive problems the students may encounter in the task.	Interventions during the planning stage reflect few possible linguistic and cognitive problems the students may encounter in the task.	Interventions during the planning stage reflect some possible linguistic and cognitive problems the students may encounter in the task.	Interventions during the planning stage reflect most possible linguistic and cognitive problems the students may encounter in the task.
Conscious raising	Interventions do not promote problem solving skills; learners are not engaged in task performance.	Interventions don't really foster the learner's curiosity and problem solving skills, and answers are given away to the learners.	Interventions often foster the learner's curiosity and problem solving skills, but answers are given away most of the time.	Interventions foster the learner's curiosity and problem solving skills, instead of giving the answers away.
Motivating the learner	Feedback is negative. Interventions don't motivate the learners to perform the tasks. Explanations are confusing for learners and are not contextualized.	Feedback is not tactful. Interventions don't promote students' enthusiasm to perform the tasks. Explanations are clear, but not contextualized.	Feedback is positive . Interventions often raise students' enthusiasm to perform the tasks. Explanations are clear, but not contextualized.	Feedback is positive. Interventions raise students' enthusiasm to perform the tasks. Explanations are clear and contextualized.

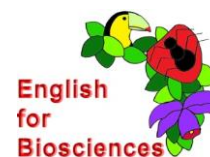
Observations: _____

Appendix C. Course Evaluation Survey

Universidad de Costa Rica

Maestría en la Enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera

II, 2012; Garro, Moya, & Vargas



Course Evaluation Survey

The purpose of this survey is to assess the quality of the instruction provided. Your input on the course content, the instructors, the materials, and your commitment and improvement will serve to provide a better learning experience to future learners. Your participation in the survey will be kept completely anonymous; therefore, your answers should be as honest and thorough as possible. Thanks for your time and cooperation!

Part I. Course content and organization

Indicate the extent to which the following aspects were accomplished during the course.

CRITERIA	Completely	To a great extent	Partially	Not at all
1. The course objectives were met				
2. The activities supported the course objectives				
3. The course content was relevant to your job				
4. The language you learned during the course can be incorporated to your work routine right away.				
5. The workload was manageable				

Part II. Instructors

Using the scale below, rate how often the instructors fulfill the descriptions in the chart.

The instructors...	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. created a respectful environment for learning.				
2. gave clear instructions.				
3. provided clear feedback.				
4. helped students improve their language performance.				
5. treated students impartially				
6. were always willing to answer students' questions.				
7. were willing to receive feedback from students.				

Part III. Commitment

Circle the option that best illustrates your point of view.

1. Indicate the amount of work you did

- a. Almost none b. What was assigned c. More than was assigned

2. Indicate your level of participation in the course activities

- a. Not very involved b. Somewhat involved c. Enthusiastically involved

Part IV. Improvement

Circle the option that best illustrates your point of view and explain why when needed.

1. In your opinion, how much progress did you make in the following areas?

- | | | | | |
|---|------|--------|------|-------|
| 1. Hosting visitors | None | Little | Some | Great |
| 2. Talking about job related tasks | None | Little | Some | Great |
| 3. Describing living organisms | None | Little | Some | Great |
| 4. Guiding tours through the institution | None | Little | Some | Great |
| 5. Devise a marketing strategy to promote a project | None | Little | Some | Great |
| 6. Emailing | None | Little | Some | Great |

2. Overall, how much knowledge did you gain from this course?

- a. A great deal b. Some c. None

Why? _____

Part V. Materials

Using the scale below, rate how often the materials fulfilled the descriptions in the chart.

The materials used so far...	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. resemble what you have to do at work				
2. are based on authentic texts				
3. are appealing				
4. are easy to use				
5. facilitate my learning process				
6. reflect the content of the course				
7. have clear instructions				
8. provide examples of real language use				
9. address my real language needs				

Part VI. Miscellaneous

1. How did you feel about the level of difficulty of the course? Explain why.

2. What additional information or knowledge would you need to help you in your work?

3. What topics should have been covered that were not?

4. Overall, how satisfied were you with the experiences during the completion of this course? Circle the option that best illustrates your point of view and explain why.

a. Very unsatisfied b. Unsatisfied c. Satisfied d. Very satisfied

Why? _____

Thanks for your participation!