



# ESP Teacher's Roles

Ella Wulandari, M.A.

wulandari.ella@uny.ac.id

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# Roles

- **A Teacher**
- **A Model of a successful language learner**
- **A professional or specialist in language teaching**

# Who is an ESP Teacher?

- Almost always s/he is a teacher of General English who has unexpectedly found him/herself required to teach students with special needs.
- The experience is often a shock – the welcome or unwelcome one.
- For non-native English teachers, there is likely to be fear that they may not cope with their students' area of specialism.
- Those who welcome ESP may have qualifications, or at least a strong interest, in another discipline.

# Personal Qualities of ESP Teacher (Robbinson, 1991:80)

- Personal attributes (enthusiasm, the ability to develop & administer a course, work-rate, rapport, a knowledge of students' world ) as equally important as the ability to write teaching materials
- An interest in the students' specialist area (at least an open mind about it), an interest in the learners' language, a readiness to respect students (whether adults or near-adults)

# ABOVE ALL,

- Key quality: flexibility
- The flexibility to change from being a general language teacher to being a specific purpose teacher, and the flexibility to cope with different groups of students, often at very short notice

# What is more about ESP Teachers

- They do not only teach. Very often, they are involved in designing, setting up and administering the ESP course.
- In nature, ESP is an integrated set of tasks involving planning, mounting, teaching, coordinating, administering a course, preparing the materials, teaching and evaluating and testing,
- (Finally) ESP teachers may well have to write reports on the students and on the course as a whole.

# Problems with ESP Teaching

- Large classes
- Classes with mixed-ability
- Grouping – whether by specialism, English proficiency, job specification or by attitude towards the target language
- Motivation (Students may not see the value of ESP courses.)
- Status, pay, and conditions
- The design of courses (esp. In business and industry) is too short with too many materials to cram in, making the students and teachers exhausted and thus the learning not effective.
- Setting → after or during office-hours → effect?

# Issue with status/professionalism

- “The ESP teacher typically leads an uneasy existence housed in a curriculum unit which exists on the margin of the academic world. It is not a situation which is conducive to a strong sense of professional identity.”
- Thus, ESP should be ‘approached systematically by well-trained, or self-trained, specialist teachers’.



# How much should the ESP teacher know of students' specialism?

- Things to think
- Whether the students are experienced in their specialism or not
- The sponsor's requirement (whether to include specific teaching of (aspects of) the specialism)
- Students' views on the role of the teacher and the nature of ELT

# So, the key is to

- Become familiar with the language of the subject
- Be educated layman
- Learn from relevant documentation e.g. Product brochures, technical specifications, instruction manuals, etc.

“undoubtedly, a knowledge of the technical area will be of great help to the language trainer. However, it’s not a pre-requisite for successful technical training.”