



BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA

FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

LICENCIATURA EN LENGUAS MODERNAS

A Practice Test Course for Intermediate students using an ESP Approach

A senior Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Languages

For the Degree of

LICENCIATURA EN LENGUAS MODERNAS

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A PRACTICE TEST COURSE FOR INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS

USING AN ESP APPROACH

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DEDICATIONS

First, I thank to God for blessing me, protecting me and guiding me in my life. Moreover, I thank to my parents Maria Luisa Isabel Hernández Ramirez and Reyes Gaspar Medina Padilla for helping me in my education, caring me and loving me all this time. I never expressed in words as how much I love them but I want to thank them for their blessings and their teachings in making my life meaningful. I thank to my son, my girlfriend and my brothers for all their love. All of them inspire me to do my best, work hard and be responsible in order to become a better person every day. They are the best of my life; I want to thank them for everything and for being part of my life.

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Abstract

This is a proposal of skill syllabus to complement and adapt interesting and challenging material from different Preliminary English books that contribute in the improvement of language skills. This project was conducted by an ESP approach and needs analysis, Smoak (2003) argued that “Observation and analysis are essential to find out what the real language needs are” (p.23). This report a mixed method study concerning these specific group of High school students, they study in a Private Language Institution called Dynamic Learning School, who require a preparation and training in order to approve successfully a Preliminary English Test. The purpose of this paper is to identify students’ needs in order to develop a syllabus, as well as, select authentic material considering the content, and the information students’ provided. This paper first presents some aspects of ESP that are important for developing of needs analysis. Secondly the description of the data collection process and the importance of the study will be presented. Finally, a detail description about the results of two questionnaires obtained through teachers’ and students’ experiences and perspectives, applied to thirteen high school students and two teachers showed to be fundamental for the creation of an appropriate curriculum design, and the material selection to fit these students’ needs in the context of the study.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale for topic selection

Nowadays, the necessities of students to improve their language skills require being more competitive in this globalize world to enhance the opportunities to obtain a better job. For this reason, they application of new curriculums facilitate and innovate the way of teaching and learning .This is the case of ESP approach that provides an improvement and a development of language skills establishing specific goals according students' needs.

According to Hyland Most argued that “ESP courses place considerable emphasis on the students' preparation in order to achieve their goals, providing guidance in different challenging activities. “ (388, 2002)

Indeed, for the complementation of a syllabus is necessary to base on teachers' and students' perceptions and experiences which support in the design of a skill syllabus to discover students' weaknesses and strengths. All of these considerations facilitate and enhance the development of the course for an effective preparation of this test course.

I decided to conduct this study by two questionnaires, the first one to know teachers' perceptions and experiences about how they prepare and train their students and the second questionnaire to recognize the students' weaknesses. This instrument provides me a support to face the students' necessities and establish specific purposes for the complementation of this practice test course.

This project will be useful to complement this skill syllabus that contributes to the improvement of students languages skills. All the participants are going to be

guided by a test training that help in the development of strategies to approve successfully a B1 certification (PET).

1.2 Significance of the topic

The significance of this project is to complement a skill syllabus according to students' needs which help them in the improvement of their language skills and facilitate the development of strategies, using challenging and authentic material for their training to answer successfully. In this way, students will obtain a great benefit familiarizing with the test and practicing through their own experiences and language use.

1.3 The theoretical context of the research

Previous research about English for Specific Purposes course (ESP) and needs analysis, According to Iwai (1999) defined "the term needs analysis generally refers to the activities that are involved in collecting information that will serve as the basis for developing a curriculum that will meet the needs of a particular group of students." The outcomes could support the complementation future syllabus and curriculums for the students' preparation to approve a certification successfully. On the hand, Richards, Platt and Weber defined (1985, p.189) as "the process of determining the needs according to priorities. Needs assessment makes use of both subjective and objective information (e.g., data from questionnaires, test, interviews, observation)." This research will be focused on finding out the students necessities using questionnaires for the elaboration of a skill syllabus. Teaching students through some paper skills which contribute in the improvement of their

skills and strategies. In addition, it will be possible to explore and understand the most relevant data that they were exposed. This research might be very important because it is going to clarify the students' and teachers perspectives for the development and organization of this test comparing and analyzing them. The doubt emerged thinking about the poor efficiency of courses to approve a B1 certification and how to guide students during the process of their preparation to determine specific goals according to students' priorities.

1.4 Research Setting

The project will be carried in a Private Language Institution of central Mexico, these intermediate students are from High schools, who come from different parts of the state, and their average age is between 16 and 18 years old. Indeed, I chose this place because I am in charge of designing a Preliminary English Course about 16 hours. It is one of the most important and concurrent language Institutions in Puebla located in downtown of Puebla City.

1.5 Aims

The aim of the project is to complement and adapt material for an efficient Practice Test Course that contributes in the improvement of students' language skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking. The material complement the existing syllabus skill that is based on teachers' and students' experiences, priorities and perceptions taken from the needs analysis instrument, all of these significant information enrich the development and adaptation of different and interesting material from different PET books that provide challenging tasks for each class.

1.6 Research questions

1. What are the needs of these students require approving the Preliminary English Test?
2. What kind of syllabus would be appropriated for these students to improve their language skills?

CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

2.0 Chapter overview

This chapter presents a detailed description of the steps taken to develop this study, such as the instrument used to collect information, and the procedure for analyzing the data.

2.1 Research Design

In this research design makes reference to the most important data which were taken into account for this study that was approached from the curriculum development in order to find out the students priorities for their preparation and training. This study is guided by a mixed method which involves the collection of the most important data in order to enrich this Practice Test Course. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) defined mixed methods as the combination of “qualitative and quantitative approaches in the methodology of a study” (p. ix). The advantages of the utilization facilitates a deep analysis to reinforce the investigation and complement this Practice Test Course

2.2. Research Setting

As a mentioned before this research was situated in a private language institution, it called Dynamic Learning School. This Institution is located downtown Puebla City. This proposal will be implemented in this Institution for this particular group of High School students who seek to obtain a B1 certification of English. This is an urban place in which we could find different students who came from several parts

of the city and different High Schools. Moreover, it was only one group which had enlisted thirteen students for the current study. In addition, this class schedule was from 9 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. every Saturday.

2.3 Participants

This study was centered on students who want to participate in a Preparation Test course. All of them are students at different high schools from Puebla State. They want to obtain a certification of the English Languages. In addition, these students were male and female with ages between 19 to 20 years old. The participants belonged to different social statuses and according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages their level fits that of a B1. For this preparation test course six women and eight men were considered for the participation of this Practice Test Course.

2.4 Instruments

For this research was necessary the utilization of two questionnaires, this instrument contributed in the recollection of data to establish validity and reliability. In this way, both questionnaires were necessary in order to compare the teachers' and students perspectives to complement and adapt an appropriate skill syllabus according to students' needs and priorities for the improvement of their language skills.

2.4.1. Questionnaires

In this investigation was essential to use two questionnaires to gather information on perspectives and experience. It was used to explore potentially embarrassing areas and at the same time it was facilitated the contacting of large numbers of people quickly, easily and efficiently. All of this information had a systematic development that was conceptualized to establish the format and the data analysis.

2.5 Description of the data collection process

The utilization of this instrument was essential, fourteen High School students participated to answer and make a deep analysis. The data for this research will be collected by two questionnaires. The questionnaires consist about what students require to improve their language skills according to their necessities based on teachers and students' perspectives. Students and teachers have to answer what are their priorities to complement this Practice Test Course. The First questionnaire was applied to teachers to know their perspectives about how they prepare and train their students before doing the Preliminary English Test. The second questionnaire was applied to High school students to know about their priorities during the course to approve the test. All this data was recollected to analyze carefully and for the complementation of the course according to students' necessities and priorities.

2.6 Data analysis

In this section presents the data analysis and how it was carried in this study. The data analysis was based on the responses of these particular participants. As I described before, I decided to use a mixed method approach to obtain reliable results All of these information was analyzed and the results were interpreted.

CHAPTER III: RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Introduction

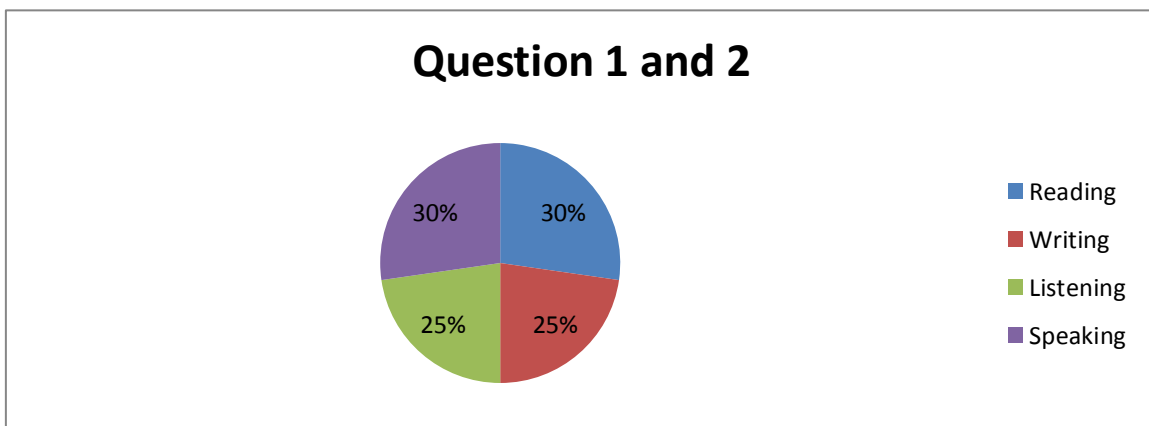
This chapter presents a detailed description the steps taken for a need analysis instrument. Indeed, the purpose of this project is to develop a skills syllabus based on an ESP approach. The data was collected by two different questioners, the first one focused on teachers' perspectives and experiences and the second one focused on students' needs. All of these results were gathered in order to provide meaningful information. The results of questionnaires are shown in graphs; later the information is described and interpreted.

3.2 Results

3.2.1 Teachers' experiences and perceptions.

This analysis shows the teachers' perceptions and experiences when they prepare their students according to their priorities to pass successfully the Preliminary English Test. Teachers' answers were enumerated from the most important language skills to the least important.

Fig 1. Students' language skills needs

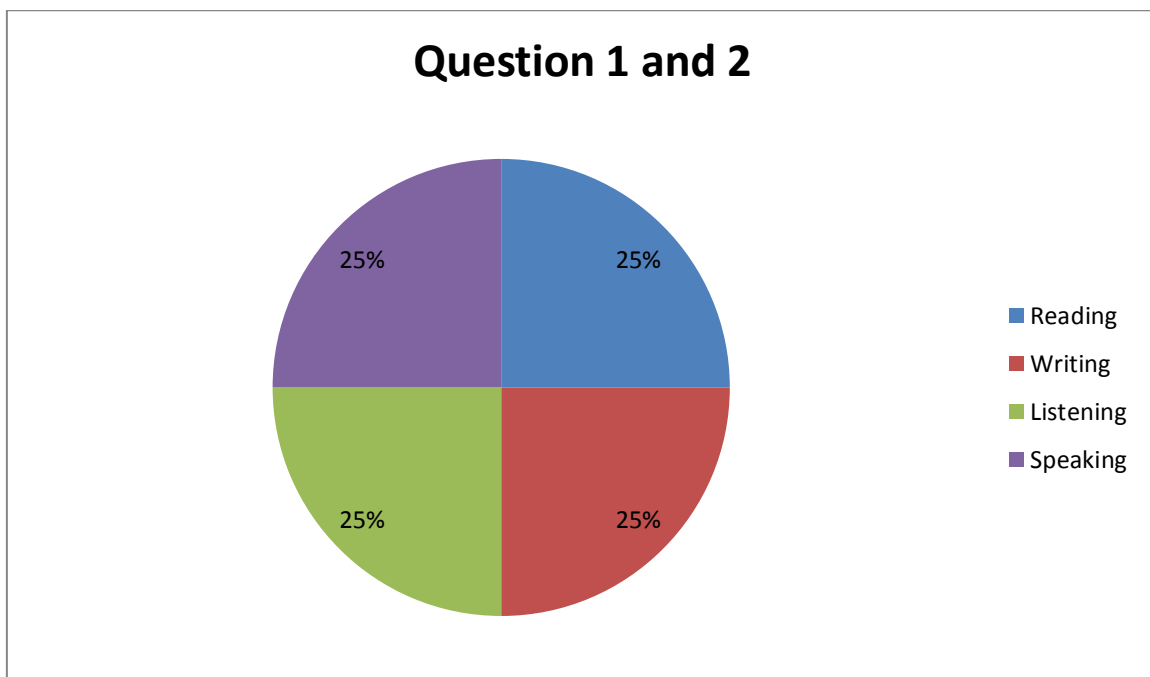


As it is shown in the graph, the trends most common are “speaking and writing” the 30% of the teachers answered “speaking”, the other 30% of the teachers answered “writing”. The 25% of the teachers answered “listening” and the other 20% of the teachers answered “writing”.

3.2.2 Students’ language skills needs.

This analysis shows what the students’ language skills needs during their preparation of the course. According to students’ answers were enumerated from the most important language skills to the least important.

Fig 2.Students’ language skills needs

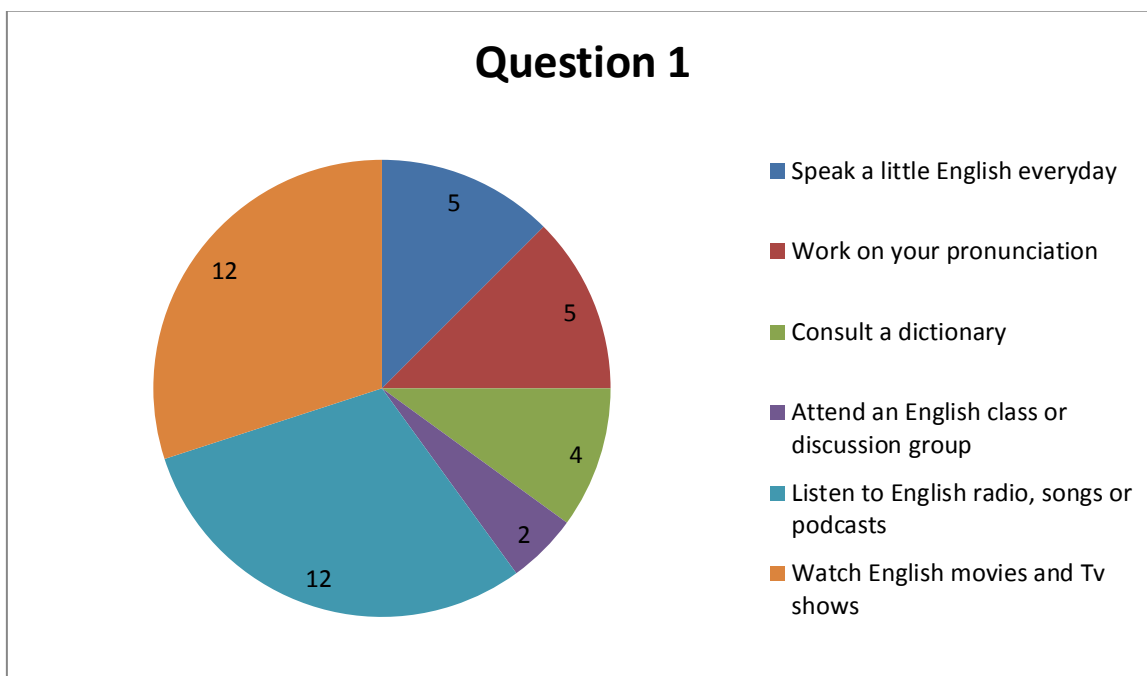


As it is shown in the graph, the trend most common is research information before students present their oral presentation, all of these are important weaknesses that students require to improve, the 35% of the students answered “speaking”, 25% of the students answered “reading and writing”, 15% of the students answered “reading”.

3.2.3 Students' strategies to improve their language skills

The following graphs compare the different results between teachers' and students' perceptions, this analyses what strategies students use to improve their language skills. The most important strategies have 12 votes and the least important has 2 votes. These results can be shown in graph 3.

Fig 3. Students' strategies

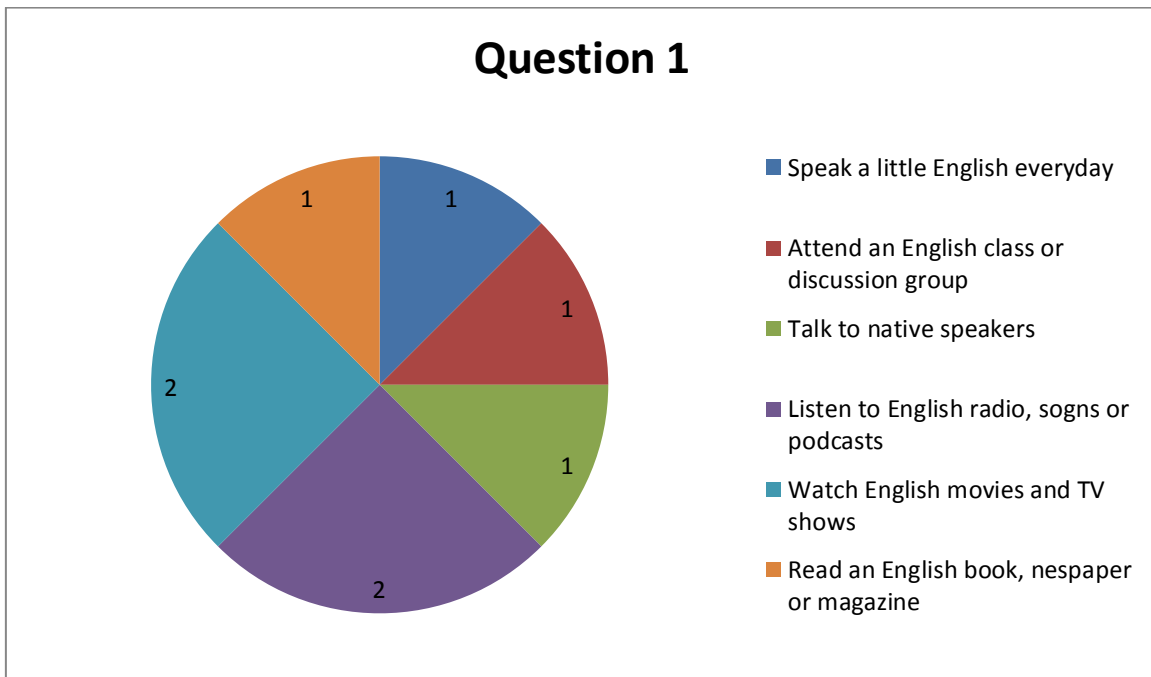


As it was mentioned before, the information of graph 3 shows students toward the most important strategies that students use. 12 students answered "listen to English radio, songs or podcasts and "watch English movies and TV shows", 5 students answered "speak a little English every day" and "work on your pronunciation", 4 students answered "consult a dictionary fluency", others 2 students answered "attend an English class or discussion group."

3.2.4 Teachers' perceptions about students' strategies

The next graph shows the teachers' perspectives about what strategies students use to improve their language skills. The most important strategies have 2 votes and the least 1 vote. The results are presented in the graph 4.

Fig 4. Students' strategies



As it can be observed, 2 teachers answered “listen to English radio, songs or podcasts and “watch English movies and TV shows” and one teacher answered “speak a little English every day”, “work on your pronunciation”, “talk to native speakers” and “attend an English class or discussion group.”

3.3 Design and justify your syllabus

This syllabus for the course was designed carefully for four sessions, every session lasts 4:00 hours and each hour is dedicated to the preparation of each one of the papers skills in order to approve successfully after taking this course. This

course is based on the four language skills to improve the material was selected from different PET books in order to provide challenging and interesting activities.

3.4 Sample of Syllabus

Cambridge Practice Tests- First Session				
First Session First week				
Paper or Skill	Time	Strategies and Teaching techniques	Format	Task Focus
Speaking Practice test Part 1	5 minutes	The examiner asks the applicant some questions in order to interchange information about personal information about his/her life.	Personal information, asking and answering questions (2-3 minutes)	Asking for and giving personal information. 1. Please sit down. What's your name? 2. Can you tell me How old are you? 3. What part of your city do you live? 4. Can you spell that? 5. What is your street called? 6. When did you be studying English? 7. Are you learning English for a special purpose or for fun?

One of the purposes of this project is to complement and adapt challenging and authentic material in order to improve the different language skills. According to the results of the instrument, I decide to complement this syllabus using material from different Preliminary English Books which are appropriated according to each category of the test. For this reason, the syllabus was dedicated one hour per skill for each class which guarantees equilibrium for the development of them. Moreover, the utilization of authentic material and teaching strategies were useful for the acquisition of new vocabulary, the development of reading strategies such as skimming, scanning and speed reading, the range of communicative competencies and enhance positive attitudes in the language use and in the comprehension of real conversations in different contexts of the daily life in order to fulfill the students' necessities to answer successfully the Preliminary English Test.

3.5 Conclusion

As a conclusion; it is clear that not only the teachers have the reason to determine the students' necessities because each group of students requires improving different language skills according to their capacities. For this reason, it is necessary a deep analysis for the complementation of any course which guarantee to find out the students' weaknesses in order to reinforce this Preliminary English Course. On the other hand, the selection of material is relevant to test students each class for the development of strategies which help students to answer efficiently the Preliminary English Test.

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Appendix 1

Needs Assessment: EAP Learner Sample Questionnaire

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. Order the skills that you need to improve from 1 to 4. Number 1 is the most important and number 4 is the least important to you at this time. Please use each number only one time.

____ Reading ____ Listening ____ Writing ____ Speaking

2. When people speak British English to you, how much do you understand?
Check the amount.

_____ everything ____ most ____ some ____ a little _____ very little

3 What strategies do you use to improve your language skills?

Improving your speaking skill

_____ Speak a little English everyday

_____ Work on your pronunciation

_____ Expand your vocabulary and use idiomatic phrases

_____ Attend an English class or discussion group

_____ Consult a dictionary

_____ Talk to native speakers

_____ Other

Improving your writing, reading and listening skills

_____ Listen to English radio, songs or podcasts

_____ Watch English movies and TV shows

_____ Read an English book, newspaper or magazine

_____ Keep a diary in English

_____ Find an English-speaking pen-pal

_____ Other

4. Order the skills that you need to improve when you surf the internet from 1 to 6. Number 1 is the most important and number 6 is the least important to you at this time. Please use each number only one time.

___ Reading ___ Writing ___ Listening

___ Speaking ___ Vocabulary ___ Pronunciation

B1 Grammar topics

5. These are topics you need to study to pass an exam at B1 level, such as Cambridge English Preliminary. Mark (✓) the grammar topics that you require to improve.

_____ Adverbs

_____ Both, either, neither

_____ Broader range of intensifiers; So, such, too, enough

_____ Comparatives and superlatives

_____ Question tags

_____ Conditionals, 2nd and 3rd

_____ Connecting words expressing

_____ cause and effect, contrast etc.

_____ Embedded questions

_____ Future continuous

_____ Modals - must/can't deduction

_____ Modals – might, may, will, probably

_____ Modals – should have/might have/etc.

_____ Modals: must/have to

_____ Past continuous

_____ Past perfect

_____ Past simple

- _____ Past tense responses
- _____ Phrasal verbs, extended
- _____ Prepositions of place
- _____ Present perfect continuous
- _____ Present perfect/past simple
- _____ Reported speech (range of tenses)
- _____ Simple passive
- _____ Wh- questions in the past
- _____ Will and going to, for prediction

Vocabulary Topics

6. All the words in this section are in the Cambridge PET word list. These are the important words you need to know to pass an exam. Mark (✓) the vocabulary topics that you require to improve.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| _____ Appliances | _____ Personal Feelings, Opinions and Experiences |
| _____ Buildings | _____ Places: Countryside |
| _____ Clothes | _____ Places: Town and City |
| _____ Colours | _____ Services |
| _____ Education | _____ Shopping |
| _____ Entertainment and Media | _____ Sport |
| _____ Environment | _____ Technology and Communications |
| _____ Food and Drink | _____ The Natural World |
| _____ Health, Medicine and Exercise | _____ Travel and Transport |
| _____ Hobbies and Leisure | _____ Weather |
| _____ House and Home | _____ Work and Jobs |
| _____ Language | |

Appendix 2

Needs Assessment: EAP Teacher Sample Questionnaire

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Order the skills that students need to improve from 1 to 4. Number 1 is the most important and number 4 is the least important to you at this time. Please use each number only one time.

____ Reading

____ Writing

____ Listening

____ Speaking

2. When students listen to British English, how much do they understand? Check the amount.

_____ everything _____ most _____ some _____ a little _____ very little

3. What do students require to improve their language skills?

Reading: _____

Writing: _____

Listening: _____

Speaking: _____

4. What common strategies do students use to improve their language skills?

Improving your speaking skill

_____ Speak a little English everyday

_____ Work on your pronunciation

_____ Expand your vocabulary and use idiomatic phrases

_____ Attend an English class or discussion group

_____ Carry a dictionary

_____ Talk to native speakers

_____ Other

Improving your writing, reading and listening skills

_____ Listen to English radio, songs or podcasts

_____ Watch English movies and TV shows

_____ Read an English book, newspaper or magazine

_____ Keep a diary in English

_____ Find an English-speaking pen-pal

_____ Other

5. Order the skills that students need to improve when they surf the internet from 1 to 6. Number 1 is the most important and number 6 is the least important to you at this time. Please use each number only one time.

____Reading ____Writing ____Listening ____Speaking ____Vocabulary

____Pronunciation

6. What are your recommendations to prepare students for Preliminary English Test?

7. What kind of experiences have you had during the preparation of your students for Preliminary English Test?

B1 Grammar topics

8. These are topics that students need to study to pass an exam at B1 level, such as Cambridge English Preliminary. Mark (✓) the grammar topics that students need to improve.

_____ Adverbs

_____ Both, either, neither

- _____ Broader range of intensifiers; so, such, too, enough
- _____ Comparatives and superlatives
- _____ Question tags
- _____ Conditionals, 2nd and 3rd
- _____ Connecting words expressing
- _____ Cause and effect, contrast etc.
- _____ Embedded questions
- _____ Future continuous
- _____ Modals - must/can't deduction
- _____ Modals – might, may, will, probably
- _____ Modals – should have/might have/etc.
- _____ Modals: must/have to
- _____ Past continuous
- _____ Past perfect
- _____ Past simple
- _____ Past tense responses
- _____ Phrasal verbs, extended
- _____ Prepositions of place
- _____ Present perfect continuous
- _____ Present perfect/past simple
- _____ Reported speech (range of tenses)
- _____ Simple passive
- _____ Wh- questions in the past
- _____ Will and going to, for prediction

Vocabulary Topics

9. All the words in this section are in the Cambridge PET word list. These are the important words students need to know to pass their exam. Mark (✓) the vocabulary topics that students need to improve.

_____ Appliances

_____ Language

_____ Buildings

_____ Personal Feelings, Opinions
and Experiences

_____ Clothes

_____ Places: Countryside

_____ Colours

_____ Places: Town and City

_____ Education

_____ Services

_____ Entertainment and Media

_____ Shopping

_____ Environment

_____ Sport

_____ Food and Drink

_____ Technology and
Communications

_____ Health, Medicine and
Exercise

_____ The Natural World

_____ Hobbies and Leisure

_____ Travel and Transport

_____ House and Home

_____ Weather

_____ Work and Jobs

APPENDIX C

PRACTICE TEST COURSE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

School: Dynamic Learning School

Time: 4 hours per session **Level:** B1

Place of Course in Program: The purpose of this Practice Test Course is to provide students practice in the skills needed to answer the questions and give information about questions and advice on answering them. On the other hand, students will gain their first exposure to test every class in the language skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Aim: After this course will enable students to pass a B1 certification successfully.

OBJECTIVES

Reading

By the end of the course, the students will be able to acquire different reading strategies and improve their vocabulary and reading speed, using authentic material such as newspaper and magazines, reviews, advertisements, brochures and leaflets, instructions, etc.

Writing

By the end of the course, the students will be able to write the transition from sentences and long pieces of prose.

Listening

By the end of the course, the students will be able to understand the gist of what is being said and it will get them used to hearing English spoken in a range of situations. For details of British overseas broadcasts, write to The BBC, Bush House, PO Box 76, The Strand, London WC2 4PH.

Speaking

By the end of the course, the students will be able to acquire and practice oral skills, though a variety of classroom materials activities.

The structure of PET

The examination consists of Paper 1 (Reading and Writing), Paper 2 (Listening) and the Speaking test.

Paper 1	1 hour 30 minutes	Reading	5 parts
		Writing	3 Parts
Paper 2	30 minutes + 12 minutes transfer time	Listening	4 parts
Speaking	Individual: 8 minutes approximately. Pair: 10 minutes approximately.		4 parts

Cambridge Practice Test Course- First Session

First Session First week

Paper or Skill	Time	Strategies and Teaching techniques	Format	Task Focus
Speaking Practice test Part 1	5 minutes	The examiner asks the applicant some questions in order to interchange information about personal information about his/her life.	Personal information, asking and answering questions (2-3 minutes)	Asking for and giving personal information. 1. Please sit down. What's your name? 2. Can you tell me How old are you? 3. What part of your city do you live? 4. Can you spell that? 5. What is your street called? 6. When did you be studying English? 7. Are you learning English for a special purpose or for fun?
Speaking Practice test Part 2 (Page 77)	5 minutes	The examiner gives the applicant a paper sheet to describe it and give specific details about the pictures.	Discussing pictures (2-3 minutes)	The examiner describe a situation and, usually , gives the candidate(s) a visual prompt, which may be a picture or a short piece of written material.

<p>Reading Practice test Part 1</p> <p>5 signs or notices</p> <p>(page 66)</p>	<p>10 minutes</p>	<p>-Students translate some signs in your own language which have an international significance.</p> <p>-Students guess where the signs might have appeared as this will help them with the context.</p> <p>-Students realize that the correct multiple choice option must have exactly the same meanings as the</p>	<p>5 signs with multiple-choice questions (5-7 minutes)</p>	<p>Candidates are presented with five signs or notices. They are based on authentic signs that a candidate may come across in public places in an English-speaking environment. Each sign is accompanied by a four-opinion multiple choice question, only one of the options conveying exact meaning of the sign. This is a standard example showing candidates what to do.</p>
<p>Reading Practice test Part 2</p> <p>Guided walks</p> <p>(page 67)</p>	<p>15 minutes</p>	<p>-Remind students that only one description matches each person and some of the other descriptions may fit in some ways but not all. They should go back and check when they have finished to make sure they haven't missed something.</p>	<p>5 Descriptions of people to be matched to the texts</p>	<p>Candidates are presented with five short descriptions of individuals or groups of people which have to be matched with eight short descriptions or advertisements on a related theme, e.g. holidays, activities, books, films, TV programmes, etc. Only one of the eight descriptions suits each individual/group exactly. Three of the descriptions are not needed.</p>

<p>Listening Practice test Part 1</p> <p>Seven short recordings (one or two people speaking)</p> <p>page 73</p>	<p>10 minutes</p>	<p>-Students practice in listening to small snatches of English and understanding the main idea of what is being said.</p> <p>-Students can look at the pictures before they listen. They can think of some of the words needed in English to describe them and examine them for differences so they will have an idea of what to listen for on the tape.</p> <p>-Students focus question can give an idea of what is going to come on the tape, e.g. it is about a journey. One picture is the correct answer, even though aspects of the others may be mentioned.</p>	<p>7 multiple choice questions (pictorial), each with 4 options</p>	<p>Candidates hear seven short recordings of a few sentences each. Each one is played twice. They are unrelated and may be dialogues or monologues. For each one, candidates are asked a focus question (on the tape and on the question paper) and in order to answer, they have to choose between four pictures, only one of which sums up what they have heard and answers the focus question.</p>
<p>Writing Practice test</p>		<p>-Students do not need to write sentences on form-</p>		<p>The candidates are presented with a form and are required to fill in specific</p>

<p>Part 2 Fashion today Page 71</p>	<p>5 minutes</p>	<p>one or two words are usually enough. They should imagine that this is a real form so the information supplied should be adequate.</p>	<p>5 Sentence transformations</p>	<p>information about themselves by writing words, numbers and short phrases in the ten gaps.</p>
<p>Writing Practice test Part 3 Letter Page 72</p>	<p>15 minutes</p>	<p>-Students practice writing about 100 words. Once they know what 100 words of their own writing looks like, they will have a good idea when they have written the required amount without having to count every word. -Students should control their language at the same time as using their imagination and use these strategies: define your task, note down their ideas, put them in order, write and check.</p>	<p>1 form-filling task with 10 spaces to fill</p>	<p>Candidates are asked to write a letter of about 100 words. They are given the context and the first sentence. They are expected to be able to use a range of structures and vocabulary and to organize their thoughts coherently in order to complete the task.</p>