

A step-by-step approach – The critical role of the needs analysis in teaching aviation English

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Presentation

This presentation highlighted how using the communicative method of teaching for learners of English in aeronautical communications requires a focused and appropriate needs analysis in order to achieve a learner's objectives.

It looked at why such a complex interaction of language skills requires this non-prescriptive method of teaching and then how we identify a learner's objectives. Working back from that point we need to then establish the requirement for a needs analysis as the basis for our curriculum development.

Following the theoretical background I demonstrated key tools from my own experience that can be used in carrying out this analysis – diagnostic tests as well as formative and summative assessments, and show how, from such tools, teachers can identify the language skills that require focused learning.

Workshop

The interactive workshops guided teachers towards realizing the needs analysis taking into account the learner's current level of language proficiency and the current stage of learning in addition to longer-term objectives.

Participants were invited to consider and evaluate possible methods of conducting a needs analysis with their own students before being divided into groups, each group with a learner/learner's profiles (pilots & controllers) – including the current situation and required objectives, from my own recent teaching. Each group was then asked to consider and analyse the profiles in order to discuss how to:

- a) assess current proficiency levels.
- b) define likely language and communicative skills that require focused learning.
- c) identify possible methodology and materials for curriculum development.

Participants finally had the opportunity to discuss their findings and make comparisons with methods that I employed with the learners.