LANGUAGE COURSE MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Effective and successful language course needs careful management. Language course management includes four main steps: course design, course promotion, course implementation, and course evaluation. Language

work (Rowntree (1986) cited by Bunyi (1995: 126). Design is the overall plan, picture, framework or structure with which to work in creating the final product (Bunyi, 1995: 127). Further, she defines course design as the planning and writing of a framework to guide the teaching and learning of a unit.

Similar opinion on course design is proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1997: 65). They state that course design is the process by which the raw data about a learning need is interpreted in order to produce an integrated series of teaching-learning experiences, whose ultimate aim is to lead the learners to a particular state of knowledge. In addition, they point out that course design is a negotiated process and dynamic process. The former refers to a process of negotiation between individuals and society. Society sets the targets and the individuals must do their best to get as close to that target as possible. The latter implies that the course design needs to have built-in feedback channels to enable the course to respond to development.

2.2 Course Design Process

Taba (1962) quoted by Dubin and Olshtain (1990: 2) states that course design processes include (1) diagnosis of needs, (2) formulation of objectives, (3) selection of content, (4) organization of content, (5) selection of learning experiences, (6) determination of what to evaluate, and what means to evaluate.Bunyi (1995: 128) proposes that there are five major steps in the course design process namely: (1) situation analysis, (2) objectives formulation, (3) content derivation, (4) selection of appropriate methods and media, (5) determination of evaluation procedures and schedule.

Combining Taba's ideas and Bunyi's opinions, the course design processes comprise (1) situational analysis, (2) diagnosis of needs, (3) objectives formulation, (4) selection and organization of content, (5) selection and organization of learning experiences, (6) selection of appropriate methods and media, (7) determination of what to evaluate, what means to evaluate, and schedule.

2.3 Approach to Course Design

In order to achieve the objectives of the course, it is necessary to adopt the most suitable approach. Hutchinson and Waters (1997: 65-67) point out that there are four approaches in language course design; (1) language-centred approach, (2) skills-centred approach, (3) learning-centred approach, and (4) learner-centred approach. Language-centred approach fails to recognize the fact that learners are human beings, and learning is not a straightforward, logical process. The skills-centred approach is founded on two fundamental principles; one theoretical, the other pragmatic. The basic theoretical hypothesis is that underlying any language behavior are certain skills and strategies, which the learner uses in order to produce or comprehend a discourse. The pragmatic basis for ths skills-centred approach is derived from a distinction made by Widdowson (1981) between goal oriented courses and process-oriented courses. This approach viewes the learner as *a user of language* rather than *a learner of language*.

A learning-centred approach indicates that the concern is maximize learning. Learning, as an internal process, is seen as a process in which the learners use what knowledge or skills they have in order to make sense of the flow of new information. The learner-centred approach is based on the principle that learning is totally determined by the learner.

2.4 Practical Points of Language Course Deisign in Practice

There are several practical points of course design namely: (a) rationale, (b) goal and objectives, (c) approach, (d) curriculum and syllabus, (e) method and media, (f) time

schedule, and (g) tuition. Rationale in language course design should be able to show the importance and the benefits after joining the course. Objectives can be behavioral objectives, skills-based objectives, and content-based objectives (Richards, 1997: 5-6). Behavioral objectives are stated in iterms of behavior, describing the behavior to be performed and the conditions under which the performance expected to occur, and are stated in a standard of acceptable performances.

Skills-based objectives are differentiated between macroskills and microskills. The macroskills are listening, speaking, reading and writing skill. The microskills are the subs of each macroskills. In specifying microskills, the language course designer tries to describe the competencies that account for functional abilities in a given skill. Besides those objectives, many language course specify objectives in relation to content.

The approach adopted in a language course should take into account the objectives of the course. The approach and objectives of the course are important, because teaching methods and techniques, teaching materials, and assessment can be determined from these two aspects.

Curriculum is concerned with making general statements about language learning, the learning purposes and experience, and the role relationships between tutors and learners. Syllabus refers to a subpart of curriculum which is concerned with a specification of units to be taught. In addition, syllabus focuses more narrowly on the selecting and grading of language teaching materials. In designing syllabus, there are three main points that should be considered namely: (1) analysis of the language (its components, rules, skills, microskills, functions, notions, aspects, use), (2) information about the learners (the kind of academic and experience background, motivation, demographic backgraound, learning strategy, learning styles, and types of learner), and (3) beliefs about language learning (behaviorism, mentalism, cognitivism).

Syllabus can be differentiated into product-oriented syllabus and process-oriented syllabus. Product-oriented sylabus are those in which the focus is on the knowledge and skills which the learners should gain as the results of the course, while process-oriented sylabus are those which focus on the learning experiences. The former suggests a synthetic language teaching strategy in which the different parts of language are taught separately step by step so that the acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up. The latter is organized in terms of purposes for which learners are learning language and the kinds of language perfomance necessary to meet those purposes (Nunan, 1997: 27-28).

Method applied and media chosen should consider the approach adopted and the kind and types of learners. From the language teaching method, the tutor can derive the suitable teaching tehniques. Of course, in determining teaching techniques, he/she should also take into account the language teaching materials used in the course.

Time schedule should be negotiated to the learners, so that the tutor and the learners are able to enjoy the language course conducted. Usually the time schedule covers the day, the time, subject of the course, the place, and the name of the tutor. In making a time schedule, it is necessary to consider the type of the language course carried out, whether intensive or nonintensive program. The length of the course is also important to take into consideration. A language course which is too long can be boring language course, while one that is too short can be "unsatisfactory".

Another important point that must be negotiated between the language course designer and the learners is the course tuition. The course tuition is the tuition for the tutor and his/her transportation, the cost for the maintenance of

setting and facilities, teaching materials, testing, and certificate fee.

3. Course Promotion

Course promotion is an essential point in language course management. If our promotion is not interesting and promising, the course designer will not get "the consumer" of the course. The points of the course that can attract consumers are among others the course

instructor, explainer, transmitter of knowledge, and corrector of errors. Reconstructionism suggests the roles of the tutor as a model, organizer, manager of learning experiences. Progressivism argues that the roles of the tutor as facilitator of learning, negotiator of course content and process, as responder to learners' needs, and encourager of learners' responsibilty.

The learners are involved in the teach-

place?.

The answer to the first aspect is everything of significance, for example, the syllabus, the course materials, the teaching procedures and techniques, the media used, the learning activities, the learning tasks, the learning experiences, the testing procedures, logistical/administrative arrangements, and the course evaluati-on system. In short, can it answer the question, "*Is the language course conducted fulfilling the learners' learning and using needs?*"

Most language courses are evaluated by using test results, questionnaires, discussions, interviews, and informal means. The information got, if it is extensive must be summarirized, then it needs to be discussed with all interested parties, afterwards drawing some conclusions drawn to decide what next to do.

The group involved in language course evaluation can be the language course institution, the tutors, the learners, and the course sponsors. Each group may have their own perception of value about the course based on their interest and concern. It is important to carry out course evaluation occur (a) in the first week of the course, (b) at regular intervals throughout the course, (c) at the end of the course, and (d) (if possible) after the course.

6. Conclusion

Language course management is crucial for the course manager. The success or failure of a language course is much determined by language course management. Careful management influences the effectiveness, effeciency, and the success of conducting a language course.

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