WHAT'S MY METHODOLOGY?
Qual é a minha Metodologia?

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Abstract

This article addresses a major problem in the Brazilian ESP community, where members may define themselves as sharing a common methodology, but in practice sometimes depart from it. This leads to conflicts between what teachers recognise as an 'official' methodology and what really happens in the classroom. The article examines data to show the existence of the problem and searches for a solution in looking at different, and sometimes confusing uses of the term 'methodology' and their implications. In conclusion, the article proposes that methodology should be seen as a framework for making decisions as part of a dialogic process, and not as a fixed set of accepted practices.

Key words: *methodology; teacher cognition; ESP; classroom research.*

Resumo

Este trabalho enfoca um problema importante dentro da comunidade de inglês instrumental no Brasil, em que os membros se definem compartilhando uma metodologia comum mas, na realidade, às vezes recorrem a outras abordagens. Isso gera conflitos entre uma metodologia conhecida como 'oficial' e o quê de fato acontece em sala de aula. O trabalho analisa dados para mostrar a existência do problema e busca uma solução investigando os diferentes usos do termo 'metodologia' e suas implicações. Para concluir, o autor sugere que qualquer metodologia deve ser vista como um conjunto de conceitos que ajudam a tomar decisões, como parte de um processo dialógico, e não como uma estrutura rígida de práticas que devem ser aceitas.

Palavras chave: *metodologia; inglês instrumental; cognição do professor; pesquisa de sala de aula.*

1.   Twenty years on

I recently attended the 13th Annual Brazilian ESP Conference in October 1999, in Rio de Janeiro. As someone who had been to my first Brazilian ESP conference in 1980, it was highly stimulating to see that Brazilian ESP, over 20 years after it first began, is still alive and developing, with familiar faces and a large number of younger ESP practitioners. But I also had a strange sense of déjà vu, which took me back to the 1980s when I was involved with my colleagues in the first years of the project. Some of the issues that were addressed in papers, or in discussions, were related to questions which had been featured in many previous ESP conferences and seminars. For example:

> *Should we teach grammar before we deal with comprehension?*
> *How much vocabulary should we pre-teach before reading a text?*
> *How much should we use the mother tongue in an EAP course?*

Didn't we settle these issues back in the 1980s? How is it possible that we are still, after numerous working papers and articles, debating the role of grammar and reading strategies in our ESP courses? The thought came to me that having a generally agreed 'ESP Methodology' in Brazil may create more problems than it solves by causing a conflict with some individuals' own experience and practice.

The role of an ESP methodology raises a number of important points and I should like to focus on what seems to me to be a general misunderstanding, or lack of consensus, about the nature of methodology. This does not just mean methodology for the teaching of ESP in Brazil, but for any language teaching.

For many people, a 'methodology' seems to mean a set of 'correct' principles to be followed. For example, in Brazilian ESP these principles were built up by consensus, through seminars, conferences, published papers, and workshops, over the years. Later on, many already experienced teachers who came into the project seemed to experience a conflict between what was taught by the 'official' channels and what they themselves had found to be successful in years of practice. Thus, at recent conferences it often seems as if teachers have two professional

systems: a personal 'classroom' methodology, built up from experience, and an 'official' methodology, linked to the syllabus, the textbook and the profession. Hence the papers in which the 'official methodology' is questioned by lessons taught by previous experience.

It sometimes seems that having a generally agreed 'ESP Methodology' in Brazil may be an obstacle to helping teachers to get on with their professional concerns. Since all the hundreds of people who call themselves "ESP teachers" are united, in theory, by a common methodology, this is a potentially serious situation. The methodology should support teachers, not confuse them. In this paper I would like to clear the ground for a discussion of the role of methodology in the Brazilian ESP Project and hopefully, help us, and other EFL teachers, to move towards a resolution of the conflict between private and official methodologies.

I shall first of all focus on some more examples which show this confusion in applying a common methodology, and from this go on to discuss the nature of methodology as it has developed in the Brazilian ESP community. I shall then make some suggestions about the nature of methodology and how teachers can develop their own answers to pedagogical questions while at the same time relying on a common methodology as a support.

## 2.	Methodology in our lives

In the previous section I mentioned the existence of certain recurring conference topics as evidence of this double methodology. There is even stronger evidence from the massive survey which took place in 1988 to evaluate the achievements of the ESP Project to that date. In Brazilian ESP, from 1978 on, developing a methodology was seen as one of the main aims of the Project. In contrast to similar projects in other countries, the Brazilian ESP Project aimed at helping teachers to solve their own problems rather than produce a set of textbooks which everyone would then use.

In Celani et al (1988), a lot of the data from that survey back up the idea that Brazilian ESP teachers saw themselves as sharing a common approach to teaching English. The survey showed many differences between those teachers who regarded themselves as being 'within' the project and those who considered themselves 'outside' the project. The data are fairly clear with regard to a number of questions on classroom procedures and methodological principles.

However, it is also interesting to see what happened when we asked teachers and students to compare their own point of view as to the main features of the methodology.

Both teachers and students were asked the same question:

Which of the following items featured in your ESP course? (Celani et al, 1988:67)

Topic	ESP Teacher	Students
Reading strategies	99%	83%
Explanation and practice of grammar	27%	33%
Exercises for increasing vocabulary	54%	43%
Text structure	96%	77%
Critical reading	75%	31%
Text functions	61%	26%
Translation into Portuguese	25%	55%
Awareness of reading process	87%	45%

Table 1: Students' perceptions and teachers' recollections about items featured in their ESP course

Note that I have included only some of the items from the two questionnaires.

The first three questions show a certain consistency between teachers' and students' responses. We can say that the 'ESP methodology' for both groups featured work with reading strategies, and that it did not feature much explicit grammar practice. In the same way, although only half the teachers said they did explicit work to increase vocabulary, the same proportion of students said so too.

The second group shows a certain difference of opinion. Almost all the ESP teachers said they taught 'text structure', but only 77% of students 'understood' that it featured in their course. The differences are even more marked in the case of critical reading, text functions and awareness, where teachers mostly seemed to be in agreement that they were all part of their ESP courses. The students, however, seemed to be unaware of this roughly in a ration of 2 to 1 . On the other hand, while teachers said they did not use translation into Portuguese, twice the proportion of students said that it featured in their courses.

We can explain these findings away in many different creative ways. For example, teachers may not make objectives explicit, so that students haven't noticed that they are working on, say, text functions. Or, students may rationalise the classroom using their previous experience, so that when discussing, in Portuguese, the meaning of a text, written in English, they may call this a 'translation exercise'. In discussions that followed this survey in 1988, these were some of the explanations put forward. But I'd be surprised if the explanation turned out to be always so simple.

In the case of "awareness of the reading process" we really must seek other explanations than a simple misunderstanding. It's not credible that teachers taught conscientização but that students were not aware that they were being made aware! There must be some other reason which made teachers say they did it, but didn't.... In this case we have a fairly clear conflict between the project methodology, as recognised by 87% of the teachers and the fact that only half that proportion of students actually perceived that they had been taught it (the questionnaire asked whether the items were 'featured in the course', not whether the students had learned them).

It's interesting that at meetings where groups of ESP teachers discussed and interpreted these findings, we felt obliged to find some kind of explanation, other than the most obvious. There was a palpable sense of guilt that the research had detected this dichotomy, and exposed what we seemed to feel was a weakness.

What I think is going on here is a conflict between teachers' received methodology, – the 'Project Methodology' – and their own 'Personal Methodology' based on their own reflected experience. For example, when questioned, teachers say "Of course I teach critical reading" and we all nod and agree what a good thing it is. Critical reading activities may figure prominently in the materials that we use. But as the lesson gets under way, there may be such a struggle to get basic meaning out of the text that the teacher may leave the critical work out, or ask the students to 'do it for homework'. Perhaps teachers leave out critical reading because they personally regard it as unnecessary, or beyond the abilities of their students. So, there is a gap between what teachers explicitly say is right and what they, in fact, do.

3.   Resolving the conflict

The data above show the possible existence of a conflict between 'official' methodologies, such as that of the Brazilian ESP project and what we might call 'teachers' personal methodologies', built up from years of experience. This conflict would be especially true in the case of 'general' English teachers who are 'obliged' to take on ESP courses.

This, however, is a challenge that the ESP project recognised, faced and to a large extent overcame in its first decade. The 1988 data from the survey show that those who identified themselves as belonging to the project shared many attitudes and beliefs regarding methodology. Even stronger proof comes from the fact that Brazilian ESP teachers continue to meet, produce materials, publish research and debate issues, in short, to identify themselves as ESP teachers. It seems that a large group of people are doing something worthwhile and are doing it together. No other British Government sponsored project, as the ESP Project was between 1980 and 1989, has managed to take off in this

way and grow years after the foreign 'experts' left. In short, the project has become sustainable since it fulfils a need shared by the members of what we may call the 'ESP Community'.

However, teachers can also be united by common doubts. Many of these can be attributed to this conflict of methodologies. It is interesting to note, as I mentioned earlier, that at the 13th National ESP conference, held in Rio in October 1999 the issue of the relationship between strategies and grammar is still one which teachers are trying to come to terms with. There were 5 presentations which dealt with the role of the teaching of grammar items, and 2 which dealt with the issue of awareness and critical thinking. These are issues which had been largely 'settled' during the first decade of the project, but are still being discussed (see the Appendix).

Continuing to question these aspects of the project methodology is no bad thing, and I use the word 'settled' in the previous paragraph in an ironic way. The Brazilian ESP Project was never a canon of fundamentalist beliefs and we hope it will never become one. One of its strengths was the initial decision to help teachers to develop their own frameworks for solving their own problems rather than producing the 'Brazilian ESP textbook'. But, still many teachers feel that there is a conflict between what they ought to teach and what they really do teach. This can cause insecurity for the teacher and bewilderment for the students.

What I would like to argue in the rest of this paper is that this 'conflict' is a natural part of the process of developing a methodology. The solution to this 'conflict' is not to resolve the problem by adopting a single mode of practice, or to become totally eclectic so that 'anything goes'. It is rather to adopt a more process-oriented or dialogic view of methodology.

4.   What do we mean by methodology?

Having seen methodology 'in action', let's attempt to define the term. This is not as easy as might at first appear. On the shelf in my

office there are at least 20 books with 'Methodology' in the title, but not all of them risk a definition of the term. Some of them (e.g. Long and Richards 1985) have the word 'Methodology' in the title, but not in the index – in other words it's not mentioned again in the rest of the book! The Cobuild Concordancer Programme (Collins Cobuild) shows that a large number of occurrences of the word 'methodology' are found in titles or subtitles, not in complete sentences. So methodology is an important word, but one which is not often mentioned in discussions.

Let's begin with the definition from the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (Richards et al, 1985: 177):

> *1. The study of practices and procedures used in teaching, and the principles and beliefs that underlie them.*
> *Methodology includes*
> *(a)   The study of the nature of language skills (e.g. reading and writing, speaking, listening) and procedures for teaching them*
> *(b)   study of the preparation of lesson plans, materials and textbooks for teaching language skills*
> *(c)   the evaluation and comparison of language teaching METHODS (e.g. the audiolingual method).*
>
> *2. such practices, procedures, principles and beliefs themselves. One can, for example criticize or praise the methodology of a particular language course.*

This definition seems to reflect the many meanings of the term, although such a range of meanings does not make it very helpful or useful. In particular, definition 1(c), where methodology is connected to METHODS. Going by our Greek roots, Methodology should be nothing more than the study of methods, just as geology is the study of the Earth and psychology the study of the mind. But Methods have passed from the face of TESOL, and such a discipline would seem as archaic as phrenology or finding the philosopher's stone.

To find the ways in which the term is currently used, I looked it up in the Cobuild Concordancer (Collins Cobuild) and found that the word 'methodology' is more closely associated with the word 'research'

than any other, and that very often the word appears in titles (books, articles, chapters) rather than complete sentences. Other common collocations are 'Marxist methodology' and 'scientific methodology', which seem to show that methodology reflects some kind of *organisation* or at least has a *coherent theory* behind it. It's easy, then to discuss one's research methodology, especially if you are doing a Ph.D., since you must explain in details the steps you are going to take and justify your theoretical approach. It's also relatively easy to describe a Marxist methodology and what is considered a 'scientific' methodology in the natural sciences, for example.

There is one collocation that the Cobuild Concordancer did not come up with: that of 'appropriate methodology', particularly associated with the work of Holliday (1994) and Coleman (1995). Perhaps this is because the Cobuild corpus has not been updated recently, but it is certainly the most common collocation in my own use of the word and that of many of my colleagues. Holliday's use of the word is interesting:

Holliday (1994:1) identifies three different meanings of the word; for him they are three different ways of *doing* English language education

1. Methodology for what the teacher does in the classroom: 'methods and approaches'

2. Methodology for designing and managing English language education

3. Methodology for collecting the information about the particular social context in order to make the other two methodologies appropriate. (research methodology).

From this, we may once again distinguish between research methodologies and teaching methodologies, but also now associate methodology with what goes on in the classroom (what the teacher *does*). Thus teaching methodology would appear to exist on various levels: from the way that an entire approach (previously Method) is organised, to the way we teach certain skills such as reading or speaking, and finally to what goes on in the classroom, with activities or exercises.

5.   Three examples of methodologies

Let's take three examples of this meaning of the term, and look at what we could call 'classroom practice' methodologies. I'll take as my examples, the traditional classroom practice methodology known as presentation, practice and production, or PPP, task-based learning, as exemplified in Willis (1996), and the ARC approach as put forward by Scrivener (1994).

PPP provides a basic sequence for the teaching of language items in the classroom. It can be adapted to the teaching of grammar, functions, or skills, and thus can help those who write materials, plan a syllabus, prepare a lesson, or train teachers. It is a useful framework, although nowadays there are a number of alternatives available. Nonetheless, PPP is an example of a methodology.

Secondly, a practitioner could choose an alternative way of dealing with language items, such as that afforded by task-based methodology. In this case, the teacher could use the sequence discussed by Willis (1996:55), going through the pre-task phase, to the 'task cycle' itself: planning, then reporting and follow-up. This can also be used in working towards objectives formulated as functions or skills as well as grammar, and as well in syllabus design and teacher training. This is another example of a methodology.

A third alternative is the ARC approach put forward by Scrivener, where the teacher can decide whether to present new items in an authentic use environment, restricted use, or spend time on clarification and focus activities. This framework is much more flexible than the previous two. For Scrivener the ARC sequence is not carved in stone like PPP. Scrivener (1994:134) says:

> *Using ARC, lessons can be described in terms of three basic types of activities. For example, a CRA lesson would start with clarification and focus work, move on to restricted use and then end with authentic use. A, R, and C activities can be combined in any number of ways (e.g. ACR, CCC etc.).*

Although we can still call this a methodology, it seems to give much more freedom and responsibility to the teacher. Rather than provide an orthodoxy it seems to provide a framework within which the teacher can operate. The teacher doesn't just 'do' activities in the classroom, but also takes decisions as to the sequence of activities in the classroom, not just the way the sequence should be implemented. Thus the formal inputs of an 'official' methodology can be mediated by personal experience.

6.   Appropriate methodology and social context

Another important factor in mediating the application of methodologies is the social context of the classroom. Many TESOL practitioners have been concerned by the way in which methodologies have been put forward as if they are universally appropriate. This would naturally lead to another source of conflict in classroom practice. While the three methodologies we cited above can be adapted to different classroom conditions, more global approaches often make claims to general relevance. Books based on such methodologies are then sold as applicable and relevant in a wide variety of contexts; they have, after all, to ensure good sales. The classic example is the communicative approach, and the way that textbooks using this approach are found in a number of widely differing social contexts. In many cases, these books are used in ways which bear little resemblance to what the teachers' guides or the textbook writers envisaged.

Coleman (1996) analyses the way that the English classrooms in the Indonesian universities which he studied were using international TESOL textbooks, but in a way which reflected more the rituals of Javanese society rather than the PPP or other classroom practice methodologies. As Coleman observed (1996:67):

> *When the teacher asked them to repeat sentences in chorus, some students responded, although there was clearly no obligation for them to do so. Indeed the fact that the teacher was talking did not mean that students had to listen. There were always students who spent the lesson reading a novel or writing*

letters, others who gathered in small groups and chatted quietly among themselves and still others who moved around the classroom consulting friends or exchanging cigarettes.

At times, however, when the teacher began to explain English grammar points in the mother tongue, the students' attention suddenly changed and they listened raptly to the teacher. Clearly, a framework for dealing with the type of classroom which Coleman observed must be radically different from what the teachers' guide in the textbook first recommended. Coleman proposes, as a way of understanding the classroom interactions, a comparison with Javanese ritual performances outside the classroom, notably the shadow puppet performance. In addition he points out how the relation between students and teachers is also modelled on other Indonesian social relationships such as religious teacher (guru) and learners, or parents and children.

In this context, it is instructive to compare the teacher's classroom practice methodology, as observed by Coleman, with the three listed in the previous section. Probably we might predict another example of 'conflict' if the teacher and students were asked to fill in questionnaires on what had been featured in the lesson.

Holliday (1996: 92-93) also gives examples, this time from Egypt, where the comparison with life inside and outside the classroom helps to explain some of the classroom practices which he observed.

(…) Dr Asya's students' ability to talk and listen simultaneously on one hand, and the quietness of Fuad's classroom on the other, both seemed to represent a gregariousness which was seen elsewhere in the classroom observations and in life outside the classroom (e.g. wedding guests talking and moving about the church while the wedding was going on and similar behaviour among audiences in cinemas etc.), and suggests that there were rules of communication within the Egyptian classroom culture which were hidden from the outsider.

In another dimension, then, we have the question of methodology and its relation to society. The most 'appropriate methodology' is not necessarily the most recent one, or even the one on which the textbook

is dependent. The concept of appropriate methodology puts a certain responsibility on the teacher to adapt or tune classroom practices and materials, especially if the latter come from another social context.

Coleman and Holliday's insightful comparisons between what goes on inside and outside the classroom in Indonesia and Egypt have a strong bearing on the Brazilian context. Many teachers have commented on what used to be called the "Show da Xuxa syndrome". Although Xuxa has given way to a number of presenters of children's shows, the idea of filling time by dancing, singing, bouncing around, telling jokes has been felt in the classroom. Students want to be entertained, and teachers often feel that sitting down and doing a little quiet reading or writing is going to be regarded as boring by the students who passed their infancies being entertained by Xuxa figures.

7.   Teacher's theories and methodology

I'll return now to what we previously called teachers' 'personal methodologies'. The subject of what is now called teachers' theories and teachers' cognition is a rapidly growing area of study (cf. Borg, 1999) which is closely linked to methodology and is especially revealing when explaining how teachers behave in what we might call the 'micro-context'. This refers to specific occasions when teachers have to make decisions on classroom management or response to students, such as when dealing with a question or giving an explanation. For example, a student asks a question. We as teachers may decide to respond with a mega-exposition on the blackboard with lots of examples and teacher talk. On another occasion we may decide to dismiss the students' question, knowing that it will be dealt with later or that the student's anxiety is temporary and the problem will simply go away. The justification for making such decisions comes from the teacher's own experience and personal methodology. In this case, the methodology is heavily dependent on the theories which the teacher has built up over their professional life, as well as what the teacher has acquired and absorbed from training, experience and professional contact.
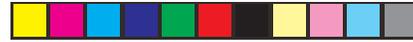
8.   A working definition

A methodology, then, is constructed or adapted subject to influences from three directions:

- the 'official methodology';
- teachers' personal methodologies, based on their own theories and experience;
- the social context of the classroom.

This leads us to another definition:

Methodology is a coherent framework for making informed decisions.

The main implications of this definition might be summed up as follows:

– coherent: self-consistent; actions taken under different circumstances do not conflict. Thus, the decisions we take at any point in our classroom teaching are consistent and do not leave us insecure, and our students bewildered;

– framework: an interlinked system of structure and support; thus our belief system is valid for a wide range of different circumstances;

– informed: a justification which comes from specific sources, either one's own experience or generally accepted practice;

– decisions: leading to action taken in specific circumstances or behaviour. This includes major policy decisions such as whether to use a task-based approach in our teaching, or micro-decisions such as whether to answer a student's grammar question with a formal explanation or a quick yes/no.

This definition seems to propose a system of beliefs, and as in any belief system , when living with our own methodologies we have certain other factors to take into account.

– **dissonance**: for example, conflict between global methodology and individual actions/decisions. At times we make decisions based more on immediate circumstances rather than the broad teachings of our methodology. For example, we believe in negotiation in the classroom and we sometimes ask our students to be quiet and get on with the task that we set. This is similar to our moral system; we believe that telling lies is wrong and yet at times we can justify telling lies without considering that we have seriously undermined our moral code;

– **experience:** interpreted and justified through methodology. Methodology is a filter for experience, both in making sense of what has happened and in justifying our own actions. In turn methodology is reformed and modified by different experiences;

– **identification**: "This is the kind of professional that I am..." Methodology acts as a label, and unites us as professionals. At a national conference of the Brazilian ESP Project the participants are united, to some extent, by the label "ESP teachers" or "Professores de inglês instrumental";

– **liberalism:** degree of conformity with methodology. All teachers seem to have different relationships to their own methodologies. Some use it as rock of stability in the chaotic classroom where it is relied upon for solving classroom problems. Others trust to their own intuition and pragmatism but for the most part we may still define themselves as 'learner centred' or 'task-based'.

9.   Methodology and religion

There is one other factor that I believe is important, and that is the role of methodology as a belief system. In looking at 'liberalism' we saw how practitioners can adopt different degrees of conformity with their methodologies. How teachers live with their methodology is important in understanding our own teaching and that of our colleagues. At a national event such as an ESP conference, Brazilian teachers show an enormous range in their attitudes to different methodologies, varying from a loose acceptance to a total commitment. Presenters at times

seem to have found the solution to all their problems and take time and trouble to convince us that we should follow their example.

The analogy between methodology and another framework of beliefs – religion – is an interesting one. As early as 1981 Alan Maley criticised the tendency of many teachers to look for certain methods to give the answers to all their problems. This was at a time when competing methods such as The Silent Way and The Natural Approach seemed to promise a great deal, but only if they were followed in their entirety. To him it seemed like an extreme form of evangelism and an invitation to suppress critical thought. Although global methods are no longer so fashionable, nonetheless I think that the analogy between methodology and religion is an instructive one. We have all come across evangelism in ELT and a number of other possible relationships with a belief system, which we can characterise as fundamentalism, scepticism and so on:

1. Evangelism: I am right and it is my duty to convince you of my correct method.
2. Fundamentalism: I am right and I know that everyone else is wrong.
3. Tolerance: I'm sure of my beliefs but I respect what you believe in.
4. Scepticism: I don't believe in it, but it seems to work so far.
5. Seeking: I haven't found the truth but I know it's there somewhere.
6. Eclecticism: Sometimes I believe in one system and sometimes I believe in others.

Perhaps as professionals we all hope to be characterised by 'tolerance'. However, we can understand how many teachers need a methodology, just as people need religion. Even those who profess to have no methodology nonetheless need some kind of system for making decisions, just as a confessed atheist needs an ethical system, which in many cases comes historically from those of the main religions.

The analogy with religion is an interesting one, since it shows what we should avoid. We can swap between religions, by undergoing conversion, although it is not an easy mental and social change, but we

cannot ourselves change religious beliefs -only prophets can do that! However, methodology can be changed since it is not the product of received wisdom or revelation, but is built up, as I have outlined, from the three different sources of 'official methodology', personal methodology and social context. Furthermore, it does not remain fixed, but should continue to change and develop for each of us, since the three factors are also in a state of constant change.

The main problem in the past has perhaps been a too religious approach to methodology. Teachers become aware of a difference between what they practice and what the official methodology says they should do, and they feel that they are secret heretics or apostates. The data I discussed in Table I were regarded by many as showing weaknesses of the project, or revealing teachers as somehow insincere or hypocritical. It was as if a Catholic bishop had been found practicing macumba in secret. The Brazilian ESP Project set out to provide teachers with the resources for working autonomously within a shared framework, and during the past twenty years this has been a source of strength. It never set out to give one true path to solve everyone's problems and it would certainly be weakened if it became to be viewed in such a fundamentalist way.

What we have been referring to as a 'conflict' should instead be viewed as a natural part of the process by which methodology evolves, within a group of practitioners such as ESP teachers, and also for individual teachers. Instead of a conflict, this is a dialogue in a Bakhtinian sense, whereby new meaning is created from a responsible interchange of ideas. Only in a fundamentalist classroom would we expect to find total harmony between teacher and students as to what goes on in the classroom.

10.   Final comments: investigating our methodologies

Perhaps now that we have a clearer idea of what we mean by 'methodology' we might be able to investigate it within the ESP movement more productively. We can now see that the dichotomy between what teachers say they teach and what their students report that they learn is an interesting and natural feature of most classroom

practice. Also, by asking the same questions as the years go by we continue to explore the topics of major importance. This shows that ESP methodology continues to be tested and to evolve. It would seem opportune once again to carry out a survey into the way teachers do/ follow their methodology. Such a research procedure need not be on a vast scale as before, but it would still be useful, especially if we no longer feel guilty that our 'weaknesses' are being exposed.

The questions could include the following:

1. What do teachers say that they teach?
2. What do students say that they learn?
3. Can we build up a picture of the methodology that teachers use to orient their own classroom practice?
4. Is there any conflict between what teachers teach and what they feel they ought to teach?
5. How can the work of the ESP Project help to clear up areas of doubt and conflict?

I hope that this paper helps to raise some research issues so that, in the long run, the Brazilian ESP methodology continues to evolve. In this way, ESP teachers can remain united and supported by sharing a common methodology, while avoiding the perils of too fundamentalist an approach.

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APPENDIX

List of papers presented at the XIII Seminário de Inglês Instrumental in Rio de Janeiro, October 1999, which deal with issues of methodology.

Conscientização:
• Reflexões sobre a influência do conceito internalizado de aprendizagem no processo de aprendizagem; (Maria Inês Gariglio & Heitor Garcia de Carvalho);

• O papel do português no ensino de língua estrangeira instrumental (Maria Fabiola Vasconcelos Lopes).

Critical thinking:
• Question-asking in Portuguese Reading Comprehension Textbooks (Sara Oliveira).

Vocabulary:
- ESP e Vocabulário: uma questão a ser discutida (Angela Cristina de Oliveira Corte; Cynthia Regina Fischer)

Grammar:
- Ensino de uma estratégia gramatical: o reconhecimento de orações condicionais (Gisele M. Simões Craesmayer);
- Leitura e coesão textual em língua inglesa (Isabel Maria Brasil Gadelha);
- A gramática faz a diferença? (Kleny Pires do Amaral);
- A importância da gramática no ensino de ESP (Marcia Fernandes Gradvohl & Verônica de Melo Fernandes);
- Gramática antes, interpretação depois? (Marta G. Cram)

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