

MOTIVATING THE STUDENT TO USE SPECIALIZED LIBRARY: REPORT
OF A LEARNER-ORIENTED ACTIVITY

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The present work intends to be a continuation of the ideas introduced by my colleague, Profa. Lourdes Marnet, on how to use the library collection of books as a means of stimulating the student's reading comprehension in ESP class.

While the previous section considered the most general use of Reference Books and also contained information about the library organization of the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul as a whole, it is our purpose here to show a kind of activity which we believe could reinforce that data in some very useful aspects.

First of all, this activity is undoubtedly learner-oriented, though it has not been produced out of the needs of the students only. In fact, we dare say the students are not even aware of its intrinsic importance for the full attainment of their academic objectives at the very moment they get in touch with it.

Above all, this work is the practical result of further discussions on the item "how to use the library most effectively" that have naturally followed the realization of the unit already shown to you,

After having introduced the students to the world of academic libraries in a general way, the UFRGS team of ESP teachers started to think about a manner through which it should be emphasized this necessity of students' attending the library. It was concluded that perhaps the most effective way of reaching such purpose was to get the students know their specialized libraries as thoroughly as possible.

In order to put in practice this assumption, it was necessary to choose among the students the most suitable group to whom the exercises were to be organized.

Choosing the CPD students was due to several reasons. First, they formed a homogeneous group - in all, fifty people whose concerns were the same subject matters. Second, they had a fairly reasonable knowledge of English - partly, because of the natural requirements to their entering this specific course, one of the most demanding offered by our University, partly, because they have English as compulsory course during two semesters. Third, the librarian elements in charge of the administration of the Course Library were particularly interested in the performing of similar activities to be carried out by teachers belonging to the CPD course. The librarians thought it as a means of involving the students engaged in the CPD subject matters. In this respect, the project of the ESP course touched closely the very objectives of the CPD library action.

Mainly because of those considerations, it was assumed that the sample composed by the CPD students' world be quite meaningful for the further evaluation of the activity.

The next step towards the formation of the exercises was to get in touch with the CPD librarians themselves, so that they could help the teachers devise items of research relevant to the students.

Such talk was really significant for the designing of our work. The chief-librarian of the CPD library gently showed the teachers all possible kinds of reading materials the students could ultimately seek for.

It is important to report that the same impact the teachers wanted to provoke in the students' perception as far as the great variety of reading material was concer

ned was then felt. Such an exposure to an unknown world of knowledge and information went far beyond the teachers' own modest expectations.

The chief-librarian also urged that it was preponderant to show the students as many examples of the library collection as possible so that they would not feel restricted to an immediate use of a particular reading material only.

This point is in perfect accordance with the idea stated by Stoica in "The place and role of the library within the university system" that says that "the function of a library to make publications rapidly and easily available is to encourage the formation and development of an interest in reading". Likewise, the diversity of the collections has a stimulating and inciting effect. The exclusive reading of handbooks should be strongly criticized for it gives the image of a simplified reality". (1)

As we heard in the previous exposition, it was not uncommon to find students who had never been to the Reference Library before the visit offered by the course *Inglês Instrumental*. Of course this is serious, but it can even be more drastic if we think of undergraduates who haven't known how to exploit the faculty's library resources appropriately during the period of their courses.

Thus, the first objective of the following set of exercises is to make the CPD students aware of the many possibilities of a vast range of reading materials (magazines, journals, dictionaries, encyclopedias, glossaries, portfolios, books in general) that can be found in the specialized library.

The second objective would be to make the CPD students read in English some pieces of information from the most significant sources in their area, taking advantage of the fact that great number of these publications are issued in English.

This reading would follow the same principles that have already orientated other activities in classroom. Basically, it would imply strategies related to

- a) reading for specific information;
- b) reading for general ideas;
- c) reading for critical opinion,

according to Munby's taxonomy, from which derive the guide lines of our ESP course design.

These phases are all relevant if we agree that they lead to "an interest in reading that cannot be separated from the development of a critical attitude as a compulsory and continuous stage in the improvement of intellectual skills" (2) a kind of mental behavior which seems to be so necessary in a world as demanding as our modern one.

Basically as ESP teachers, it is important and necessary that our students not only understand but also think of their readings in a sensible way.

The third objective, perhaps the most general one, is to reinforce the adequate use of libraries, mainly the specialized one, as a means to achieve the "full mastery" of a subject matter. Which cannot obviously be reached through the exclusive performance of a teacher - however well - informed he way be.

We think this opportunity of devising such an activity a good example of how things can actually be done in a cooperative atmosphere - where purposes and efforts are integrated - towards the final aim of any educational enterprise, that is, the very learning of our students.

With the decisive contribution of the library staff of the CPD unit, we tried to make the reality of using the specialized library nearer to the students. On the other hand, they had a chance to improve both reading skills and comprehension of English in a relevant academic procedure.

NAME:

DATE:

COURSE:

TEACHER:

DISCOVERING YOUR SPECIALIZED LIBRARY

These exercises are intended to be a continuation of the information you acquired from the 1st semester visit to the UFRGS Reference Library.

This time, however, you are asked to get in touch with new sources of knowledge you will most certainly find in your Course Library. As it was assigned for the first task, you should answer the questions in Portuguese.

1

List the different kinds of bibliographical material your specialized library may offer (encyclopedias, books, manuals, etc.).

Complete the following three-column table.

In the first one, specify all the materials you have found. In the second, sort out their probable intended audience (kind of reader). Finally, state their purpose of use, taking account of the several ways of reading.

Example:

MATERIAL	INTENDED AUDIENCE	PURPOSE
Manual	Aluno de graduação	Familiarização com máquinas e tipos de linguagem de computação

2

In many specialized periodicals of a department library it is very common the use of abstracts. An abstract is a kind of summary of the ideas exposed in a following article or paper.

As a CPD student, you may find some samples of this academic procedure, for instance, in magazines such as BIT, Communications of the ACM, and in publications of the department of Computer Science of Carnegie-Mellon University.

Examine the abstracts of these bibliographical sources and verify the differences and similarities among them. Tell which one gives you more indications about the matter, the kind of language which is used, the peculiarities of each of them. See if these elements may be related to the kind of publication and its intended reader.

Report all your observations and conclusions.

Afterwards, choose one of the abstracts and translate it. Justify your choice.

3

In your specialized library you will find books that deal with the complex relationship between man and the computerized world.

Three of them are:

1. GEORGE, Frank. Machine take over. Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1977.
2. MARTINS, James & NORMAN, Adrian R.D. The computerized society. Penguin, 1970.
3. MUMFORD, E. e SACKMAN, H. Human choice and computers. North Holland.

Probably you will find out many other similar works.

Have a look at these books and choose a topic in one of them (an entire chapter, a specific title or even some passages concerning a determined subject).

Read it carefully and then summarize its content in one page. Try to state the main ideas, relating them, if possible, to other parts of the book.

4

What kinds of manuals does your specialized library receive?

Are you required to use computer manuals in the course?

Do you have any trouble in reading computer manuals? If so, what kind of trouble?

After answering the questions above, examine a manual from Burroughs and check with an X which points it consist of:

Table of contents	()
Introduction	()
Preface	()
Glossary	()
Index	()
Author's index	()
List of Illustrations	()
Appendices	()
Abstracts	()
List of tables	()
Summary	()

5

Look for the advertisement of a particular product in a specialized magazine or periodical. Examine the language used in the ad (figurative use of words, kinds of verbs, words which try to persuade the prospective buyer, etc.) as well as the different typographical clues (different kinds of letters, illustrations, etc.) and then do what follows:

1. Make a xerox copy of the ad you have chosen.
2. Indicate the complete source where it was taken from.
3. Characterize the language used (words to persuade the reader, etc.).
4. List the different typographical clues.
5. Comment on the effectiveness of the ad.
6. Tell what kind of reader it is addressed to.

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