

THE ESP PROJECT AT UFES: SITUATION AND PROSPECTS

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In this paper we narrate the history of the ESP project at UFES up to the present. We talk about the research we are developing, the idea of the common core course and we present our course design. Very briefly, but hopefully, we speak about our prospects for the future and about the constraints which we hope to overcome in the long run.

The ESP project at UFES started in fact in 1981 in spite of isolated attempts made in 1979 and 1980. At its initial phase we opted for a small number of classes due to the lack of teacher training and to the - at least for us - experimental character of the course. The 1980 National Seminar supported us with some theoretical background, provided us with some practical material and showed us what was being done in other universities. The visit of Prof. Holmes to our University came to bring a larger understanding among the people engaged in the project of what ESP means as well as encouragement to produce our own material. The results of our work of the 1981 first semester were quite satisfactory, thus motivating us to pursue our work. In the second semester we participated in the Ouro Preto Seminar, which gave us a deeper theoretical background whereas the workshops offered us very useful practical training.

In 1982 we began to work with the Research and Post-Graduation "Sub-Reitoria" developing a research project. This new situation brought several benefits to the

Project, such as:

1. Greater facility of research - located at the research centre of the University we felt more at ease to produce our own experimental material;
2. Administrative autonomy - we enjoyed greater freedom to plan the course according to its needs;
3. Consolidation of the ESP team - we were given a room where we could keep our ESP materials, meet and work together any time we liked;
4. ESP started to be offered as an extra-curriculum, non-compulsory course. Thence we could extend the Project throughout the University (professors and officials of the administrative staff are also regularly coming into our courses) and the students are highly motivated as it was observed in the research carried on in 1982/1.

At the end of the 1982 first semestre we made an evaluation of the learning/teaching process in our ESP courses, and this evaluation led us to develop our own research on ESP. In the second semester we had the pleasure to hold the III Regional Seminar of our area. In that Seminar we presented the results of our small research (evaluation of the learning/teaching process) and submitted some of the work developed by our ESP team. Prof. Deyes sent us a report containing detailed criticism on our work and valuable suggestions on how to improve it. It was mostly due to Prof. Deyes's report and to Prof. Scott's workshop on course design that we reformulated ours at the same time that we started to develop the idea of writing our ESP common core course.

Let us now comment briefly on the work we are developing: ESP Common Core Course. One of the problems of ESP is specialization x non specialization. Here in Espírito Santo quite often students come to us in groups and demand for specific material of their area of special -

ization, thence our necessity to build up different materials to teach the reading strategies. To avoid too much diversity we imagined a common core course with a set of units where reading strategies will be taught by means of two texts of general interest per unit. These texts will be used by all the teachers. Exercises and activities will be expanded in more specialized texts, chosen by teacher and/or students. A further advantage of this course is that it meets the peculiarities of discourse organization of each area.

The Research. We proposed the following problem: "Do ESP students read more efficiently than non ESP students?" We elaborated the following hypotheses to try to solve the problem:

1. The ESP students have better text processing in English as well as in Portuguese than non ESP students.
2. The ESP students have an equivalent performance in text processing both in English and Portuguese to that of non ESP students.

The research proposes to validate the ESP reading strategies.

The Course Design. To develop our course design we considered on the one hand the wants analysis and on the other hand the needs analysis. Studying the wants analysis we considered it under a psychological point of view and the needs analysis under the academic point of view. Using M. Hoey's terminology we first regarded the situation of the students who came to us, situation of frustration as most of them have already been exposed to different courses of English and nevertheless are unable to use the language to satisfy their needs of reading in their specific field. The problem of the teacher is to develop positive attitudes by (solution) installing self-confidence in the student which will make him

motivated and consequently he will enjoy reading. Thence pleasurable reading is the evaluation we expect. Under the academic point of view - needs analysis - the situation is that of reading necessity as those who seek our courses need reading in English for academic purposes. The problem is to teach reading by means of specific reading strategies (solution) and the evaluation expected is efficient reading.

The aims of the course design are the following:

The students should:

1. Read efficiently at the three levels of comprehension
2. Develop their own set of reading strategies.
3. Develop a critical attitude
4. Develop a positive attitude towards reading

We considered the three levels of comprehension and settled both the objectives and the teaching points to be covered.

General Comprehension

Objectives

1. Find the topic of the text
2. Be aware of the 3 levels of comprehension
3. Locate specific information

Teaching points

1. Predicting
2. Guessing through context
3. Skimming
4. Scanning
5. Non-linear information
6. Cognates
7. Key-words (repeated words)

Main Points Comprehension

Objectives

1. Understanding the text architecture
2. Understanding the main ideas

Teaching points

1. Rhetorical functions
2. Word formation

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|---|---------------------|
| 3. Reading for application | 3. Lexical items |
| 4. Critical analysis of the idea | 4. Cohesive devices |
| 5. Establish communicative relationships between words. | |

Intensive Reading

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Teaching points</u>
1. Reading for details	1. Sentence structure
2. Analysing the author's discourse	2. Verb tenses
3. Critical reading	3. Notions
4. Decoding the text by using grammatical clues.	4. Conjunctions
	5. Morphology

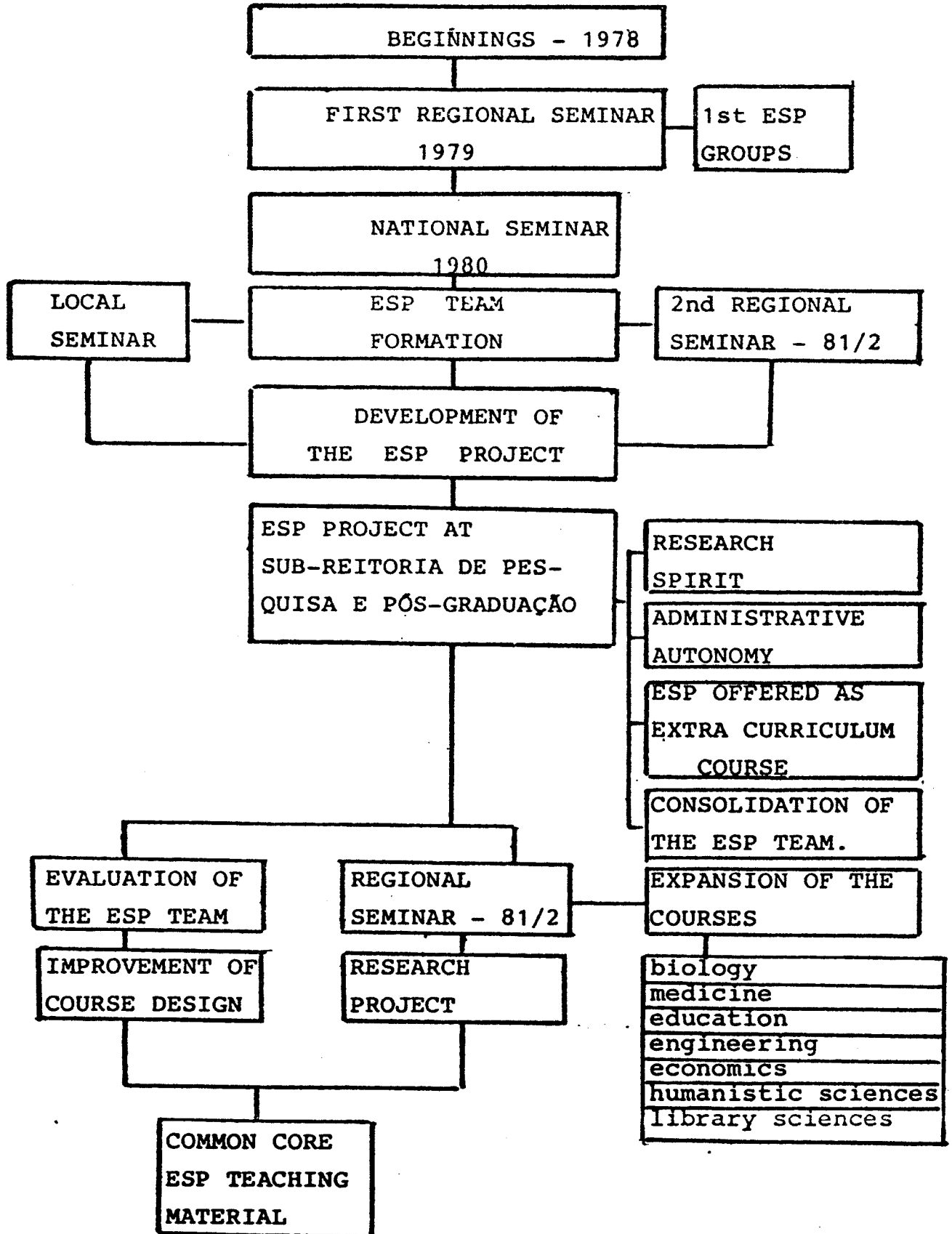
Prospects: For the future we envisage the following:

1. a larger interchange with the resource centre. We must admit that though we are receiving quite regularly material from the National Coordination we have not been sending ours very often. Together with this paper we include some of our material as a token of our wish to cooperate;
2. assistance to the Technical School of Vitória. After the Seminar held in Vitória we agreed to assist the teachers of that school, but they chose a superficially attractive ready-made material which was offered them by one of our institutes of language. Nevertheless, one of their teachers is trying to use an ESP based approach in her classes with our assistance. We intend to supply her with material which was prepared and applied by one of our ESP teachers, Guilherme B. Pacheco.
3. we are also planning to start a new research project on the interactional aspects in the ESP courses, as we believe the relationship teacher/student is quite

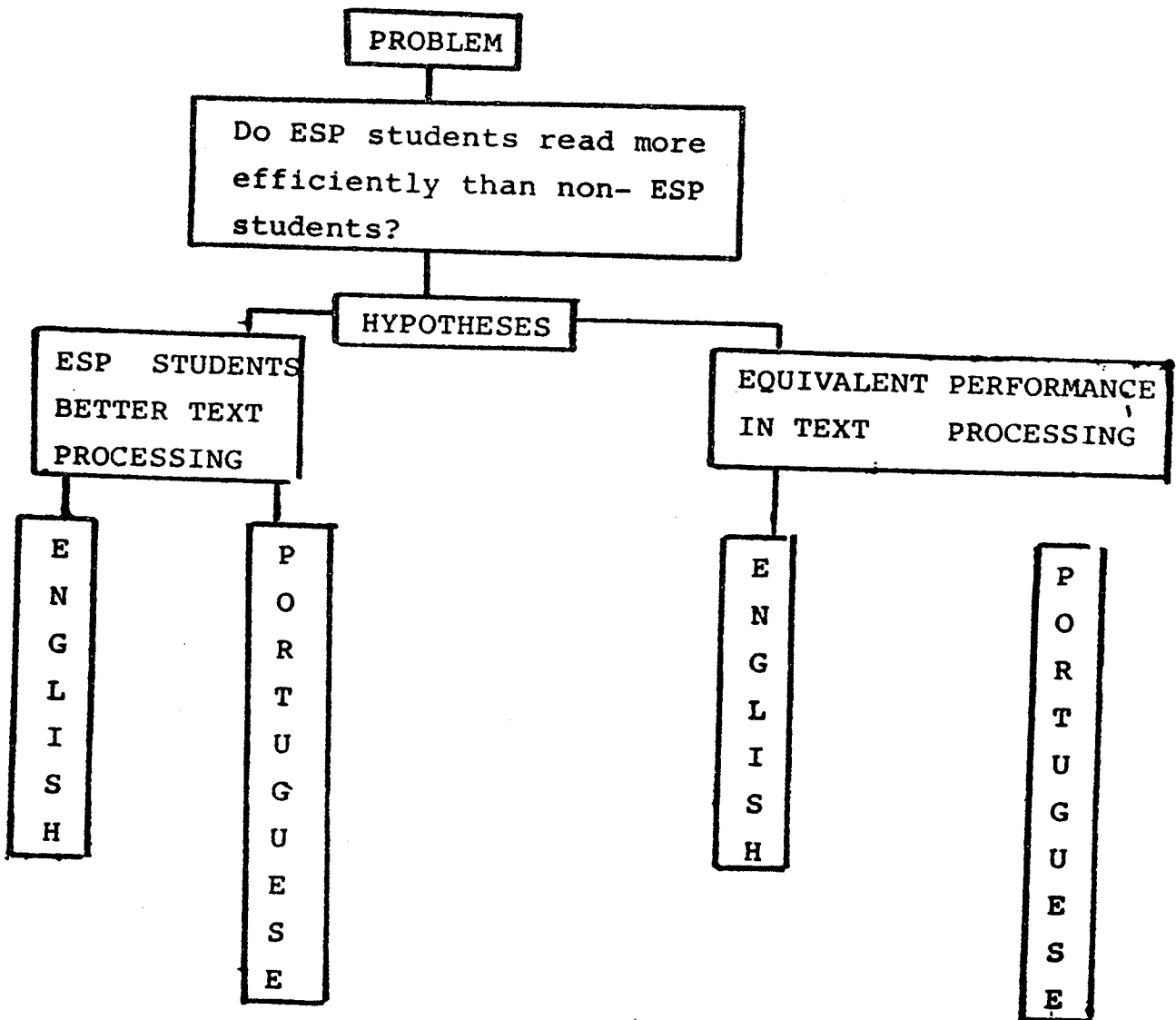
different from the relationship in any ELT program.

Though we feel pleased with our work we suffer from constraints which as we can conclude by the reports of other teachers are the same all over Brazil: constraints of administrative, academic and financial order. These, we are afraid, are problems which can only be solved in the long-run with much work, perseverance and obstinacy.

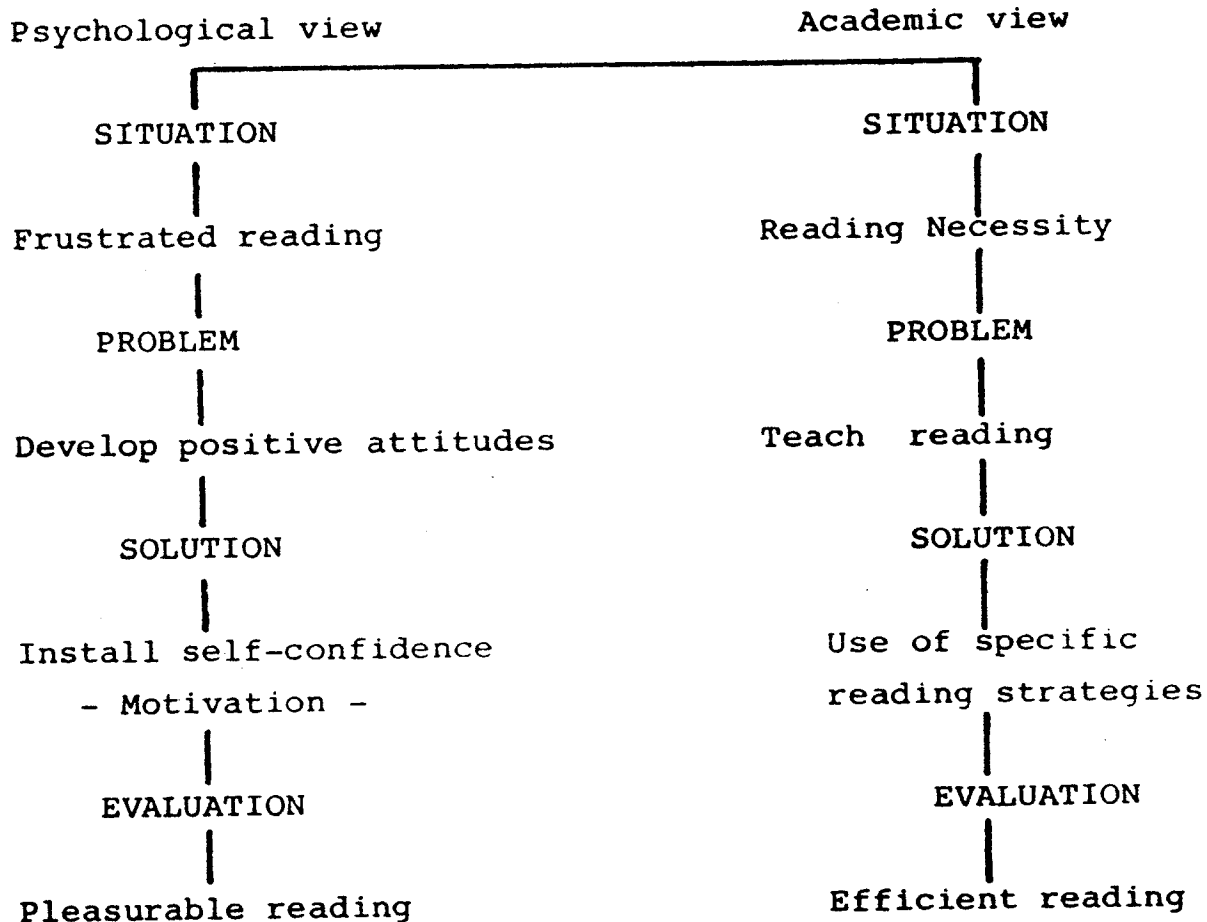
EVOLUTION OF THE ESP PROJECT AT THE U.F.E.S.



THE U.F.E.S. RESEARCH



OVERALL VIEW OF THE COURSE DESIGN



AIMS

Students should:

1. Read efficiently at the three levels of comprehension;
2. Develop his own set of reading strategies;
3. Develop a critical attitude;
4. Develop a positive attitude towards reading.

GENERAL COMPREHENSION

Objectives	Teaching points
1. Find the topic of the text	1. Predicting
2. Be aware of the three levels of comprehension	2. Guessing through context
3. Locate specific information	3. Skimming
	4. Scanning
	5. Non-linear information
	6. Cognates
	7. Key-words (repeated words).

MAIN POINTS COMPREHENSION

Objectives	Teaching points
1. Understanding the text architecture	1. Rethorical functions
2. Understanding the main ideas	2. Word formation
3. Reading for application	3. Lexical items
4. Critical analysis of the idea	4. Cohesive devices
5. Establish communicative relationships between words.	

INTENSIVE READING

Objectives	Teaching points
1. Reading for details	1. Sentence structure
2. Analysing the author's discourse	2. Verb tenses
3. Critical reading	3. Notions
4. Decoding the text by using grammatical clues	4. Conjunctions
	5. Morphology.

PROSPECTS

1. Interchange with the Resource Centre.
2. Assistance to the Federal School of Vitória.
3. Psychological interests (a new research project):
interactional aspects in the ESP courses.

CONSTRAINTS

- Academic, administrative and financial problems.

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