



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



ENG 140: A Personal Reaction

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Abstract

I was assigned to teach an English course for students at a College of Science. The assigned book is Step Forward: Language for Everyday Life 4 by Barbara R. Denman. The first half of the book is to be introduced to the first level students. The book has twelve units; the second half is to be taught in a second English course for students at that college have only two English courses in their program. This article will address some personal points I have written while teaching the course in order to share them with my colleagues in the career.

Keywords: English; Course; Students; Objectives; Class

1. Introduction

The objectives of the course are too ideal and could not be achieved. The number of registered students is huge. So I write these notes and conclude that:

Any course material should comply with students' knowledge and the goal should be achievable. Also, students should educationally benefit from taking any course. Hence, an English course should be consistent with the level of the students. In turn, students' knowledge of English must be determined in advance; they should be distributed into groups based on their knowledge and competence. Low level students can be asked to take more English classes before registering advanced courses. Moreover, the number of students should be seriously considered; no more than fifteen students in a classroom should be allowed for it is difficult to closely monitor more than this number of students, especially at a college whose officials brag about obtaining academic accreditation. This article will address these mentioned points so that they should be reconsidered for the benefit of students who are exposed to the same circumstances.

2. Description and Outline of the Course

The course description requires students to deal with four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing at the same time. It is a four-hour weekly course. By the end of the course, students are expected to be able to present their opinions and express their ideas, to be able to write letters and articles, and to develop their understanding and comprehension of English content as in the book. All of these goals are expected of students who find it difficult to know the letters and form simple sentences only. Hence, those objectives are out of reach (Dohal, 2021 & 2022).

3. Course book

The first half of Step Forward: Language for Everyday Life 4 by Barbara R. Denman (see Appendix I) is what is required for teaching at the first level. The book consists of twelve units, and each unit is divided into lessons: vocabulary, real-

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life writing, grammar, daily conversation, real-life reading, and a general review section. According to Elttayef & Hussein (2017), teachers “while teaching [students] a prescribed book or course” (1).

The first problem I faced with this book is that its level is higher than the level of the students I teach. Some students are not able to distinguish between some letters, such as p and b. Also, most of them confuse d with b when pronouncing and writing, not to mention that they cannot form simple sentences except for a few. Yet, they aspire to obtain high grades. In fact, students at this level need a different book that suits their level, as I see it.

4. Students and their English Knowledge

In my three classes, the number of students exceeds one hundred thirty students. One hall has fifty five students, another is with forty seven students, and thirty seven are in the third hall. The large number makes it difficult to teach the language; following up with the students becomes difficult, and requires a lot of effort and more time from the teacher. The subject is allocated only four contact hours per week, and the student is credited with three academic hours. Because the language of society does not belong to the same linguistic system, there is no practice, which complicates the issue and makes it very hard. Dohal (2021) argues how the overcrowding number of students in classes makes it difficult to teach the language to non-native speakers (Healey, 1997). When the number exceeds fifteen students, the matter becomes useless for the language requires participation, response, and questioning, as well as practice (Dohal, 2023). Without these elements, learning in general becomes a dilemma that requires a solution (Thompson, 1999).

The presence of such a large number in a college whose academic programs have received academic accreditation raises other questions. Is the large number of students only present in non-specialized subjects, including English, which has become an important language in our current era, or do the specialized subjects have a large number of students in the halls as well? Certainly, the English language is required in teaching science, and if this happens in the college of science, what about other colleges that make the English language an optional requirement in their programs—such a step is needed in order to obtain academic accreditation?

The college should comply with a certain admission requirements. Also they may resort to determining the level of students and distributing them in the halls accordingly. In such a case, they may apply a different text and curriculum especially when students' proficiency levels differ. Ansari (2012) asserts the importance of the curriculum teachers teach (524). Finally, an intensive program may be offered to low-proficiency students. However, such a program needs more language credits, teachers and efforts. Anyhow a credited program should be evaluated according to all factors including the number of students in classes and the outcome of teaching a required foreign language (Abdelgadir & Ramana, 2016).

5. Questions and Results

Based on the curriculum objectives (see Appendix II), the book content, and the exercises required to master, I put four questions in the midterm test (see appendix III), which are as follows: a question about using specific words to form correct sentences, a question about arranging limited number of words to form useful sentences, a question related to the grammar of the course, and finally a question about sentences with mistakes, and the student should extract those mistakes and correct them. As for the fourth question, it is diverse, as the student should answer as required in parentheses in front of each item. The answers were very disappointing. Most of the students could not know the question, let alone the answer. At exam time, students start asking me about the meaning of some of the words they find in the questions, how to read certain words, and the like. As for the answers, they are discouraging, to the point that it is clear that some students do not know that a sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period.

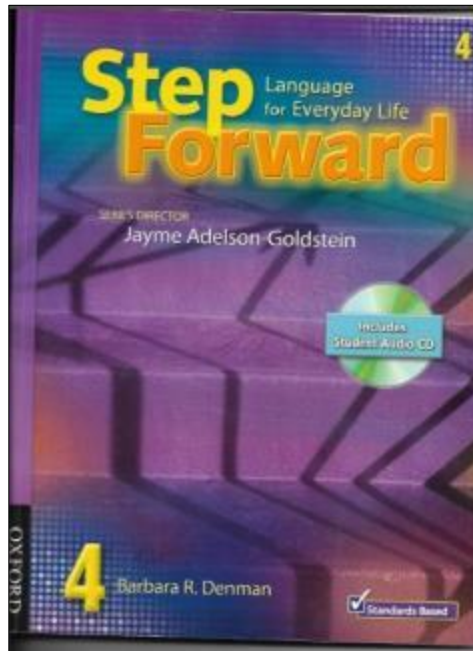
Accordingly, the results are very disappointing. I later review the answers of the questions and inform the students of their answers so that they will know their real level. A week later, more than two-thirds of the students drop the course. By the way, the mid-term exam covers only four grammatical rules: present simple, present continuous, past passive, and affirmative pronouns. There are two more rules to be taught after the mid-term; they are reported speech and object pronouns.

6. Expectations

I do not think that the college realizes the obstacle of the huge number of students in a classroom; apparently officials do not intend to restrict the number. Fifteen students at a class will enable students to benefit from the material, and grant the teacher a chance to follow up students' activities and discuss ideas with them. Also, approving a book like this

book may pose an obstacle for students because of its level. Those in charge may assign a book that contains basic principles of the language, and common vocabulary. However, as long as officials decide on an advanced book and include in the description items that are out of reach, this tendency does not serve the educational process and does not help students learn the language (Ansari, 2012).

Appendix I



Appendix II

By the end of the course, students will be able to

1. **express thoughts and opinions** about a topic using thematically linked vocabulary,
2. **use model letters, and memos or essays** for communicating needs or expressing ideas and opinions in writing,
3. **learn and accurately use grammar** in order to effectively interact and write on the lesson topic,
4. **use an authentic exchange as the basis for conversations** on the lesson topic while developing lessons and pronunciation skills and fluency,
5. **increase comprehension of narrative reading materials** while developing the vocabulary and skills required for both academic and non-academic reading, and
6. **integrate the language learned** in the lessons in order to accomplish a variety of communication tasks.

Appendix III

Name:	No.	G:
<u>Eng. 1140: Science 3</u>		
<u>--Put each word in a sentence and don't repeat yourself: (10 marks)</u>		
love, study, verbal, school, people		
Use the back of this sheet to answer this question.		
<u>--Complete as directed between parentheses: (10 marks)</u>		
1. Which news source became popular recently? (Answer)		
2-The article was written on Monday. When(Complete)		
3. A news photographer hurt one animal. (Change into past passive)		
4. You are too hard on (Use reflexive pronoun)		
5. The paramedics took the injured people to the hospital. (Change into past passive)		
<u>--Underline and correct what's wrong when applicable: (10 marks)</u>		
1- He has a website with pictures from his trips.		
2. She doesn't watch TV now?		
3- Does he remember everything he need.		
4. <u>just</u> think that this shop is good.		
5. Because of fire, the area was close on Monday?		
<u>--Arrange each of the following to form a sentence and write it: (10 marks)</u>		
1. calls, <u>ali</u> , colleague, his		
2. <u>the mohamed</u> , writes, article		
3. was, by, <u>the</u> , the, police, road, closed		
4. <u>you</u> , like, classes, do, evening		
5. may, help, i, you, how		

7. Conclusion

If we return to the goals, the book, and the number of students, all those points need serious reconsideration in order for the goals to be achievable and commensurate with the general level of the students, and move away from idealism. An appropriate book could be found and approved. An assigned book should be suitable for beginners and those who have no principles in the language and face difficulties in learning the language. As for students, their number in classrooms should be reconsidered as long as the ultimate goal is the benefit of students. If the goal is to benefit from the curriculum and learn language principles that help the student know sentences that he can use when needed, and so on, the number of students should not exceed fifteen students. The teacher needs time and chance to grant everyone's participation, and the larger the number is, the more difficult the task will be. Without giving students a space and chance to participate, ask, answer, and practice what they have learnt, the course will turn out to be useless and devastating.

It is also important to take into account the general level of students. Assignments and tests require time for marking, which makes limiting the number of students important and mandatory in foreign language teaching. All of these obstacles will have serious negative consequences and bad results that must be paid attention to before they happen. One of the immediate consequences is that more than two-thirds of my students have dropped the subject from their schedules, and of course they will create a negative reaction to learning the English language.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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Authors short biography



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