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SYLLABUS DESIGN OF AN ENGLISH FOR VOCATIONAL PURPOSES COURSE FOR
WELDING AND METALWORK STUDENTS USING TASK-BASED TEACHING

MA thesis

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to integrate English for Vocational Purposes content with task-based teaching to develop a syllabus for a 22-hour introductory metalworking course tailored for first-year metalworking and welding students at Tartu Vocational College. The primary objective is to design a syllabus with authentic and relevant pedagogical tasks, enabling students to acquire field-specific terminology and enhance their language proficiency for realistic workplace scenarios. The thesis consists of an introduction, two principal chapters and a conclusion. An outline of English for Vocational Purposes and related branches and terms can be found in the introduction. The first chapter provides a comprehensive literature review covering necessary concepts, including syllabus design, task-based teaching methods, task design, and an overview of needs analysis. The second chapter is dedicated to empirical research describing the needs analysis process culminating with task design and subsequent syllabus formulation. The thesis concludes with a discussion, including appendices such as example tasks and other related documents.

Keywords: EVP, task-based teaching, tasks in TEFL

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ESP - English for Specific Purposes

EVP - English for Vocational Purposes

CLIL - Content and Language Integrated Learning

EFL - English as a Foreign Language

NA – Needs Analysis

CEFR - Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

TBT - Task-Based Teaching

INTRODUCTION

English for Specific Purposes (hereafter ESP) represents a popular field of research and practice and can be defined as teaching specialised content to learners of English so that they can succeed in specific academic or professional settings. Over the years, ESP has evolved into increasingly specialised domains, ranging from English for Business Purposes to English for Horse Breeders and Social Media. Figure 1 illustrates the framework of ESP and its various branches, with a particular emphasis on English for Vocational Purposes (hereafter EVP). To begin with, ESP falls under the bigger umbrella term Language for Specific Purposes (LSP). From this point, it can broadly be categorized into two types – English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (hereafter EOP). From this point, it can broadly be categorized into two types – English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (hereafter EOP).

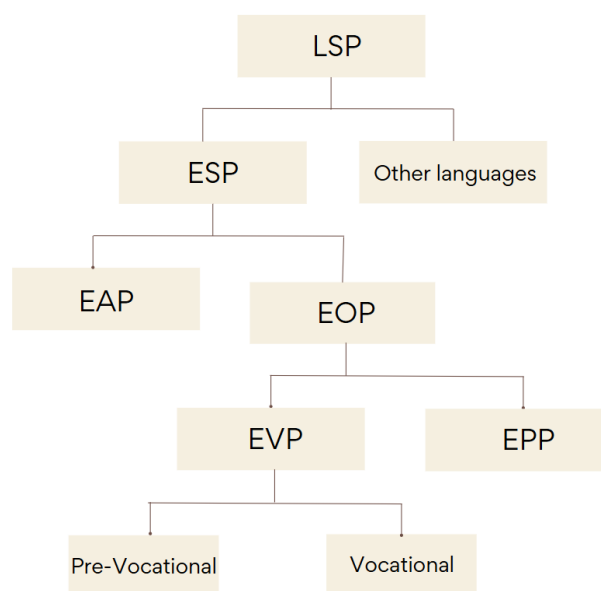


Figure 1: ESP and EVP (Based on Brown (2016), Tonic (2010))

The present study concentrates on EOP, which is subdivided into English for Professional Purposes (EPP) and English for Vocational Purposes (hereafter EVP). The former delves into the needs of working professionals within specific fields; the latter targets learners preparing for a career and is characterised by a more practical and skill-oriented approach, aspiring for functional language use. EVP encompasses skilled occupations like welding, automotive technology, carpentry, plumbing and many others (Coxhead et al 2020) and represents the focal point of this thesis. EVP can be viewed as both vocational and pre-vocational as it "...helps students understand their vocational content, build and develop their vocational knowledge and skills, communicate their vocational expertise and perform specialist tasks, and develop their disciplinary language" (Widodo 2016: 280). Thus, it is an essential component of vocational training.

One potential source of confusion is the distinction between ESP and Content and Language Integrated Learning (hereafter CLIL), a more recent concept that has gained significant traction in the last thirty years (Martin Del Pozo 2017). CLIL combines learning a language and a non-language subject, where both elements are emphasised. Although both ESP and CLIL courses commence with needs analysis, are goal-directed, and revolve around content from a non-linguistic subject matter, ESP is tailored to the students' field of study, and students are likely familiar with the content (Martin Del Pozo 2017). Therefore, according to Martin Del Pozo (2017), with ESP, the goal is for the students to improve their language proficiency in their professional field of study. Furthermore, while the topics in a CLIL course have to follow the logical order of the subject matter, more flexibility is possible in an ESP course. The role of the teacher also differs, making the ESP teacher the expert in language and merely interested in the content. CLIL instructors, on the other hand, are typically expected to be experts in the subject matter and, in addition, possess a good command of the target language.

As previously mentioned, the present study focuses on structuring an ESP syllabus that, more specifically, falls under English for Vocational Purposes (EVP), which emphasises vocational skills, specialising in metalwork and welding. The syllabus will be created for a recurring 22-hour introductory course within the welding and metalwork curriculum at Tartu Vocational College. The aim is to create a task-based syllabus that prepares students for their studies and prospective workplace scenarios in the target language.

As previously stated, although there is a considerable body of analysis in the field of ESP literature and research, EVP, on the other hand, has not yet reached widespread recognition. Although EVP is taught in numerous vocational institutions, it is rather specific, and the research has not kept pace. One of the reasons might be the growing number of ESP fields. Flowerdew et al (2011) point out that, on the one hand, it affords teachers the flexibility to prepare students for the rapidly evolving professional fields. By contrast, it is questioned whether all the different branches of ESP make the scope excessively broad to be definitively categorised as ESP (Flowerdew et al 2011).

To support the need for an EVP course, annual statistics in Estonia demonstrate the growing number of vocational students and the popularity of vocational education in general (EHIS 2024). Nowadays, English language proficiency is indispensable in the trades, even if there is no necessity for communication; at the minimum, machinery and instructional manuals are frequently exclusively available in English. Both students and potential employers can concur that English proficiency will enhance employment opportunities, thereby increasing the need for good quality ESP courses. This is supported by government initiatives to attribute more importance to and improve the quality of vocational education with national curricula, which, among other factors, place greater emphasis on specialised foreign language competencies to ensure the educational system produces professionals capable of effective communication in the target language.

Despite the increasing popularity of vocational education, when it comes to EVP instructional resources for English as a foreign language (hereafter EFL) students, there is a notable scarcity of materials available in general within the vocational disciplines, as well as in metalwork and welding in particular. Vocabulary lists explicitly targeting welding and metalwork students have been created; however, the majority of materials currently accessible are aimed at native speakers and do not cater to EFL classes, nor are they specific to Estonia. This situation poses a challenge for the teachers of EVP, who must create instructional materials while simultaneously researching the vocational field. Furthermore, there is a need to establish a strong focus, as there is pressure to achieve the educational objectives within a relatively short timeframe due to the limited duration of the course.

As previously indicated, the objective of ESP courses is straightforward and clear, but the reality of how to reach that goal is more ambiguous (Belcher 2009). The development of a syllabus for an ESP course will differ from that of a general-purpose language course as it will take into account the students and their professional and academic environment. While students' needs are often considered in general English courses, ESP is more meticulously structured and systematic (Basturkmen 2021). Consequently, the content of the courses will depend on the field of study, different stakeholders and particular students and their needs. The latter will decide on and vary according to their language proficiency, target professional or social activities that represent real-life situations, situational specificity and the focus on language, skills or discourse (Widodo 2017). Therefore, in order to establish which contexts would apply to the syllabus and activities, needs analysis (hereafter NA) is a crucial step to determine the needs of different stakeholders and develop an understanding of the field. Having a realistic understanding of the sector is essential. However, it is important to note that a language teacher does not need to know the specifics of the area but rather its core values and the manner in which the language is used in the target environment (Belcher 2009). To make

sure the syllabus corresponds with the school guidelines and relevant occupational competence, the NA for the present study will include an analysis of the school vocational curriculum and occupational qualification standards (*Kutsestandardid*), as well as semi-structured individual interviews with two vocational teachers and a community insider.

To provide students with the optimal opportunity to engage in purposeful and genuine target language practice, the aim is to construct a syllabus that focuses on speciality terminology as well as communication. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) advocates valuing communication skills first and gradually working on accuracy (Council of Europe 2020). For the material to feel relevant for the students, the objective is to include relevant topics to practice real-world situations, focusing on meaning through task-based activities. Tasks provide an opportunity to practice the target terminology within an authentic or semi-authentic context while being supported by classmates and the language teacher. Alongside the target language and linguistic features, task-based teaching will enable students to develop field-specific knowledge and transferrable skills.

In order to reach the target and create a syllabus for an introductory course for metalwork and welding students, the research questions are as follows: 1) Which contexts and practical situations demonstrate the necessity for English use in the learners' school situations and future work environments? 2) Which tasks are most relevant for the students in both vocational and professional settings? 3) Which communicative language activities need attention to be successful in the aforementioned task-based activities? 4) How to best design a syllabus with the findings established during the needs analysis?

The thesis starts with an overview of syllabus types and design, continuing with task-based teaching and the basics of task formulation. A relevant and valuable course syllabus should first identify learners' target needs; therefore, an overview of NA is given. The second

chapter consists of empirical research and includes document analysis, thematic analysis of the interviews, and concludes with the development of tasks created alongside the syllabus. The appendices provide example tasks and related information about the findings. Free AI writing assistance software, Grammarly, was used for proofreading throughout the thesis.

1. THE SYLLABUS-DESIGN PROCESSES IN ESP

The first chapter provides an overview of the essential concepts relevant to creating a syllabus for an ESP course. The beginning section of the chapter gives a general account of the process of syllabus design, including different types of syllabi. The chapter then shifts its focus to task-based teaching, examining its advantages, possible weaknesses, and various approaches. It continues with the basics of task design and the challenges that creating tasks might pose. Finally, a summary of NA is provided, clarifying the definition of the term “needs” and presenting various approaches to provide a range of academic methods for planning the NA.

1.1 The process of syllabus design

A syllabus provides an overview of the competencies successful students attain by the end of the course (Hutchinson et al 1987). These competencies include academic knowledge, practical skills and relevant attitudes. It is a strategic blueprint for the teacher to plan out what needs to be accomplished during the study process in manageable components. The same plan will be a foundation for effective material design or selection and a structural guide for students (Hutchinson et al 1987).

EVP syllabus design often begins with NA, a critical phase in identifying the diverse competencies and topics that learners should acquire. Once this data is collected, it must be prioritised to develop a syllabus that effectively balances the needs of all stakeholders with the available resources and effectively organises and delivers course content. The multitude of

possible syllabus designs is extensive and can be organised with a focus on features or functions. While each type of syllabus acknowledges the factors highlighted by others, it prioritises their distinctive elements (North et al 2018). Traditionally, language teaching emphasised linguistic skills, but in the 1970s, communicative views in syllabus design began to gain popularity (Nunan 1988). This section will examine both perspectives and point out the respective syllabus types.

The distinction between a synthetic and analytical syllabus should be elaborated on to talk about different syllabi. The synthetic syllabus is form-focused, it teaches a language step-by-step and centres around teaching grammar components, gradually building in complexity and task types (East 2021: 76). Nunan (1988) has described this syllabus as product-oriented, where learners should achieve the necessary skills as a result of instruction, usually taught separately and discretely. The controversial side of this syllabus type is the lack of meaningful context and teaching the content in a compartmentalised manner, where attention is on the skills and knowledge gained due to the instruction. A classic example of a synthetic syllabus design is a grammatical syllabus structured around grammatical structures that, in today's world, may feel overly academic while failing to provide factual context and oftentimes not leading to communicative competence due to a strong focus on form (Nunan 1988).

A supplementary example is the notional-functional syllabus that organises instruction around meanings and purposes of communication, focusing on language in everyday situations (Douglas et al 2007). Although it is a learner-centred approach that draws from real-world relevance, it breaks the language down into functional categories that may feel isolated and therefore, the content might lack cohesion. According to Douglas and Brown (2007), although the syllabus type did not ensure communicative fluency, it was an important transition from

grammar-based syllabi and paved the way to teaching the language in a contextual setting and, therefore, modern communicative teaching principles.

Meaning-focused approaches prioritise communication and language as foundational elements, emphasising their functional use rather than mere linguistic elements (Willis et al 2007; Ellis 2018). The shift to communicative approaches lead to an analytical syllabus that adopts a more holistic approach, mimicking a natural way of learning a language (East 2021:78). Nunan (1988) has described a similar term - process-oriented syllabus - where concentration is on the study process and underlying skills like critical thinking and analytical reasoning putting focus on the learning process itself. One example of an analytical syllabus is the content-based syllabus that uses topics or themes as the organisational unit when learning the language. Lessons usually use authentic material, and learners build subject-specific vocabulary in context.

One step further is the task-based syllabus that uses real-world tasks as units that are organised by increasing level of difficulty, and the language input usually comes from performing meaningful scenarios, not pre-taught linguistic forms (Nunan 1988). It is predominantly learner-centred and praised for high student engagement and a strong focus on communication. Implementing a fully task-based syllabus presents challenges, including vigorous planning and high teacher expertise. Nunan (2004) emphasises that the complexity of designing a syllabus composed entirely of practical tasks that succeed in reaching the desired learning outcomes requires high competence, and not all instructors possess the required training and experience. Furthermore, Nunan (2004) continues that opting for a task-based syllabus might also provide insufficient attention to language forms due to solely implicit language acquisition. Additionally, despite the innovative approach, structuring the syllabus

based on tasks in the order of complexity may lead to a confusing order of topics and disorientation for students who are accustomed to more traditional lesson plans.

All in all, a syllabus selection needs to be justified and match the learner's needs, as it will determine the features and functions of the course (Nunan 1988). Synthetic syllabus types can be effective with lower-level students who need the foundation of grammatical structures and in more academic or exam-oriented settings. Analytical syllabus types emphasise meaning and communication, making it suitable for higher-level students capable of self-directed learning with a focus on spoken language. That being said, this understanding has somewhat changed since Nunan (1988) published his findings and communicative approaches are believed to be suitable for lower-level students as well, focusing on fluency in less complex conversational situations, thus enhancing their motivation. Ultimately, a syllabus type does not have to be exclusively decided. East (2021) explains that a hybrid syllabus offered by Ellis combines different teaching approaches, blending the strengths of different methodologies. Incorporating syllabi might offer the best approach as it is flexible, targeted at specific groups, and adaptable in a rapidly evolving environment.

In the case of an EVP course where students have an intermediate level with an orientation of work to mirror real-world language, communication, transferrable skills and focus on learner autonomy, meaning-led task-based syllabus types are predicted to provide the best option to meet the needs of the students. To justify this selection, although there is a lack of structure and little focus on form, the syllabus is learner-centred with a strong focus on their exact needs. Significant emphasis is placed on communication, and through the process of completing tasks, the focus is on studying and promoting lifelong learning. For vocational studies, learners come from different schools and their level of English language proficiency may vary greatly, task-based approach is also especially suitable for mixed-ability groups as

different learners can complete a task using the language resources they currently have. From a contrary angle, this approach is not traditional and might clash with the institution's expectations. To continue, due to the strong focus on communication and tasks, there is a difficulty with reliable assessment. That being said, for a non-differentiated EVP course where students receive either a fail or a pass, that does not pose an insurmountable problem.

Regardless of the selected syllabus design, when designing an ESP syllabus, Brown (2016) draws attention to the course's decisions about scope, teaching methods, and material selection. The latter must align with the overall aims of the course and therefore it must be decided whether it is best to adopt a narrow-angled approach that is designed for a distinct group of learners (Basturkmen 2010) or use a wide-angled approach with more generally accessible topics and keep the specialist language demands to a lesser degree (Belcher 2009).

Furthermore, promoting learner autonomy and incorporating flexible methodologies are crucial when the syllabus aims to prepare learners for diverse and evolving workplace situations. Even with limitations in in-depth knowledge about the target subject matter, teaching opportunities and quickly evolving work environments, the students can be supported by the practice of transferable skills, vocabulary glosses, peer collaboration opportunities, constructive feedback, attention to communication strategies, and so on (Belcher 2009). Accordingly, it is crucial to equip students with the tools to study further (Widodo 2016). When students are aware of resources for material sourcing, they can further study independently. Thus, materials like games, dictionaries, and others will be integrated based on the opportunities and topics.

In conclusion, the decision on syllabus design will profoundly mirror its teacher and their contribution and reflect research findings. Fundamentally, it will provide a framework for all of the stakeholders and determine the trajectory of the classes. That said, after the initial

development, a syllabus is not a finished document but a work in progress that should be modified when new information comes to light. Given the potential of a task-based syllabus to provide an effective learning platform for the students of EVP, task-based teaching techniques will be examined in greater detail in the following section.

1.2 Task-based Teaching

Task-based language learning (TBL) that focuses on the role of the student and task-based teaching (hereafter TBT) that mainly focuses on the teacher are both linked to communicative language teaching (CLT) and centre around tasks as mechanisms to facilitate learning, in contrast to more traditional grammar exercises. Another closely related concept is the Task-Based Approach (TBA). This broader term prioritises learner-centeredness by executing authentic tasks that reflect real-world activities that students might encounter outside the classroom to enhance language proficiency (Nunan 2004).

Task-based language teaching, abbreviated as TBLT, might be the most popular method pioneered by researchers like Long (1985), Candlin (1987), Prabhu (1987) and Nunan (1989) (Ellis 2018). While their theoretical frameworks may have varied, they shared a common objective focused on task design and evaluation (Ellis 2018). The foundational premise for TBLT is that interactive engagement is the most effective method for language acquisition (East 2021:35).

A distinction can also be made between task-supported and task-based materials; the latter focuses on tasks as the unit of analysis and in syllabus design. For instance, the associated activities are not predicated on underlying grammar structures and are not meant for a generalised audience (Long 2015). Task-supported methods which employ tasks solely as a means of practice, can serve as a suitable medium between commercially produced materials

that address various language aspects and a fully task-based syllabus design (Long 2015). The difference between the two demonstrates that task-supported methods might be validated in beginner settings, as they provide more scaffolding as opposed to task-based methods, which expect higher autonomy. On the other hand, when we look at the long-term goals, task-based methods like TBT, TBL, and TBLT will more likely deliver fluency in intermediate-proficiency adolescent students who prefer to have more control and appreciate the variety and relevant tasks. A potential drawback is bigger class sizes, where classroom management and chances for feedback are limited (Nunan 1988).

Despite the differences, all task-based methods share a common ground and focus on fluency rather than accuracy, promoting learner autonomy and transferrable skills by performing tasks that mimic real-world situations within their fields. Special interest in this context will be on TBT as it is particularly focused on lesson design and the instructional process, aiding students in developing group learning dynamics and refining practical skills such as problem-solving, brainstorming, and various social skills like initiating questions (Bolen 2021). Contrasted with TBLT, it is a more general method with a strong focus on transferable skills and is not exclusive to language learning, making it appropriate in a vocational setting.

There are several definitions of tasks. Long (2018) offers a simplified explanation, characterising tasks as real-world activities performed throughout the day. Similarly, Willis asserts that tasks are generally constructed to simulate real-life situations to meet a specific final objective (Willis et al 2007). This characterisation emphasises the necessity of distinguishing between pedagogical tasks and authentic target tasks. As Nunan (2004) explains, pedagogical tasks are situated within the classroom environment, promoting target language interaction with an emphasis on meaning. Although the tasks are inspired by authentic contexts, their primary aim is not to replicate exact future workplace situations but rather to activate the

necessary language skills in a meaningful context. Ellis (2003) further elaborates that pedagogical tasks provide a framework for reaching a language target and must be evaluated.

Although pedagogical tasks are fit for the classroom for the reasons mentioned above, care needs to be taken to prepare students for real-world scenarios so they can be competent in their future professional endeavours. In the case of a profession where communication is not prevalent in their daily tasks, pedagogical tasks offer a solid foundation. Still, teachers should make sure students understand the potential of transferring the knowledge to actual language use. For intermediate-level students, a combination of both authentic and pedagogical tasks might provide a good balance. Another questionable aspect of pedagogical tasks is the tendency for repetition and gamification, which is not usually present in the real world but is a necessary part of language learning to maximise retention (North et al 2018).

For task-based methods to yield optimal results, following important principles is essential. First, scaffolding and support must be provided throughout the execution process, particularly at the beginning of the task performance (Nunan 2004). Secondly, tasks must follow a coherent progression and be reintroduced periodically to enhance retention (Nunan 2004). Moreover, TBT emphasises active learning; classes should provide abundant opportunities for language use, minimising teacher speaking time (Nunan 2004). Finally, students must have the opportunity to reflect on their performance and the knowledge acquired.

Implementing task-based activities presents multiple benefits. For instance, Bolen (2021) states that tasks offer a meaningful context for students and enhance motivation. She elaborates that students are not confined to using a requisite form and can explore the vocabulary and grammar they need. Students' speaking time in task-based or task-supported courses is advantageous, as it reduces teachers' speaking time and highlights students' performance (Branden 2014:165). Along the same lines, the task-based methods are especially

beneficial for ESP students, as they address their exact needs and provide purpose-driven tasks that help students build proficiency by acting out realistic workplace situations. In addition to enhancing their language abilities, students can develop their critical thinking skills and review pertinent material relevant to their professional domains. Another significant advantage of TBT within ESP is the capacity to accommodate diverse proficiency levels of the students. By prioritising meaning, students can perform the task within their capabilities, affording every individual an opportunity for improvement (Willis, Willis 2007).

Although TBT offers a compelling alternative for ESP students, it has certain drawbacks. Previously, it was indicated that the role of the teacher in task-based methods is minimised; at the same time, for TBT to be effective, the teacher has to take on several important responsibilities. The preparation process to plan meaningful tasks from the ground up must be rigorous and, in addition to practical materials, include successful planning, as the performance of tasks might be more time-consuming, especially in large class sizes. Realistically, teachers with a high workload might resort to overreliance on generic tasks without proper scaffolding, leading to low efficacy by losing authenticity and insufficient language development.

Not only does the teacher need to assume the role of the researcher, select content and decide on the learning focus of the classes, but they will also be responsible for facilitating the tasks, managing classroom time effectively and providing support. During the classes, the teacher needs to prioritise student motivation; this can be achieved by highlighting the objectives of the lessons, mainly if the content is relevant to the students (Branden 2014). Another crucial element is supporting the students while preparing and performing the tasks, which includes giving clear instructions, modelling the task when necessary, monitoring progress, offering constructive feedback, and creating a safe atmosphere for the learners (Branden 2014).

Furthermore, the task-based methods have been criticised for focusing too much on communication, not enough on language structures, and lacking an empirical basis in general (Nouar 2013). Branden (2014) highlights the complexity of implementing task-based methods with large class sizes. He emphasises the limited control that educators may have in the classroom since students drive the task completion and, to some extent, direction. Branden (2014) further argues that task-based methods do not adequately prepare students for standardised assessments, which could pose problems for specific schools.

All in all, task-based methods centre around meaningful activities that promote interest and communication. Whether in TBT or other task-based methods, students engaging in tasks will help them discover innovative ways to combine terminology, familiar structures and expressions that offer high engagement and, consequently, language acquisition (Nunan 2004). At the same time, complexities should be taken into account when implementing this method, and sufficient time should be allotted to ensure proper preparation. For future considerations, emerging digital tools and AI trends can provide opportunities to implement TBT and simulate real-life scenarios by enhancing authenticity. The specifics of the development of tasks will be examined in the following section.

1.3 Creating Tasks

According to Long (2019), NA initially identifies target tasks, which are the foundation of instructional materials comprising of more complex pedagogical tasks. While NA will provide the basis, creating the tasks is a complex process and deciding on the topic is just one of the preliminary steps. Among others, things that need consideration are task type, task complexity, time management, and sequencing. These and other aspects will be discussed in this section.

As mentioned in the last section, effectively planned tasks imitate authentic situations and help acquire the language naturally. One must first examine the different task types to plan and construct the task. For example, Nunan (2004) approached the tasks from perspective strategy types, identifying cognitive, interpersonal, linguistic, affective and creative tasks. Some researchers have opted for a more straightforward route and categorized task-based activities into focused, unfocused, or combined. Ellis (2003) explains the difference by stating that focused tasks aim to engage students in practising a "...pre-determined linguistic feature in meaning-centred communication." (2003: 65). In contrast, unfocused tasks provide students with the freedom to fulfil the task in a preferred manner. The less control is put on language aspects during the tasks, the less students will be concerned about form, thereby enhancing the authenticity of the tasks (Willis et al 2007).

Another way to view tasks was introduced by Prabhu in 1987, conceptualized as overcoming a gap (East 2021: 49). He brought out three types of gaps – information-, reasoning- and opinion gaps (East 2021: 49). Although his method did not mandate interaction between students and was strongly teacher-led, the three gap types provided a sound foundation for tasks in action and are, in basis, still used (East 2021). Analogue task types can be categorized as problem-solving, decision-making and opinion-exchange activities (East 2021). While opinion exchange requires a student to articulate their personal viewpoint, decision-making and problem-solving tasks start by exchanging information that, through analysis, culminates in a required conclusion (East 2021:52-53).

Furthermore, we can divide tasks into open and closed (Willis et al 2007), where closed tasks are highly controlled and anticipate a particular outcome, as opposed to open tasks, which are more adaptable. The dimensions of output and input of tasks are also significant. Output-

based tasks entail spoken and written production, whereas input-based tasks include listening and reading (East 2021:60).

Regardless of the task type, a popular approach sees tasks as consisting of three stages: the pre-task phase, the task phase, and feedback (Bolen 2021). In Bolen's description, the initial stage includes an introduction, checking what students already know and setting the expectations. Ellis (2018) emphasizes that the teacher's role in this part is to offer guidance, establish context and even model the tasks when necessary. Secondly, the task phase constitutes the most extended portion of the assignment, where students work in pairs or groups and practice the task, focusing on fluency (Bolen 2021). While the primary focus is on accomplishing the task, the students simultaneously practice the necessary vocabulary and naturally use the language. In the final phase, students may revisit the task, striving for accuracy, but most importantly, get either peer- or instructor feedback (Bolen 2021). The primary objective of the third stage is task reflection from the perspectives of both students and teachers (Ellis 2018).

Among numerous important principles when creating tasks, task design is crucial and significantly influences student engagement. Consequently, meticulous planning and consideration of elements such as goals, content, time limitations, and materials are vital. Before material design, goals and functions should be decided on. Goals express the intention behind a task and assist in linking the specific tasks to the syllabus and curriculum (Nunan 2004). Task functions provide more abstract reasoning to the tasks and can be categorised into macrofunctions and microfunctions, where the former represents a broader communicative goal and the latter a specific language focus (Nunan 2004).

Regarding the content, as determined before, it is advisable to include topics familiar to students, as they will have relevant personal experience. With EVP, tasks will be related to

their vocational field, and necessary topics will be determined during NA. When creating tasks to meet the final goal, a backwards design is often used, beginning with the selection of a topic and target tasks that mirror authentic situations. Only after topic selection can one determine which activities are appropriate to introduce the content, new vocabulary, and how to deliver instructions (Willis, Willis 2007).

To prepare the learners to carry out the tasks, Nunan (2004) offers a six-step procedure. First, students must be introduced to the context and exposed to all the necessary elements, including related terminology and necessary expressions. Secondly, controlled practice will grant students the first opportunity to work within the context by, for instance, doing vocabulary exercises or reading a model conversation. Controlled practice will be followed by authentic listening practice within the same setting, focusing on the heard linguistic elements. The final steps include more complementary practice and introducing the main pedagogical task.

As Widodo (2016) refers to instruction, prompts offer guidance and scaffolding to help students perform the tasks as independently as possible. Prompts should provide an engaging context and sufficient information to accomplish the task successfully. Supported by prior research in vocational education, materials can also benefit from visual elements to enhance comprehension (Coxhead et al 2020). When developing these instructions or guidelines for individual tasks, it is also essential to consider cognitive complexity. Task difficulty can be influenced by various aspects, such as the complexity of instructions, the amount of context provided, the number of task requirements, personal experience, and factors dependent on the students, such as language proficiency (Ellis 2003). Therefore, well-designed guidelines must be precise enough to avoid ambiguity, increase performance, and facilitate the execution of tasks.

The benefits of task-based teaching should be maximised by sequencing the tasks in the syllabus in order of difficulty. The complexity of pedagogical tasks can be influenced by task input, the duration and necessary steps of completion, the amount of context provided, and the extent of previous knowledge required (Ellis 2018). Ideally, earlier tasks will provide scaffolding for those to follow (Ellis 2003: 67). However, as Ellis (2018) points out, grading and sequencing of the tasks will significantly depend on teacher intuition and involve a process of trial and error.

In a similar vein, recycling the tasks is important, whether within a fully task-based syllabus or simply task-based teaching (Nunan 2004). Reusing similar tasks to reinforce terminology or other language features is vital, as in foreign language acquisition, students must be exposed to new information multiple times to ensure retention. Consequently, tasks should be organized to offer opportunities for revision.

Despite the numerous benefits, several drawbacks should be taken into account. Firstly, the implementation of the tasks is crucial. If tasks are not adequately prepared, they can lead to more harm than benefit. For example, if the task is overly complex and lacks proper preparation, students may feel pressured during performance and opt to use words and phrases from their mother tongue. Ellis (2003) points out how tasks may lead to unequal participation, where stronger students dominate, and weaker students will not achieve the full benefit of the task.

Another disadvantage of using tasks is the difficulty of assessment. Since tasks are focused on communication, assessing grammatical accuracy or field-specific vocabulary might pose a problem (Nunan, 2004). The instructor must clearly understand how to evaluate task performance and how much importance is put on accuracy versus fluency. To continue, task planning must also include careful time management, as tasks can be overly time-consuming.

Even with careful planning, task performance may diverge significantly from the intended outcome due to student influence. Therefore, it is essential to be flexible and modify the task when necessary.

To summarise, tasks should have clear objectives and a defined outcome while emphasizing communication and meaning. Whether using tasks or other activity types, when developing ESP materials, four key areas need to be addressed: authenticity, relevant vocabulary, motivating activities and scaffolding (Stoller 2016 through Hyland 2021). These four areas will ensure the tasks incorporate workplace-oriented authentic activities and cover the necessary terminology, along with supportive preparatory activities to promote student engagement and successful task performance.

1.4 Needs analysis

Most researchers (Hyland, Belcher, Basturkmen et al) agree that needs analysis is integral to preparing an ESP course to serve as the basis for classroom methodology and syllabus design. Simply put, Brown (2016) defined NA as a systematic collection and assessment of required information to determine the needs of students within a particular institution. To define needs, different viewpoints should be considered. Hutchinson (1991) distinguishes between target needs and learning needs. The former includes what the students need to be able to do with the language, and the latter explains what needs to be done in order to learn. Gollin-Kies (2015) adds another aspect to target needs, including different stakeholders and the aspect of what others need the students to be able to do.

Some researchers have gone more in-depth. Brown (2016) has viewed needs from four different angles – democratic, discrepancy, analytic and diagnostic. The democratic view

includes what the majority wants; in this case, the expansion of stakeholders, including the students, school and potential future employers. The discrepancy view focuses on the difference between what students can currently do and what they should be able to do. The diagnostic view will focus on the elements that might cause harm if missing. Lastly, the analytic view will focus on the language learning process and the next logical steps based on the second language acquisition theory. Collectively, these views emphasize the complexity of determining language learning needs, considering immediate and long-term goals for all stakeholders involved.

The present thesis focuses on target needs as they guide syllabus design to ensure learners acquire the necessary skills for real-world communication. Students' expressed needs are important since they help keep motivation high, but recurrent classes accommodate different students each academic year, and consequently, students' personal needs will vary annually. Furthermore, students can be a good source of information; however, it is important to be aware of how far along these students are in their studies because if they are novices, their understanding of the subject matter might not be reliable (Long 2010). Conversely, teachers have specialised knowledge of teaching practices and language systems to consider different aspects and make informed decisions. According to Long (2010), even though students can state their reasons for studying, it will be the teacher's responsibility to conduct the needs analysis and assume responsibility for the content.

1.4.1 Methods of Needs Analysis

There have been many influential models of NA, like the Target Situations Analysis by John Munby (1978), The Learning-Centered Needs Analysis by Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) and more recently, the Task-based Approach by Long (2005). When earlier needs

analyses focused on the lexical and grammatical features of a text, modern analysis methods emphasise understanding how language can be used in specific fields (Hyland 2020).

Researchers have included various focus points and a number of proposed methods for the process of NA, and for illustration, three will be pointed out. Bocanegra-Valle (2016, referenced through Hyland 2021) brought out six sub-analyses: Target situation analysis, discourse analysis, present situation analysis, learner factor analysis, teaching context analysis and task analysis. Conversely, Brown (2016) offers the most extensive list and states that there are at least eleven analysis strategies, differentiating between target-situation use analyses and target-situation learning analyses, adding rights analyses and language audits. Widodo (2021) points out seven: ethnographic approach, narrative approach, corpus approach, discourse approach, and critical approach, adding an important task-based approach. When both Brown (2016) and Bocanegra-Valle (2016) accentuate the identification of gaps between learners' current proficiency and target language requirements, Widodo concentrates on the learner's background and identity. Most importantly, though, all three stress the importance of prioritising the learner's needs.

Berwick (1989) has distinguished between inductive and deductive procedures (referenced through Long 2010). The needs formulated in the former are based on expert intuition, participant observations and unstructured interviews. The latter expects comprehension of needs that have already been devised and must be tested further through structured interviews, tests, or questionnaires.

In designing an EVP syllabus, it is essential to understand the needed language competencies, expected vocational requirements, and knowledge of the occupational sector. Addressing all those aspects is crucial to designing a successful syllabus, and therefore, target situation analysis or task analysis appears to be well-suited. The first focuses on identifying

general skills and tasks learners need to perform effectively in their future roles (Basturkmen, 2021). It will provide a broad understanding of learners' needs and the field itself. Alongside this, identifying specific target tasks that students need to perform in the target language helps design practical learning activities that provide students with opportunities to practice the aforementioned skills and tasks necessary (Long et al 2019). This process will help note down detailed activities and language aspects the learners will need to perform their future duties (Basturkmen 2021) and also provide enough context for the teacher to instruct the designed tasks properly.

On the downside, both methods might overlook language aspects, and therefore, grammar and form should be critically weighed when creating the syllabus. Furthermore, both methods cater to specific professional contexts, which might not be suitable for all courses, but it is desirable in the case of a specialised EVP. Although time-consuming, both methods contribute to a holistic and effective language learning approach, aligning educational objectives with real-world field-specific activities.

Furthermore, there is also a wide array of tools that can be used to perform the NA. There are tests, diaries, forms, literature reviews, inventories, personal records, observations and many others (Long 2010). For example, questionnaires and surveys are the best choice for collecting data quickly and cost-effectively from large groups of learners. The limitation is the superficiality of information, which can be misinterpreted. Interviews, on the other hand, offer personalised, detailed information but can be time-consuming and subject to researcher bias.

It may seem challenging to decide which approach and procedures to use. Brown (2016) suggests that a combination is a better choice instead of adhering to one specific NA method. Researchers and linguists view the different needs analyses as complementary (Sincer 2017). Long (2010) encourages the use of multiple measures as well as sources to increase the quality

of the information. Either in stages or simultaneously, this allows the combination of the views of different stakeholders, different available materials, and other aspects to be considered. In cases of uncertainty regarding selecting NA methods, the procedures should be pragmatic, systematic, learner-centred and situation-appropriate (Brown 2016).

In summary, the chosen methods should be planned well, use a reasonable number of resources, and provide the best possible outcome within a given framework. The consequences of choosing inaccurate methods might lead to low student motivation and even worse, low employability due to not meeting the necessary language demands for the professional environment. Throughout the process of NA, it is important to remember that even with the best practices and methods in mind, NA is subjective and will reflect the teacher's/researchers' better judgement at the time of the analysis (Brown 2016). Another important aspect is to treat needs analysis as a continuous process due to the changing nature of variables (Kaewpet 2009). For example, workplace demands are complex and can change quickly due to trends in technology as well as changing roles within companies. The NA needs to be flexible and continue to keep up with current important aspects.

In the present study, the focus will be on tasks and syllabus types pertinent to tasks. A fully task-based syllabus that consists of pedagogic tasks focused on communication is an example of an analytical syllabus (East 2021: 79) and will be used in this thesis. This task-based syllabus relies exclusively on tasks and calls for procedures to grade and sequence the tasks to increase in complexity progressively (Ellis 2018) and a "task" is always the unit of analysis (Long 2015). The favourable aspect of a task-based system is high student engagement, providing learning opportunities in meaningful content and promoting communication. Another aspect mentioned previously is adaptability to varying proficiency

levels by adjusting task complexity within the syllabus. The design of the task-based EVP syllabus and related tasks is explained in the following chapter.

2. NEEDS ANALYSIS AND SYLLABUS DESIGN

The present chapter focuses on the research questions of the thesis and aims to design a syllabus for a course at Tartu Vocational College metalwork and welding curriculum students. The planned syllabus is for a 22-hour introductory course for first-year students. The target group varies annually and, with some exceptions, mainly consists of vocational students studying after middle school who will be roughly the same age and from the same ethnic background. With a larger group, a placement test will be provided at the beginning of the course to divide the students into two groups based on their English level. Based on the author's experience, the average CEFR level is B1, as it is supposed to be by the end of the basic school, according to the National Curriculum.

Research questions addressed in this chapter are as follows: 1) Which contexts and practical situations demonstrate the necessity for English use in the learners' school and future work environment? 2) Which tasks are most relevant for the students in both vocational and professional settings? 3) Which communicative language activities need attention to be successful in the aforementioned task-based activities? Finally, 4) How to best design a syllabus with the findings established during the needs analysis?

To address the research questions and determine what students ought to know in the target context and which kinds of tasks are relevant for their studies and future job prospects, a step-by-step plan to produce valid and reliable NA findings, concluded with syllabus design, was created and is shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Step-by-step research plan.

Firstly, the chapter begins with analysing relevant documents and formulating interview questions. Three semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data, and section 2.3 summarises the thematic analysis of interview findings, highlighting the themes identified and chosen for the syllabus. Consequently, the chapter continues with syllabus design and example tasks created within the identified topics. Lastly, a discussion and a conclusion of the study are provided.

2.1 Analysis of the School Curriculum and Occupational Qualification Standards

To prepare the interview questions and plan the syllabus, the first step of the NA is to familiarise oneself with and analyse the school's vocational curriculum and occupational quality standards. The analysis of these documents determines the competencies and outcomes the students need to acquire within the EFL classes and the general abilities applicable in the English-speaking classroom. The primary emphasis is on competencies that refine their vocational skills and enhance their confidence in future professional endeavours.

Firstly, the school is an important stakeholder and provides the standards and requirements to be followed when creating the syllabus. The curriculum analysis does not focus

on the composition or effectiveness of the curriculum itself. However, it aims to obtain the necessary information to map the learning outcomes and employ appropriate methodologies.

The school curriculum is based on the national curriculum for Mechanical Engineering and Metalworking Professions approved by the government on the 11th of November 2020. As this thesis focuses on an EVP course, the learning outcomes for a general EFL class, as outlined in the vocational curriculum, will not be the focal point. Nevertheless, transferrable skills relevant to their field of study should be incorporated, and broader EFL skills summarised and translated into English from the school's vocational curriculum for welding and metalwork (2020) are provided. Students should develop adequate oral and written communication skills to express and defend their views in various contexts. They should also be aware of international studies and job opportunities and be able to prepare relevant foreign language application materials. Additionally, they should describe themselves and their experiences in the foreign language, particularly concerning their field of study. Finally, students should use effective language learning strategies and resources to support lifelong learning.

Furthermore, a thorough examination of the curriculum document was done to determine all the instances where foreign language skills are integral to the educational objectives related to welding and metalwork. According to the curriculum, the primary expertise metalworking students need is professional terminology for welders, assemblers, and CNC operators, including English terminology for essential and auxiliary materials. By the end of their studies, students should be capable of reading vocation-related manuals and instructions, using databases and IT tools in English (WPS), completing necessary documents to finalise the work process (work orders, delivery notes, error and problem reports) on paper and/or electronically. General transferrable learning goals were also looked into to gain more insight into the field. Appendix 1 includes summarised "can-do" statements outlining the competencies students are expected to gain by the end of their studies. This list provides more

practical tasks like proper tool and equipment use and maintenance, following the necessary documentation and safety requirements, and values the scientific worldview and their professional field.

General focal points were derived based on these learning objectives provided in the curriculum. Students should be able to talk about their field of study and prepare documents for applying for a job; students should possess knowledge of field-specific terminology, such as tools and equipment; students have to be able to interact and communicate daily in the workplace and take part in teamwork; students should be able to read manuals and instructions, fill out documents and so on. Another aspect to promote is valuing professional development and future learning opportunities. Based on this summary, several aspects needed more information and therefore were included in the list of interview questions, like daily communication opportunities, instances to talk about materials, specifics about documentation, specifics about manuals, instructions, field-specific magazines and web platforms, and future learning opportunities.

The subsequent step focused on the occupational qualification standards established by the Estonian Qualifications Authority (Kutsekoda). For this part of the analysis, three selective directions were worked through – welder, assembler and CNC operator. All three orientations that fall under the Welding and Metalworking curriculum are appointed level 4 by the qualifications authority when they graduate and pass their occupational exams. Therefore, level 4 was set as the basis of the analysis. Since the documents offered much speciality-specific information that would not be optional for a language class, the material was analysed based on the criteria for potential use in the foreign language classroom. A comprehensive list of learning outcomes offering common aspects through all three specialities can be found in Appendix 2.

This brief analysis yielded insights into the students' daily responsibilities, essential knowledge, opportunities for teamwork, and safety precautions. This checklist enabled the author to eliminate more straightforward aspects that will not need additional information, like safety requirements. Furthermore, some features overlapped with the curricular objectives, like the use of technological manuals and instructions, as well as communication opportunities. Therefore, features that needed more focus were terminology related to materials, processing technology, measuring equipment, and the use of technological charts. More information was needed about potential teamwork situations, instances where students must vocalise their opinions, and situations where workers consult with their supervisors. The combined results from both documents were included in the process of forming the questions for the interviews and examples will be elaborated on in the next section.

2.2 Preparing and conducting the interviews

2.2.1 Forming the questions for the interviews

After analysing the school's vocational curriculum and occupational quality standards, preliminary interview questions were formulated and translated into Estonian. The complete set of interview questions can be found in Appendix 3. Using a qualitative research method with personal semi-structured interviews, the research aimed to examine general predictions and map out details about the metalworking profession. This flexible interview format allowed the interviewer to adapt questions and their order, directly follow up on new information uncovered during the interviews and ask for clarification, enhancing the depth and quality of the information collected (Gideon 2012).

Fully structured and unstructured questions were used to invite different information and follow the interview's natural course. The first type offers quick and accurate information, and the second focuses on flexibility and invites long responses (Gideon 2012). Two types of

structured questions were used – closed questions and open-ended questions. The interview began with closed interview questions and aimed to build rapport, get information about the interviewee and confirm facts about the metalwork and welding curriculum, for example, *"Have you worked at a facility or company whose main profession is metalwork or welding?"*. These questions were altered depending on the interviewee, and some needed to be only confirmed once.

Most predetermined interview questions are open-ended to invite the participant to discuss the general topic but focus on their experience and preferred aspects. Ensuring the questions were not leading and trying to invite a particular response was important. The objective was to make the structured questions straightforward and address a single issue to avoid confusion (Aultman 2024). All the information gained from the national curriculum and occupational qualification standards was considered when creating the interview questions. For example, to gain more insight into daily communication, question ten, *"Which are the main channels of work-related communication?"* and twelve, *"In which situations do the students need to consult and cooperate with managers/coordinators?"* were added. Question sixteen, *"Which field-specific websites or magazines would you recommend?"* was made to find out more about good sources for field-specific literature to include in the tasks. For added insight, question seventeen has a different construction to be thought-provoking and gain different information about several necessary aspects.

Look at the following keywords. Can you give examples of how these topics are presented in their daily jobs?

- *Tool use and maintenance*
- *Safety instructions and drills*
- *Quality Control*
- *Properties of materials*
- *Technical documentation*

Figure 3. Interview question 17.

Initially, question eight, "*Which language skills (speaking, reading, writing, listening) do they need to use in their everyday work? Please give examples.*" was about language skills based on the four modes of communication: reception, production, interaction and mediation (CEFR 2020). When production means generating speech or pieces of writing, then reception includes language produced by others. Interaction and mediation both include reception and production, and the former especially demonstrates social use of the language through spoken and written exchanges; mediation describes a collaborative process to convey ideas. That being said, within the interviews, the question about four language skills uses the previous distinction used in language instruction – listening, speaking, writing and listening - to simplify the question for the interviewees since they are not language specialists. Within learning outcomes, a more specific distinction is made about which modes of communication are presented.

After the researcher and another EVP teacher examined the questions for clarity, ambiguity and repetition, they were arranged to have a logical flow. An interview guide was formulated, and questions were altered depending on the interviewee's background. Follow-up questions were formulated in advance to collect additional information if needed.

2.2.2 Conducting the interviews

An interview was selected as a data collection procedure because of its broad scope and its compatibility with the availability of a small-scale sample. The target needs will be recognised by a convenience sample (Long 2010) representing the experts' and non-experts' interests in the field. The expectation is that the information from two vocational educators and a community insider, combined with teachers' perspectives, will effectively reflect the diverse needs of students and subsequently interpret the mandated curriculum and, if necessary, reduce the disparities between them (Widodo 2021). An added benefit is that connecting with the vocational teachers will provide a necessary connection and future collaboration opportunities.

The selection of interviewees was decided based on their extensive experience in the field. Two vocational educators have experience working in metalworking companies and years of instructional experience in a vocational institution. Additionally, the community insider has pursued vocational studies in a similar institution and brings a lengthy work experience in Estonia and internationally. This individual teaches an introductory metalwork course at a higher education institution.

The location and time of the interviews were chosen based on the availability and convenience of the interviewees, resulting in three 40-minute face-to-face interviews. The interviewees were informed about the study's aims and rights, including voluntary participation and confidentiality. Written consent was not necessary. The interviews were recorded to enable transcription, reduce the need for note-taking and allow more attention to be paid to listening for substance and asking concrete follow-up questions if needed (Seidman 2005). Apart from a voice recorder, no technological aids were used.

Based on advice by Aultman (2024), the interviews began with an introduction and a short warm-up so the interviewee would feel comfortable. One question was asked at a time to keep the interview clear-cut, with clarifying questions asked when appropriate. At no time did the interviewer express their personal opinions during the interview. Unstructured questions that arose during the interview were a direct response to the information shared by the interviewee and were asked based on necessity and appropriateness. These questions included information the interviewer did not anticipate and provided valuable insight into a topic (Aultman 2024; Gideon 2012).

2.3 Thematic analysis of the interviews and related documents

Thematic analysis was chosen to analyse the interviews and contrast the emerging themes with the vocational curriculum and occupational qualification standard to ensure the most relevant themes were selected for the syllabus. Maguire and Delahunt (2017: 3352) define thematic analysis as "... the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data". They argue that this method is highly flexible and accommodates diverse data sources. However, a potential drawback is the risk of overlooking significant insights by concentrating only on prevalent themes (Hecker et al accessed 2024). This thesis, however, aims to understand the scope, not to analyse latent information.

To ensure a quality analysis, a top-down 6-step process outlined by Brown and Clarke (2006, referenced through Maguire et al 2017) was taken as an example. This process consisted of first familiarising oneself with the data, reviewing the initial notes taken during the interviews, reading the interview transcripts and developing initial keywords, such as machines, equipment, material qualities, material types, units, geometrical shapes, measurements, tools, safety, machine maintenance, work order, technical documentation, reading, talking, writing, teamwork, field suitability, and finally terminology. Then, the interviews were re-read to confirm information that had already been found and to identify more aspects that might have been missed. After the text was coded, initial themes were established while care was taken to distinguish them from the interview questions. This led to the emergence of eleven broader themes, in no particular order: materials, mathematical principles, equipment, tools, safety, technical documentation, work order, communication in the workplace, teamwork, suitability of the field and terminology. A complete list of themes with example phrases from the interviews can be found in Appendix 4. The following themes were then juxtaposed with the topics from the vocational curriculum and occupational qualification standards to ensure an overlap, mainly with the school curriculum. All themes

were covered in the vocational curriculum; however, the occupational qualification standards did not address the “*suitability of the field*”.

The next step was to determine the selection of themes for the syllabus. To begin with, the analysis demonstrated the need to familiarise oneself with tools, equipment, materials, and different mathematical concepts. All these are vital to dealing with work-related technical documentation, reading and understanding work orders and discussing their daily tasks. Safety requires special attention, as students must thoroughly understand fundamental principles and be exposed to them in various contexts throughout the course.

In terms of language skills, the syllabus must address receptive, productive and interactive skills. Students must be well-prepared to read technical texts, user manuals, and equipment specifications and work with and interpret safety guidelines and standard operating procedures. They will also be required to complete safety procedure documentation, write incident reports, compose technical reports and keep a work diary. Students must also comprehend verbal instructions during practice and watch instructional English videos in their speciality classes.

NA confirmed the independent nature of everyday tasks and that the working environment does not provide many situations for spoken production. Nonetheless, the interviews pointed out work-related communication between co-workers, as well as workers and supervisors, as part of daily work situations, not to mention work practice abroad or international work placements. All the previous scenarios necessitate making requests, providing instructions, asking for assistance, asking for clarification, talking about work-related problems, writing emails and memos to interact with supervisors, and so on. Mediation skills will be practised throughout the course activities as transferrable skills, even though NA did not highlight much of the need for teamwork in their work environments. In addition, the

interviews revealed that first-year students often lack a clear understanding of their selected vocation. Consequently, an overview of the field and necessary skills will be included in the syllabus to develop familiarity with the industry and their chosen profession and discuss their future aspirations.

Finally, an important aspect confirmed during NA was the technical terminology. It is a pivotal part of vocational studies as foreign language skills are necessary when using machinery and, therefore, present in many speciality classes. Since students are novices and only beginning to learn the vocation, teaching specialised terminology will need to have priority throughout the course. Technical terminology will consist of names for different tools, materials, basic techniques for metalwork, equipment and so on. The objective is for students to navigate the field effectively and articulate various metalworking processes, from preparation to finished products. Therefore, due to the weight of this topic, it was left out of the table, and developing technical terminology is included throughout the syllabus.

All in all, from the themes that emerged during the thematic analysis and through a process of logical selection and deduction based on the information collected about the field, the syllabus will consist of eight topics: introduction to the metalworking profession, workplace situations, safety, materials, mathematical principles, tools, equipment and concluding the course. These necessary topics are inclusive of all emerging themes and will provide the necessary learning outcomes.

Due to the limited length of the introductory course, this research will be instrumental in making informed decisions about the content of the course in the following year. In the second year, students will select their majors and study their chosen fields in depth. Many of the topics introduced in the initial course can be revisited during a lengthier second-year course, as the introductory syllabus can only cover the fundamental aspects of each topic, given the

time constraints. By this stage in their studies, students will have mastered these subjects in their first language and feel more comfortable engaging with the material in English.

2.4 Syllabus design

A syllabus provides an opportunity to communicate the course content to the interested stakeholders; in the present thesis, they are the vocational institution, EVP teachers and learners. The ESP teacher's first fundamental decision is whether the course should focus on content or language (Widodo 2016). Within this study, based on the needs uncovered during the analysis of the interviews and related documents, the focus is on developing language skills, especially relevant terminology and content knowledge.

The syllabus (Figure 4) is task-based and is divided by topics to help students acquire the vocabulary and practice other language skills through real-world inspired, relevant activities in logical chunks. The themes that emerged from the interviews and vocational curriculum are organised by ostensible topic complexity. It was decided that ordering the syllabus by topics secures better performance and convenience for the students since the focus is not only on tasks, but great attention will be put on vocabulary acquisition. Although in this case, the tasks are not organised only based on the complexity of the functions, care is taken to consider task complexity. Sequencing the tasks is also vital to offer students opportunities for revision, and classes should begin with a review task. The syllabus can also be divided into modules based on topics of necessity and included in other EVP courses within the three-year metalwork and welding curriculum.

Although the focus is not on student opinions, the syllabus is based on the curriculum and needs of a specific school and speciality and, therefore, fits a narrow-angled approach to

syllabus design. That being said, the topics are introductory, and the course has the potential to focus on even narrower topics within the three specialities. It is important to remember that this is a short introductory course and will not need to go into detail about the speciality. At the end of the first academic year, students are divided into groups based on their preferences and study results and continue to study the field in depth with more specific speciality content.

As mentioned previously, developing technical terminology is included in the syllabus throughout the course and is a pivotal part of any EVP course. As Widodo (2016: 284) puts it, "...vocabulary knowledge is an important dimension of EVP so that students can understand and produce both spoken and written texts in the vocational context." However, due to time constraints, it is not the focus of this thesis.

Course name: INTRODUCTION TO METALWORK	
Hours: 22 academic hours (990 minutes)	
Meetings: 11 weekly meetings (2 x 45 min.)	
Course goal: Students can understand and apply welding and metalwork-related vocabulary in communicative tasks.	
Activity types: Students will be introduced to the course material through communicative and motivating pedagogical tasks.	
Assessment: Vocabulary test and portfolio with completed worksheets and reflections.	
Topic 1: Introduction to the metalwork profession (135 minutes/ 3 lessons)	
Learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students predict and describe their future schedule. • Students describe what kind of tasks a metalworking profession involves and what characteristics a professional should have. • Students design a poster for a job advertisement.
Tasks	TASK: "A Day in the life of a metalworking professional" 35 minutes (Appendix 7)

	<p>TASK: “A perfect job ad for a welder” 60 minutes (Figure 5)</p> <p>TASK: Introduction to the task “Work diary” (20 minutes) where students write a description of their school and on-site practice, using different field-specific terminology.</p>
Topic 2: Workplace situations (90 minutes/ 2 lessons)	
Learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students role-play authentic situations from the workplace. • Students follow verbal instructions. • Students make a request, provide instructions, write an email, ask for assistance, ask for clarification, report a concern, and give feedback. • Students analyse and critique an article.
Tasks	<p>TASK: “Let’s role-play” 30 minutes (Appendix 8)</p> <p>TASK: “Send a memo to a co-worker and direct manager based on a prompt. 20 minutes.</p> <p>TASK: “Web quest: Find a field-specific magazine and select an article to share with your class”. 30 minutes.</p>
Topic 3: Safety (135 minutes/ 3 lessons)	
Learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students follow written and verbal instructions on safety and emergencies. • Students read and interpret safety guidelines, standard operating procedures, and material safety data sheets (MSDS). • Students fill in a report. • Students design a poster about safety rules.
Tasks	<p>TASK: “Reporting an incident” 60 minutes (Figure 7).</p> <p>TASK: Create a safety poster with the seven most important rules for the metalworking room. 70 minutes.</p> <p>Optional task: Find information on the MSDS. 20 minutes.</p>
Topic 4: Materials (135 minutes/ 3 lessons)	
Learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students recognise and reproduce the names of materials. • Students compare and contrast different properties using the correct terminology. • Students prepare a presentation. • Students present and illustrate material qualities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students examine, assess, recommend, negotiate and decide which material is best for a project.
Tasks	<p>TASK: “Material qualities”. Students read a text describing various materials used in metalwork and welding. After, in pairs, students work with a worksheet to match the materials to their characteristics based on the information provided in the text. 50 minutes.</p> <p>TASK: “Research one quality in depth”. In groups of 2-3, prepare and present one material quality to the class and give examples of household items that possess that quality. 60 minutes.</p> <p>TASK: “Why this material?” Students work in groups of three, and each group member is provided with a work order (3 different options). First, independently, then with the help of groupmates, students research and need to explain and discuss as a group what the project is, what kind of material is used, and what properties are necessary for such a project. 25 minutes.</p>
Topic 5: Mathematical principles (135 minutes/ 3 lessons)	
Learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students reproduce the correct terminology for units, shapes, numbers and measurements. Students describe and identify the missing information on a work order. Students correctly reproduce “how much” and “how many” questions.
Tasks	<p>TASK: “Missing information”. In pairs, students fill in the missing information on the work order. One student will read out the text (a cone with its measurements, material and so on), and the other will fill in the missing information on the work order and then draw an approximate sketch. 40 minutes.</p> <p>TASK: Listen to a technical description of a metal part and identify its dimensions and shape. 20 minutes.</p> <p>TASK: “Guess how much”. Students practice asking and answering questions about facts and statistics while using guessing and estimation skills in a fun and interactive way. In pairs, both students have sentences with facts and need to ask questions about the given statements to their partners. The partners guess the answer, after which they switch roles. When finished, in teams, students do a quiz to recall the information. 50 minutes.</p>

	TASK: “Tool user guide”. Skim through a user guide for a tool of your choice. Afterwards, discuss with your partner what kind of information you encountered and what you learned. 20 minutes.
Topic 6: Tools (135 minutes/ 3 lessons)	
Learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students reproduce the terminology for metalworking tools. • Students categorise tools. • Students discuss, assess and describe which tools are best for a job. • Students compare and contrast pictures of tools. • Students present and illustrate the features of a tool. • Students compose a story on the perfect toolbox. • Students examine and evaluate a user guide.
Tasks	<p>TASK: “What kind of tool?” Divide the tools based on functions - electrical, universal, specific and so on. 20 minutes.</p> <p>TASK: “Spot the difference”. The teacher will provide two somewhat similar pictures of tools. Students should not show their partner the picture but describe it in detail to spot the difference. 30 minutes (Figure 6).</p> <p>TASK: Show and tell about a tool or piece of equipment. To describe the features, practice the vocabulary (verbs and nouns). 50 minutes.</p> <p>TASK: Writing task: “Describe the perfect toolbox”. 30 minutes.</p>
Topic 7: Equipment (90 minutes/ 2 lessons)	
Learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students reproduce the correct terminology for different pieces of equipment in the target language. • Students arrange and match terms with the pictures. • Students indicate and demonstrate when giving a tour. • Students mimic giving a tour of their workplace. • Students assess the situation, recommend, negotiate and decide what equipment and tools to use.
Tasks	<p>TASK: “Match”. Students match the images of equipment with their corresponding names and describe their functions and use. 25 minutes.</p> <p>TASK: “Give a tour” Students give a new co-worker a tour of the metalworking room by describing different machines and the ambience. The teacher will provide a blueprint of the room. 25 minutes.</p>

	TASK: “What equipment to use?” The teacher will provide a work order, and students must discuss the equipment and tools they would use and why. 30 minutes.
Topic 8: Conclusion (135 minutes/ 3 lessons)	
Learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students perform review exercises. • Students evaluate their progress. • Students reproduce terminology that was learnt throughout the course. • Students fill out an application form. • Students produce a work diary and analyse their performance.
Tasks	<p>TASK: Students review their job advertisement posters. Would they change anything? 15 minutes.</p> <p>TASK: “Apprenticeship application” 60 minutes (Appendix 9)</p> <p>TASK: Students reflect on their work diary. 30 minutes.</p> <p>TASK: “What is being done?” Based on a picture or a video, describe the process of production. 25 minutes.</p>

Figure 4. Syllabus for the “Introduction to metalwork” course.

Currently, at least one topic in the syllabus includes more tasks than can be realistically covered within the designated timeframe. This is due to varying task length depending on the student's previous knowledge, and secondly, an option of choice for different groups on a year-to-year basis. The tasks not used during an introductory course can be the basis of the subsequent EVP during their studies. At the same time, the first topic has extra time that is meant for introductory activities.

When the material is ready to be administered, it is vital to remain adaptable and make changes for the activities to be functional. Although some of the designed tasks have already been tested, the syllabus as a whole needs to be piloted and the order and instructions of the tasks need to be improved on according to the results. While this research emphasises target

needs, learning needs are essential and should be considered depending on the group of learners. Groups' uniqueness and students' preferences can be considered in class, and, if necessary, the materials can be adapted. Prior to material delivery, evaluating assessment methods and course effectiveness should be considered, especially if students exhibit varying levels of language proficiency. As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, if possible, a placement test will be administered at the start of the course. Three example tasks are brought out and analysed in the next section to illustrate the key features of the activities included in such a course. Other examples of tasks created for the syllabus are provided in the Appendices.

2.5 Task design

This section of the study aims to provide students with practical pedagogical tasks to practice vocation-related English. The proposed tasks prioritise meaning over form, facilitating both explicit and implicit foreign language acquisition, as outlined by Branden (2016). The former is intentional learning, for example, when students are aware of the new vocabulary and forms. The latter involves unintentional learning, where students work towards fluency without the feeling that they are studying. While the focus of these tasks is on meaning and might overlook form and other skills, it is essential to note that in the case of this particular EVP course, task-based teaching is supported by general language classes that follow a more traditional approach, prioritising grammar and other linguistic features.

When formulating the tasks for any course, it is essential to assess the situation realistically. The target group for this thesis learns the language in a non-target-language environment where there is almost no immediate need to practice the language (Gollin-Kies et al 2015). This is a common language learning environment, and although pedagogical tasks cannot simulate real-world situations, the goal of the tasks surpasses language skills and aims

for students to practice field-specific knowledge in a familiar context where students should be able to see the practicality of the material.

Based on insights gained from NA, the tasks should primarily enable students to develop field-specific technical terminology. Additionally, students should have the opportunity to improve their receptive, productive and interactive language skills, both oral and written. Moreover, the activities should ensure that students acquire a foundational understanding of their field and engage in planning and discussing their future goals. Finally, the tasks should ensure that students have the opportunity to gain knowledge about the different topics uncovered during the thematic analysis.

When designing the tasks, characteristics outlined by Nunan (2004) and Bolen (2021) were combined to describe each task's essential features. The description of each pedagogical task includes the title, necessary materials, allotted time, macro- and microfunctions, and divided into pre-task, task and post-task activities. An example task for introducing the metalworking profession can be found in Figure 5. The task encourages students to contemplate their chosen career, reflecting on the nature of the work and assessing whether it aligns with their aspirations.

TASK: “The perfect job ad for a welder”

Time: 60 minutes

Materials: A4 or A3 paper, instructions on the board.

Macrofunctions: Students design a poster

Microfunctions: Students describe what kind of tasks a metalworking profession involves, their schedule, and the characteristics a professional should have.

Pre-task activities: Students are divided into teams of 4 and are shown a picture of a person in the metalworking industry. In groups of 4, discuss what qualities an employer would look for in a welder in their opinion. Follow-up questions:

What are the working conditions like? What kind of characteristics do you think they need? Which skills and qualifications are necessary?

Task: In the same teams of 4, students create and present a job advertisement for a welder.

Instructions: In teams of 4, create a job advertisement for a welder. Make up a company and include the job title, job description, required qualifications and experience, required skills and characteristics, describe the working conditions and how to apply.

Be creative and make it visually appealing. The teacher will provide markers, paper, pens and other necessary resources. Make sure it is easy to read and it looks professional.

Decide how you will present the poster and who will talk about what. Each person must contribute.

Post-task activities: Each team presents their poster to the class, explaining the key elements of their advertisement. After each presentation, questions and a discussion will follow. The teacher encourages constructive peer feedback. Guiding questions: Did the job ad include all the necessary information? Were the qualifications and skills listed clearly? Was the advertisement visually appealing and easy to understand? Final discussion points: Which poster was the best? Which qualities were included most on the posters and are, therefore, most necessary?

Figure 5. Example task: “The perfect job ad for a welder”.

Although the form is not the focus, as explained in the previous section, teaching terminology plays a vital part, and the example task “Spot the difference” (Figure 6) is designed to activate the terminology for tools and geometry. In addition to practising common tools and shapes, this activity will allow students to practice collaboration, problem-solving, asking for clarification and confirming information. The pictures for the tasks are specifically designed and can be found in Appendix 5.

TASK: “Spot the difference”

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Printed and laminated pictures for students A and B.

Macrofunctions: Comparing and contrasting pictures by finding the differences, collaborating to solve a problem.

Microfunctions: Identifying and naming objects, describing positions using prepositions, asking for clarification, correcting misunderstandings, and confirming information.

Pre-task activities: Using pictures or, if possible, real tools, the teacher activates prior knowledge and relevant vocabulary for tools and shapes, introducing new vocabulary. If necessary, revise prepositions of place. The teacher will provide a sample picture on the board, and students can perform a short oral drill describing what they see in the picture.

TASK: Students work in pairs, and each student is provided with a different version of a picture showing tools placed in four shapes (Appendix 5). Without showing their images to each other, students take turns describing their pictures in detail, focusing on the types and positions of the tools. While one student describes, the other listens, compares with their image, and notes differences. Then, they switch roles and identify and agree on 5–7 differences using descriptive and comparative language.

Post-task activities: Group discussion: students share some differences they found. Key terms and phrases used during the task are confirmed, and students write at least 2 complete sentences describing one key difference they found.

Figure 6. Example task: “Spot the difference”.

Effort was made to make the tasks as versatile as possible and, for example, include problem-solving, decision-making, and communication-based tasks. Therefore, when the previous example task was fully pedagogical, and students would not encounter a similar activity in real life, then filling out an incident report (Appendix 6) is an essential skill for any physical labourer that they are likely to encounter during their career. The task “Reporting an incident”, shown in Figure 7, also requires pre-teaching vocabulary and ideas for pre-task activities are included in the task description. This task is individual, and several prompts are

provided to make the task more interesting. Like with many other tasks, post-task activity requires peer feedback, which teaches students to self-evaluate and provide constructive feedback. When creating the scenarios for students for this task, as well as "A day in the life of a metalworking professional" (Appendix 7) and "Let's role play" (Appendix 8), I attempted to use the recent developments in AI to my advantage. To create the different role-plays and task prompts, suggestions from AI (Copilot by Microsoft) were used. Prompts that were posted described the field-specific nature of metalwork and the task aim, for example: *For the task of filling in an incident report, describe four incidents that could happen to employees in a facility in the metalworking industry.* The results were assessed critically, and the suggestions generated provided a good starting point for the scenarios, which were then developed, and details were added.

TASK: "Reporting an incident"

Time: 60 minutes

Materials: Printed and laminated cards with prompts. Printed incident reports (Appendix 6). Materials for vocabulary exercises.

Macrofunctions: Submit a report and follow protocol.

Microfunctions: Students gather information, identify the incident, assess the damage, fill in the report, and use the correct terminology.

Pre-task activities: The teacher shows a picture of a metalworker in full gear. Students name and discuss the term PPE. In writing, students name the PPE and its functions. Students do two exercises that include safety terminology: countable and uncountable nouns and gap-fill of hazard-related verbs. Discuss what an incident report is and why it is essential for safety in the metalworking industry. The teacher shows a sample incident report or a brief video about safety practices in metalworking.

TASK: Students complete an incident report (Appendix 6) based on the chosen prompt.

A: *A small fire started at work while welding a metal piece, and you burned your hand, but weren't seriously injured. Describe how the fire began, including what*

you were doing, the materials used, and how the fire spread. Explain how the fire was noticed and what actions you took to control it before it escalated.

B: *You injured your hand while using a grinder to cut metal. Describe the sequence of events leading up to the injury, including the tools you were using, what happened at the moment, and your actions. Be sure to mention how you notified a supervisor and sought medical attention.*

C: *The welding machine stopped working during a routine task. Describe what happened when the machine broke, what you were trying to weld, any sounds or signals that indicated a problem, and the action you took once the failure occurred. Mention if the failure caused any delays or impacted the production process.*

D: *You were not wearing the required gloves while operating a power saw in the metalworking shop. Describe the situation, the task you were performing, why the gloves were not worn, and what happened due to not using the proper safety equipment (PPE). Explain any immediate consequences or reactions from others.*

Post-task activities: With their desk mates, students exchange their incident reports. They will read their partner's report and provide feedback on whether the report is clear and easy to understand, if the incident is described in the correct order, and whether essential details are included. Afterwards, students make any necessary revisions to their reports based on feedback.

Figure 7. Example tasks: “Reporting an incident”.

The division of tasks into three parts is the main principle considered when developing the tasks and is expected to give the activities a natural flow, starting with an introduction and finishing with feedback. Initially, with new task types and topics, the instructor needs to spend more time on introduction and modelling, but after students familiarise themselves with the organisation and structure of the tasks, they should develop familiarity and hopefully an encouraging setting. The instructor needs to be adaptable, and some characteristics, for example, the allotted time or introductory activities, need to be altered, depending on the group's particularities and size.

2.6 Discussion

This Master's thesis aimed to design a syllabus for an introductory EVP course focusing on metalwork and welding. Additionally, the study sought to create motivating tasks to increase students' fluency and vocabulary in the target language within their vocational field. Given the field-specific nature of the intended course, recycling a previously designed syllabus for a specific CEFR level was not feasible. Therefore, to include relevant language aspects and skills in the syllabus, it was crucial to consider why the students are learning in order to create material that promotes success in their future professional endeavours and current studies.

To address the research questions about which contexts and practical situations demonstrate the necessity for English use in the learners' school and future work environment, along with which tasks are most relevant for the students in both vocational and professional settings, a needs analysis, inclusive of document analysis and three interviews, was conducted to provide an understanding of the context and elicit practical situations that students encounter in their school and future work environments. Examining the vocational curriculum alongside the occupational qualification standards helped create a framework of the field and identify initial topics and areas that needed more information to be added to the interview questions.

The three interviews provided ample information and formed the basis for the thematic analysis that helped identify the themes necessary to create tasks that mimic situations from their professional and vocational settings, as well as determine which communicative language activities need attention to be successful in the aforementioned task-based activities. The topics that emerged during the thematic analysis were included in the syllabus and are as follows: introduction to the metalworking profession, workplace situations, safety, materials, mathematical principles, tools, equipment and concluding the course. The language activities that need attention are receptive, productive and interactive skills. Students must be able to

perform various tasks, including reading safety guidelines, understanding verbal commands, writing accident reports, talking with colleagues about work-related situations and many more.

The last research question asked how to best design a syllabus with the findings established during the needs analysis. Informed by literature analysis, a task-based syllabus type was selected to support students in achieving their language goals in the EVP classroom. Research indicates that task-based teaching offers high student engagement, meaningful content and has a strong focus on communication (Nunan 1988). Consequently, this study resulted in a task-based syllabus inclusive of eight topics and consisting of material for 22 academic hours. The syllabus is organised by topics to ensure a logical flow of the material, as well as providing a reasonable basis for the retention of field-specific vocabulary associated with each theme.

The ideas for tasks that emerged during the interviews and document analysis were synthesised to create pedagogical tasks corresponding to the learning outcomes. Example tasks are structured into three main parts: pre-task, task and post-task activities, and clearly outline the learning goals. Although the tasks are presented in chunks according to topics, the tasks are sequenced by apparent complexity to optimise learning (Ellis 2018). In a task-based syllabus, repetition is important to aid retention and maximise student input (Nunan 2004). Therefore, the final topic in the syllabus focuses on recycling tasks to allow students to reflect and refine their prior performances.

The syllabus relies heavily on group work, necessitating attention to equal participation to ensure that all students have the same opportunities to practice. The flipped classroom technique, where students engage with new material before class, could provide a solution to pre-teach complex terminology, especially for lower-level students who need more time to

acquire the necessary material. Furthermore, encouraging quality peer feedback can enhance teaching quality, contributing to course effectiveness and practicality.

To further refine the syllabus, specific information about student behaviour, grammar points, attendance, grading, support, course materials, and faculty could be added (Wagner et al 2023). Furthermore, selecting instructional strategies would be beneficial, but was not discussed in detail in this research due to time and space constraints. Collaborative planning within departments could yield new ideas and shorter planning time for future developments.

Due to the specificity of the course, the findings cannot be generalised, and this study is a direct result of the criteria set by the vocational institution and the opinions of the vocational teachers. That being said, due to the introductory nature of the course, many of the tasks created are transferable within the field and can be used to practise the target language for vocational purposes.

Needs analysis should be viewed as an ongoing process, and the course should be adapted annually. Further research is welcome, and within a lengthier thesis, the research could focus more on how the occupational sector influences language and communication. Text and genre analysis would allow focus on the specific linguistic features students require but were excluded due to time constraints, such as technical vocabulary and discourse markers in scientific texts (Brown 2016). A fully task-based NA was also omitted to allow for a broader understanding of the field and to retain flexibility in selecting an appropriate syllabus design approach, however, it could add additional insights. When students reach an advanced level, a natural extension could be forming a CLIL course. New technologies and approaches to language learning should also be considered. For example, a virtual reality set could simulate the workroom, allowing students to describe what they see.

As mentioned before, there is a lack of EVP materials. Thus, more ESP teacher training opportunities are needed in Estonia to teach instructors how to design good-quality courses. Based on the academic papers focusing on ESP-related topics, there is much literature on needs analysis, history, and different types of ESP. However, only a few papers focus on the practitioners' needs. Basturkmen (2001) also stated that there is a need for more research into the needs of ESP language teachers to provide a basis for better ESP teacher education. Sincere (2017) brings out the interesting finding that, in addition to the pedagogical skill base, more than half of the EVP instructors believe that having in-job training in the target location is important and worthy of consideration. At the same time, although there are many difficulties in creating ESP courses, those intellectual challenges make the process more gratifying and professionally rewarding (Belcher 2009). This thesis could also serve as a source of information for colleagues, modelling the process of developing a syllabus for an EVP course and creating a series of tasks on the basis of this syllabus.

CONCLUSION

As reported in the Statistics Estonia database (2024), recent years have demonstrated an increasing number of vocational students. Simultaneously, the government is implementing reforms to enhance the appeal of vocational education, further increasing the need for English for Vocational Purposes courses. Despite the growing need for specialised vocational language training, there is a deficiency of vocational teaching resources that cater to the linguistic and contextual needs of English as a foreign language learners in Estonia. Therefore, this research has grown out of the necessity to provide students with the best possible opportunity for learning, having direct benefits in the form of practical skills that will bestow students with the opportunity to acquire competencies necessary for their professional careers. Although generic commercial materials offer benefits such as cost and efficiency, tailor-made ESP materials have clear advantages that cater directly for the needs of specific students and schools.

This thesis aimed to develop a 22-hour introductory metalworking course syllabus for Tartu Vocational College metalwork and welding curriculum students and answer the following research questions: 1) Which contexts and practical situations demonstrate the necessity for English use in the learners' school and future work environment? 2) Which tasks are most relevant for the students in both vocational and professional settings? 3) Which communicative language activities need attention to be successful in the aforementioned task-based activities? 4) How to best design a syllabus with the findings established during the needs analysis?

The decision on syllabus type is strongly influenced by the needs of all stakeholders and the course objectives. In developing an EVP course focused on communication, a task-based syllabus was selected to practice authentic scenarios through performing relevant

activities that provide ample situations to practice field-specific vocabulary. In addition to this type of syllabus assisting students in enhancing their specialised vocabulary, the material would aid in understanding and developing their vocational knowledge and skills to communicate their vocational expertise. Primarily, the current EVP course aims to develop students' proficiency in the target language.

The main benefit of a task-based syllabus type is the strong focus on meaningful tasks that lead to high student engagement (Nunan 1988). Student motivation is further enhanced with a focus on communication and transferable skills, not particular grammar structures (Nunan 1988). In addition, the suitability is reaffirmed due to task-based teaching accommodating students with diverse proficiency levels, allowing them to perform meaning-focused tasks to improve their skills unaffected by the capabilities of other classmates (Willis, Willis 2007). This is especially useful in a first-year vocational course where students can have varying language levels.

Despite a number of prospective benefits, the material might minimise attention on form, leading to low levels of accuracy. Furthermore, due to the time-consuming and complex nature of creating tasks, sufficient time needs to be taken to create and prepare the tasks adequately. Widodo (2016) and Ellis (2003) both emphasise task difficulty and the importance of the role of the teacher in the classroom, who needs to provide proper scaffolding, give clear guidance, ensure equal participation, and maximise the benefits of the material. In addition, teacher training to have the knowledge and practical skills to be adept in task-based teaching might be necessary.

To achieve the objective of creating an EVP syllabus, NA, consisting of document analysis, three semi-structured interviews, and a thematic analysis, was used to discern the target needs of students and other stakeholders. Firstly, the analysis of the vocational

curriculum and the related documents from occupational qualification standards provided the first look into the field, highlighted the criteria the syllabus must follow and provided the basis for formulating interview questions. Three 40-minute interviews with two vocational educators and a community insider, who were chosen based on their expertise and field-specific work experience, helped to identify the vocational expectations and the target tasks. The interviews were analysed thematically to support further comprehension, and a list of the most necessary topics to be included in the syllabus was formulated.

The primary objective of the created syllabus is the retention and application of vocabulary in communicative tasks for welding and metalwork situations. The prospective course is divided into eight topics, with learning objectives and corresponding tasks assigned for each. All the topics included are strongly connected to the students' fields of study and should entail high motivation. Furthermore, three examples of pedagogical tasks and their characteristics are brought out. Based on Nunan (2004) and Bolen (2021), all tasks are divided into pre-task, task and post-task activities. In addition to basic features like name and time, the included characteristics also include macro- and microfunctions to express the broader communicative goal as well as specific language focus (Nunan 2004).

The formed syllabus is a work in progress and should be piloted, after which modifications can be implemented. Adaptations should be made annually through further needs analysis or simply by adjusting the tasks based on the group's peculiarities. Future research is needed, mainly due to the evolving nature of the field and its dependence on technology.

As with every study, there are limitations to this research. For example, the findings of this study cannot be directly generalised since they are strongly connected to a particular school and the professional opinion of its teachers. Furthermore, the NA is relatively small-scale, including three interviews and qualitative data. For the scale and purpose of this study, the

chosen methods proved effective, but limitations indicate that the findings do not capture the needs across different vocational contexts.

Although a fully task-based EVP syllabus might seem unconventional for students, it has high potential to increase student motivation, and consequently, their language skills, as well as provide familiarity and confidence in school and potential workplace situations. The transferrable skills are not limited to vocational knowledge, but task-based classes can enhance students' problem-solving, teamwork, and self-reflection skills. For the instructor, it is a demanding task at first, but after the initial design, the tasks can be recycled and modified depending on the group size, advancement and speciality. It is certain to be a highly valuable resource for a recurring course.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. General educational goals for the welding and metalwork profession based on the Vocational Curriculum for Tartu Vocational College.

This list is not final and includes skills that offer insight into the vocation and are potentially applicable to the language learning process.

It is expected that by the end of the studies, the student:

- 1) Can apply necessary communication skills and work techniques in mechanic and metalworking companies; uses information and communication technologies and employs tools efficiently.
- 2) Can carry out maintenance work on tools and equipment according to instructions.
- 3) Can perform tasks according to documentation, following safety requirements.
- 4) Can organize their work rationally, independently, effectively, and resource-efficiently.
- 5) Can work as a team member, taking responsibility for their work and adapting to changing situations.
- 6) Values their professional and work-related development and further learning based on technological progress.
- 7) Can understand written texts and express themselves clearly and understandably in the language of instruction, both orally and in writing.
- 8) Can communicate in a foreign language as an independent language user.
- 9) Can understand the scientific worldview and values and adhere to the principles of sustainable development.

Source: Statements from the school's vocational curriculum are summarized and translated into English.

Appendix 2. Necessary skills for welders, assemblers and CNC operators based on the occupational qualification standards created by the Estonian Qualifications Authority (Kutsekoda).

- They analyse their activities and can find appropriate information to perform their duties and solve work-related problems.
- They follow work instructions and necessary procedures
- They are able to work with technical drawings, work instructions, and technological charts (WPS)
- They perform quality control and can repair imperfections.
- They can choose the necessary equipment, materials (assemblies, parts, elements, etc.), tools, and accessories based on the nature of the work and production conditions.
- They know processing technology
- They know the properties of materials (metals and their alloys)
- They know the tools and measuring equipment and the terminology.
- They use opportunities for self-improvement to upgrade their skills and take part in in-service training
- They understand and are able to assess the possible consequences of low-quality work. Pays heed to deadlines and technological manuals.
- They follow and know the safety requirements (correct work methods, principles of providing first aid, main working environment requirements, fire and electrical safety requirements, etc.)
- They know the basics of first aid
- They can select and check personal protective equipment. Knows the terminology and advantages and disadvantages of items.
- They register and communicate technical issues and other work-related problems
- They participate in teamwork. Is cooperative, shares all necessary and useful information for work with others, and works towards achieving the best common result.
- In the case of more complex works (requiring inspection), They consult and cooperate with their line manager, coordinator, or foreman.
- They have the skill and courage to present and defend their opinions in a well-argued way and to present ideas and suggestions for improving work.
- They share knowledge and field-specific expertise with colleagues and develop professional skills.
- They understand the work and functions of various organizational departments, can communicate with people at all levels, clearly express opinions, and do not withhold information.
- They take criticism constructively and can draw conclusions and learn from it.
- Based on the company's work arrangements, they delegate tasks appropriately and fairly. They organize the work of subordinates, guide them in their tasks, and evaluate their performance. They make suggestions regarding the need for additional training.

Source: Statements are summarized and translated (when the document was unavailable in English) from the Estonian Qualifications Authority.

Appendix 3. Interview questions in Estonian followed by an English translation.

(Closed questions)

1. Milliseid eriala aineid te õpetate? (Which vocational subjects do you teach?)
2. Kas olete varem töötanud metallitöoga tegelevas firmas? (Have you worked at a facility or company whose main profession is metalwork or welding?)
3. Kas ma saan õigesti aru, et kõik kolm keevitus ja metallitöö eriala (keevituse spetsialist, cnc metallilõikepingi operaator ja koostelukksepp) saavad lõpetades kutsestandardi järgselt taseme 4? (Is it correct that upon finishing their studies, all three welding and metalwork specialities (CNC bench operating, assembling and welding) will receive level 4 according to the Estonian Occupational qualification standards?)

(Open questions)

4. Palun kirjeldage lühidalt keevitajate/ cnc metallilõikepingi operaatori või koostelukksepa töö ülesandeid. (Please briefly describe the job tasks of a welder/CNC operator/assembler.)
5. Palun kirjeldage keevitaja/CNC operaatori/koostelukksepa tavapärast tööpäeva. (Can you describe their normal workday (welder/CNC operator/assembler).)
6. Milline terminoloogia on metallitöö õpilastele vajalik? (What kind of terminology do welding and metalwork curriculum students need?)
7. Millistes olukordades vajavad õpilased erialast inglise keelset sõnavara? (In which situations do the students of welding and metalwork curriculum need to use English terminology?)
8. Milliseid osaoskusi (rääkimine, lugemine, kirjutamine, kuulamine) õpilased oma töös ja õpingutes vajavad? Tooge palun näiteid. (Which language skills (speaking, reading, writing, listening) do they need to use in their everyday work? Please give examples.)
9. Kas ja missugustes olukordades töötavad õpilased tiimis? Palun tooge näiteid. (Do students need to work as part of a team? Please give examples.)
10. Millised on peamised suhtluskanalid igapäeva töös? (Which are the main channels of work-related communication?)
11. Milliseid probleeme võib nende igapäeva töös kui koolis esile kerkida? (What kind of daily work-related problems can occur in school and their future workplace?)
12. Millistes olukordades peavad töötajad suhtlema otsese ülemusega või juhatajaga? (In which situations do the students need to consult and cooperate with managers/coordinators?)
13. Palun näitlikustage olukorda kus töötajal tuleb alustada uut projekti ning sealhulgas koostada tööplaani ja valida töövahendid. (Could you please elaborate on a situation when a worker starts with a new project and needs to plan out their work and choose the equipment?)
14. Milliseid tööjuhiseid peavad nad järgima, kas te saaksite näiteid tuua? (What kind of work instructions do they need to follow? Please give examples.)

15. Kas ja kui palju kasutatakse valdkonnas erialaspetsiifilist slängi, lühendeid ja mugandatud sõnu? (If and how much jargon and abbreviations is used in the industry?)
16. Milliseid erialaseid internet lehti või ajakirju/ajalehti soovitaksite? (Which field-specific websites or magazines would you recommend?)
17. Vaadake palun neid märksõnu ja tooge välja kas või kuidas need teemad kerkivad esile igapäeva töös. (Look at the following keywords. Can you give examples of how these topics are presented in their daily jobs?)
 - Töövahendite kasutus ja hooldus (Tool use and maintenance)
 - Ohutusnõuded ja koolitused (Safety instructions and drills)
 - Kvaliteedikontroll (Quality Control)
 - Materjalide omadused (Properties of materials)
 - Tehniline dokumentatsioon (Technical documentation)
18. Lõpetuseks, kas te tunnete, et on veel mõni oluline teema mida me ei ole puudutanud? (To finish up, do you feel that there is a topic that should be considered, but didn't come up during the interview?)

Follow-up questions (if the topic doesn't come up)

19. Milline tehniline dokumentatsioon on õppes ja töös kasutusel? (What kind of technical documentation is used by those three specialities during studies and work?)
20. What kind of manuals, graphs and instructions must they read? Please give examples. (Milliseid juhendeid ja juhiseid peavad õpilased lugema? Palun tooge näiteid.)
21. Milline on kvaliteedikontrolli protsess? (What are the steps of the process of quality control?)
22. Milliseid arvutiprogramme peavad õpilased oskama kasutada? (Which online programs do they need to use?)

Appendix 4. Themes with examples from the interviews.

THEMES	EXAMPLES FROM THE INTERVIEWS (in no particular order)
Materials (inclusive of material properties and types)	<p>“...they do not decide the material they need to use, but need to know the properties.” (Interview 2)</p> <p>“...you have to understand if it is stainless steel or carbon steel”. (Interview 2)</p> <p>„They should remember in school if the material is ferrous or non-ferrous“ (Interview 1)</p>
Mathematical principles (units, geometrical shapes etc.)	<p>“...different measurement devices and their English names, as well as what we are measuring and the measurement units in English, like hundredths, thousandths, and their conversions, should be understood.” (Interview 3)</p> <p>“...we describe the shape of a detail, specific elements of the detail, and perhaps a little about the processing regime.” (Interview 3)</p>
Equipment	<p>“All machines have English language displays.” (Interview 2)</p> <p>„Instructional guides for tools and equipment are necessary.“(Interview 3)</p> <p>“Manuals are usually in English, with more technical terminology.” (Interview 1)</p> <p>“...machine displays are all in English, especially when welding coloured metals like aluminium and others.” (Interview 3)</p> <p>“...need to know equipment and its handling” (Interview 2)</p>
Tools	<p>“...using and maintaining tools is an everyday task.” (Interview 3)</p>
Safety	<p>“Safety should be a top priority if you have machines, problems like poorly maintained cables, broken grounding wires, malfunctioning clamps, or electrical hazards can happen, since the workplace is filled with fine metal dust.” (Interview 1)</p> <p>“...Equipment malfunctions, possible work accidents, and injuries. Where to change work clothes? What work clothes are required? For example, we need safety footwear. What are the requirements for work clothes?” (Interview 3)</p>
Technical documentation	<p>“No need for this, as the office side usually handles it.” (Interview 1)</p> <p>“...filling out a work diary.” (Interview 1)</p>
Work order (reading situations)	<p>“On the work order, everything necessary is written down.” (Interview 1)</p> <p>“...this means that a work order involves information about where to get the material, what material is needed, the drawing, which program and machine to use for the task, and how many details need to be prepared.” (Interview 3)</p>
Communication in the workplace	<p>“If something is unclear, it’s better to ask for clarification before proceeding on your own.”(Interview 2)</p> <p>“There isn’t much conversation during work situations” (Interview 1)</p> <p>“...explaining a work task, or if you get an unusual assignment, or if you need new work clothes, tools, or something else.” (Interview 1)</p>

	<p>“Communication with the immediate superior during the workday might happen for about an hour or even less. With higher management, it’s about once a week.” (Interview 3)</p> <p>“...in fact, professional discussions are also needed. For example, ... training sessions in Portugal, which were taught in English. Most people managed well with understanding, but some had difficulty describing their actions and explaining why they solved something in a certain way.” (Interview 3)</p> <p>“During outside practice, feedback on what has been learned is given to the local instructor.” (Interview 3)</p> <p>“When interacting with management or colleagues, it's about understanding instructions and orders.” (Interview 2)</p> <p>“For example, right after vocational school, older colleagues don’t talk casually but give you helpful advice.” (Interview 1)</p>
Teamwork	<p>„...there is not much teamwork. ... But when working on a project, then, teamwork is very important.“ (Interview 2)</p>
Terminology	<p>“Basic needed terminology relates to various metals and non-metallic materials processed with lathes and milling machines, and terminology for interpreting information from drawings, such as surface, cylinder, cone angles, surface roughness, tolerances, deviations, etc. This vocabulary in English is certainly necessary.” (Interview 3)</p> <p>“...MMA (manual metal arc welding), MIG, MAG, etc. Most terms are in English, and abbreviations are used, like butt weld (BW), fillet weld (FW), corner joint.” (Interview 2)</p> <p>“...welding techniques – semi-automatic, manual arc, TIG, electrode welding, spot welding, gas flow, guillotine, drilling machine, or stamping press.” (Interview 1)</p>
Suitability of the field	<p>„When students come here to study, they need to figure out if this is something they are really interested in.” (Interview 2)</p>

Appendix 5. Example task: “Spot the difference”.

Picture for student A.



Picture for student B.



Appendix 6. Example task: “Reporting an incident”.**INCIDENT REPORT**

Date: _____

Time: _____

Name: _____ Location: _____

Person(s) involved: _____

Witnesses: _____

Description of the incident

Action taken (What was done immediately following the incident?)

Outcome (Was anyone injured? Did production stop?). Provide details

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 7. Example task: “Day in the life of a metalworking professional”.

TASK: "A day in the life of a metalworking professional"

Time: 35 minutes

Macrofunctions: Students describe and create a detailed schedule for their future workday.

Microfunctions: Students role-play, communicate, predict and express their opinions. Students describe what kind of tasks the metalworking profession involves.

Pre-Task activities: Discuss the metalworking profession, the different types of metalworkers, and their essential tools. Students are encouraged to think about the skills needed in the profession, such as attention to detail, precision, and problem-solving.

TASK: Each student or group picks a role within the metalworking industry (welder, CNC machinist, blacksmith, assembler or lathe operator). Students design a schedule for a typical day on the job, including a morning routine, the first task of the day, lunch break, afternoon and end of the day. The teacher will provide instructions on the board with questions.

Instructions: Pick one role within the metalworking industry, like a welder, CNC machinist, blacksmith or a lathe operator. Design a schedule for a typical day, including a morning routine, the first task of the day, lunch break, afternoon and end of the day. Prepare and make notes, then tell your partner about your schedule.

Morning Routine: *What time do you start work? Do you need to change clothes, inspect tools?*

First Task of the Day: *How do you decide on the task to start your day with? Do you review blueprints?*

Lunch Break: *Where and when do you take a break? Do you discuss projects with coworkers?*

Afternoon Projects: *What other tasks will you complete throughout the day? How do you manage multiple projects, and what tools do you use?*

End of the Day: *Do you clean tools, write reports, or have a team meeting? How do you wind down after a workday?*

Post-Task activities: Students reflect on how their schedules differed and why they made these choices. Did they mention safety? Did anyone mention any challenges they expected to face during the day? What would happen to their schedules if an accident or urgent project occurred? What did students learn about time management?

Appendix 8. Example task: “Let’s role play”.

TASK: “Let’s role-play”

Time: 30 minutes.

Materials: Printed and laminated cards with roleplays.

Macrofunctions: Prepare students for real-life scenarios they will face at work.

Microfunctions: Making a request to a colleague, providing instructions to a colleague, asking for assistance, asking for clarification from your supervisor, reporting a concern, and giving feedback.

Pre-task activities: The teacher invites class discussion on scenarios that might come up in a welding or metalworking shop. Ask students to share situations where they might need to communicate with a colleague, supervisor, or vocational teacher. Model an example role-play if necessary.

Task: Have students break into small groups to practice a brief version of one scenario or to discuss how they would handle a communication challenge in the shop. The teacher will provide group role cards; they should act out at least two role-play situations. First, students will practice independently to prepare to perform in front of the class.

Role-Play scenario 1: *You’re working on a welding project and realize you need a special welding clamp that your colleague has. Approach your colleague and request the tool politely. Explain why you need it and how it will help you complete your work.*

Role-Play scenario 2: *You’ve been asked to help your colleague learn how to weld a particular joint (e.g., a T-joint or butt weld). Explain the steps and safety procedures to your colleague, ensuring they understand the process.*

Role-Play scenario 3: *Approach your supervisor and explain that you are having an issue turning on the lathe machine. Ask for their assistance or advice on how to resolve a machine malfunction.*

Role-Play scenario 4: *You need clarification from your boss about the dimensions or details of a project before you begin welding. Approach your boss and ask for more information to ensure the work order is followed correctly.*

Role-Play scenario 5: *Provide feedback to a colleague on how to improve their welding technique. Be respectful and specific, offering suggestions for improvement.*

Role-Play scenario 6: *Approach a colleague or supervisor and report the safety concern. Explain why it’s important to address the issue before continuing work.*

Post task activities: Reflection that helps students identify areas for improvement in their communication and technical skills to the best of their abilities. Students should provide peer feedback first, then the teacher comments if necessary.

Appendix 9. Example task: “Apprenticeship application” and the application form.

TASK: “Apprenticeship application”

Time: 60 minutes

Materials: Printed application forms

Macrofunctions: Apply for a foreign apprenticeship

Microfunctions: Fill in the application form, list skills and qualifications, and write a personal statement.

Pre-task activities: Discuss the application process, components and common mistakes of an internship application. Look at key phrases and vocabulary that may help write the application.

TASK: Students are provided with a sample internship application form that includes personal details, personal statement, skills and qualifications. Students fill in the form using vocabulary and structures they’ve learned. Students are encouraged to write about their specific interests and stand out.

Post-task activities: After students finish their applications, they exchange applications with a partner and provide constructive feedback on the clarity of the personal statement, appropriateness of the tone and language and whether the qualifications match the job requirements. Follow up discussion points: What was challenging?

APPLICATION FOR AN APPRENTICESHIP

PERSONAL INFORMATION

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Date of Birth (DD/MM/YYYY) _____

Nationality: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Current School/Institution: _____

Relevant skills and/or experience:

PERSONAL STATEMENT (motivation and personal attributes).

Why do you want to apply for the Metalwork Apprenticeship at Global Technical Academy?

- _____
- _____
- _____

What skills do you believe are essential in the chosen field?

- _____
- _____

How would you describe your work ethic?

- _____
- _____

What qualities make you a good fit for an apprenticeship program?

- _____
 - _____
-

REFERENCES. Please provide a reference who can speak to your character and work experience:

Reference 1:

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Email/Phone: _____

DECLARATION AND SIGNATURE.

I confirm that all the information provided is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that providing false information may result in the disqualification of my application.

- *Signature:* _____
 - *Date:* _____
-

RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL

MAAILMA KEELTE JA KULTUURIDE INSTITUUT

Maris Karafin

Syllabus Design of an English for Vocational Purposes Course for Welding and Metalwork Students Using Task-based Teaching

Ülesandepõhise kutseõppe inglise keele kursuse ainekava loomine keevituse ja metallitöö eriala õppijatele

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Annotatsioon:

Kutseharidus on viimastel aastatel näidanud kasvavat trendi (Statistikaamet 2024), kasvatades omakorda vajadust kutsealase inglise keele kursuste järele. Vaatamata kasvavale nõudlusele, on Eestis puudus keelealaste kutseõpetamise ressursidest, mis vastaksid nii valdkonna kui keeleliste nõuetele. Uurimuse peamine eesmärk on välja selgitada millised praktilised olukorrad nõuavad inglise keele kasutamist nii praeguses õpi- kui ka tulevases töökeskkonnas ning kuidas kujundada ainekava, mis kaasab vajaduste analüüsi käigus tuvastatud andmed. Uurimuse tulemusel valmis sissejuhatav kursus keevituse ja metallitöö eriala õpilastele. Ainekava sisaldab ülesandeid, mis on inspireeritud õpilaste kooli- ning tulevases töökeskkonnast ja võimaldavad omandada inglise keelset erialast terminoloogiat ja arendada üldist keeleoskust.

Magistritöö koosneb sissejuhatusest, kahest peatükist ning kokkuvõttest. Sissejuhatuses antakse ülevaade erialase inglise keele (English for Specific Purposes) valdkonnast, sealhulgas inglise keelest kutselistel eesmärkidel (English for Vocational Purposes). Esimene peatükk sisaldab põhjalikku kirjanduse ülevaadet, alustades ainekava kujundamise põhimõtetest ning jätkates ülesandepõhiste õpetamismeetoditega (Task-Based Teaching) ning õpiülesannete kujundamise põhitõdedega.

Teine peatükk on pühendatud empiirilisele uurimistööle, kirjeldades vajaduste analüüsi protsessi mis koosnes rakenduskava ja kutsestandardite analüüsist ning kolmest intervjuust kahe kutseõpetaja ning ühe kogukonna esindajaga. Intervjuu tulemused analüüsiti temaatiliselt ning koostati nimekiri kõige olulisematest teemadest mida ainekava peaks sisaldama. Lõputöö tulemusena koostati 22-tunnine ainekava, mis jaotub kaheksaks teemaks ning iga teema koosneb õpieesmärkidest ning neile vastavatest õpiülesannetest. Töös on välja toodud ka näidisõpiülesanded. Lõputöö lõpeb arutelu ning kokkuvõttega.

Märksõnad: ülesandepõhine ainekava, inglise keel kutselistel eesmärkidel, õpiülesanded inglise keele võõrkeelena õpetamisel.

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