

Needs analysis

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On defining needs and needs analysis

Needs: Needs is actually an umbrella term that embraces many aspects, incorporating learners' goals and backgrounds, their language proficiencies, their reasons for taking the course, their teaching and learning preferences, and the situations they will need to communicate in. Needs can involve what learners know, don't know or want to know, and can be collected and analyzed in a variety of ways.

Needs analysis: Needs analysis refers to the techniques for collecting and assessing information relevant to course design: it is the means of establishing the how and what of a course. It is a continuous process, since we modify our teaching as we come to learn more about our students, and in this way it actually shades into evaluation – the means of establishing the effectiveness of a course.

A brief history of needs analysis

- ▶ “Analysis of needs” by West in India in the early 1920s in ELT
- ▶ Reintroduction of needs analysis in the early 1960s with the coinage of English for special purposes at Makerere conference
- ▶ Establishment of needs analysis in the late 1970s

Different types of needs

- ▶ objective, product, perceived needs versus subjective, process-oriented felt needs
- ▶ Necessities and demands
- ▶ Lacks
- ▶ Wants
- ▶ Learning needs

Different types of needs analysis

- ▶ Target situation needs analysis
- ▶ Present situation needs analysis
- ▶ Deficiency analysis
- ▶ Strategy analysis or learning needs analysis
- ▶ Means analysis
- ▶ Language audits

Methods in collecting needs

▶ Inductive methods

1. Expert opinions
2. Participant and non-participant observations
3. Unstructured interviews
4. Learner diaries
5. Document analysis

▶ Deductive methods

1. Questionnaires
2. Tests
3. Rating scales
4. Structured interviews

Other relevant issues relating to needs analysis

- ▶ Needs analysis and theoretical issues
- ▶ Time of conducting needs analysis
- ▶ Agents of conducting needs analysis
- ▶ Audience of needs analysis