Using Communicative Approaches in ESP Courses in East Asia
Hull, J.
Proceedings of the International Symposium on ESP and its Application in Nursing and Medical English Education, pp. 92-106. 2007.

Abstract

While communicative approaches have been widely advocated for language teaching generally, less seems to have been said about their application to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. At the same time, there has been some resistance to these approaches in East Asian countries, particularly those with strong Confucian traditions. This paper reviews the literature on the use of communicative approaches with special reference to studies in East Asia. In doing so, it looks at three such approaches, task-based learning (TBL), problem-based learning (PBL) and project work. The overall conclusion is that, as long as a broad definition of learner autonomy embracing 'relatedness' and 'reactivity' is observed, communicative approaches can work very well in ESP courses in East Asia.

Introduction

The communicative approach to foreign or second language teaching, also known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Richards & Rodgers, 1992, pp. 65-66), has been with us for about four decades and has many keen proponents (e.g. Nunan, 1999, p. 9). Its starting point is that language is for communication and its goal is to develop learners' communicative competence (e.g. Canale & Swain, 1980). One of the central pillars of the communicative approach is learner-centredness, which (coupled with learner needs) is identified by Underhill (2004) as one of ten key trends in English Language Teaching (ELT) today; for him, learner-centredness includes attention to learner styles, self-direction and self-evaluation.

Reflecting ELT generally, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has, in recent years, shifted towards learner-centredness. As Tudor (1997), among others, has observed, for the past two decades or more, many ESP specialists have been questioning whether the traditional reliance on course design experts gathering supposedly objective information on learners is sufficient and whether learners' own avowedly subjective views should be included in curriculum and material design. Moreover, Hutchinson & Waters (1987) have suggested that ESP should

1

become more 'learn*ing*-centred'; that is, it should include a focus on how second languages are learned and encourage learner participation in the process.

One way to focus on learner participation is by providing opportunities for learners to use English for communicative purposes with a view to their ultimately becoming autonomous. Several methodologies that claim to achieve this goal have been posited. These include task-based learning (TBL) (e.g. Willis, 1996) and problem-based learning (PBL) (e.g. Wee, 2004) as well as the use of project work (e.g. Fried-Booth, 1986; Sheppard & Stoller, 1995). While acknowledging and weighing the resistance to learner-centredness and the promotion of learner autonomy in many cultures in East Asia, this paper, by reviewing the literature, explores the potential of utilizing these methodologies in ESP syllabi, with particular reference to project work in English for Nursing.

Contrasting views on learner-centredness and learner autonomy in East Asia
Communicative competence includes, but goes beyond, linguistic competence, embracing sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competences (Canale & Swain, 1980). Yet, in many countries in East Asia, the prevailing preference among both teachers and students continues to be for traditional language-focused, teacher-centred activities. In other words, despite the fact that the communicative approach, including its attendant elements of learner-centredness and learner autonomy, remains a key trend in the ELT literature and in classrooms in many parts of the world, a consensus among stakeholders that this is universally beneficial does not exist; specifically, there are those who feel that this approach to language learning runs counter to some non-western cultures.

Jones (1995), for instance, believes that learner autonomy is "laden with cultural values, especially those of the West" (p. 228) and, as such, unsuitable in the Cambodian context. Ho & Crookall (1995) point to traditional Chinese views of teachers' and students' roles in the classroom (though, as will be seen below, their own study in Hong Kong provides striking evidence that the use of large-scale simulations can "powerfully" promote learner autonomy, [p. 235]). As Scollon & Scollon (1994a) point out, these roles are derived from varying views of authority. Asians focus on "the care, nurture and benevolence (or their absence) of the person in authority" while westerners tend to "focus on the restriction, limitation and dependence of the person over [whom] the authority is exercised" (p. 21).

Scollon & Scollon (1994a) also say that the Confucian teacher-student relationship discourages questioning in class as this might be perceived as tantamount to saying that "the teacher had not taught well because there were still unanswered questions" (p. 17). This view, however, has been termed as "the biggest cliché about Asia today" (Liu & Littlewood, 1997, p. 372). In support of their position, they say that the term for 'knowledge' in Chinese has two characters, one of which means 'learn' while the other means 'ask'. They contend that "This means that the spirit of enquiry, the act of questioning, is central to the quest for knowledge. It also implies an active role for the learner" (p. 375); and they add that Buddhist teaching also strongly promotes the asking of questions. Another tenet of Confucianism, as emphasized by Lee (1996) concerns individual ability and striving, the belief that achievement of goals is dependent less on innate ability than on individual effort and self-discipline.

As Dickinson (1995) observes, such beliefs promote motivation since "personal effort, unlike ability or chance, is within the control of the student" (p. 171). He cites several areas of research into motivation in general education which:

> "suggest that motivation to learn and learning effectiveness can be increased in learners who take responsibility for their own learning, who understand and accept that their learning success is a result of effort, and that failure can be overtaken with greater effort and better use of strategies." (p. 168)

One of the areas of research cited by Dickinson is that investigating links between intrinsic motivation and learner autonomy. Students who are intrinsically motivated to do an activity want to do it for its own sake, rather than due to external pressures (i.e. extrinsic motivation) such as exams. Based on an extensive review of the literature, Deci & Ryan (1985) posit that self-determination leads to intrinsic motivation and, further, that intrinsic motivation leads to more effective learning.

Thus, from a historical and cultural perspective, there appear to be conflicting views about the potential for applying learner-centredness and promoting learner autonomy in English-language classrooms in East Asia. In practice, many applied linguists suggest a compromise; that is, they believe in adapting ideas in pedagogy to accommodate eastern culture. Rao (2002), for instance, recommends that "EFL [English as a Foreign Language] countries like China need to modernize, not westernize, English language teaching" and goes on to suggest that such modernization should "combine the 'new' with the 'old' to align the communicative approach with traditional teaching structures" (p. 85).

Rao's conclusion stems from an interesting study conducted at a university in mainland China in which students were asked for their perceptions of communicative and non-communicative activities in their EFL classes. The results of this research indicate a preference for non-communicative activities, particularly drills and grammar rules explained by the teacher in English (both favoured by 100% of the subjects); this preference may, in part, be because, as several of the subjects noted, all their language tests are grammar-based. Nonetheless, there was also strong support for some communicative activities, particularly group and pair work (favoured by 96.66% and 93.33% of the subjects, respectively). In contrast, considerably fewer (a mere 30%) enjoyed activities that require moving around the class, though it wasn't clear from the data whether this was due to the small size of the subjects' classrooms. Rao agrees with Thompson that teachers in China can develop "locally appropriate version[s] of the communicative approach" and that, in any case, CLT, even as practised in western countries, does not exclude the teaching of grammar (Thompson, 1996, p. 36, cited in Rao, 2002). Likewise, Willis's (1996, p. 155) framework for TBL explicitly allows for follow-up language work.

Conducting an ethnographic case study in a secondary school in Hong Kong, Meszaros (2007) makes the similar observation that an approach combining learner-centredness and cultural sensitivity should be "more appropriate and

effective than importing a foreign methodology that was not designed with Hong Kong's students, teachers, classrooms or educational system in mind" (p. 66).

Also researching in Hong Kong, though at tertiary level, Littlewood (1999) warns against "stereotypic notions of 'East Asian learners'" in terms of autonomy, or what he also calls 'self-regulation' (p. 71). He posits that, if autonomy is defined in educational terms as involving:

> "students' capacity to *use* their learning independently of teachers, then autonomy would appear to be an incontrovertible goal for learners everywhere, since it is obvious that no students, anywhere, will have their teachers to accompany them throughout life" (p. 73).

This position reflects Rivers' (1975) use of the term 'autonomous communication' to describe the goal of all foreign language teaching. Nonetheless, while this argument may seem eminently logical, it may well fail to convince those who feel autonomy, as they understand it, to be an unrealistic and unattainable goal for their students. However, some people may oppose autonomy because they have a narrow view of it as being exclusively individualistic.

Redefining learner autonomy
Crucially, Littlewood is among those who include the notion of 'relatedness' to the concept of learner autonomy or, as Ryan (1991, p. 227, cited in Littlewood, 1999) calls it, 'autonomous *inter*dependence [italics added]'. For Ryan, autonomy can develop most effectively in an interpersonal environment that provides it with support. Further, he suggests that a 'facilitating environment' for autonomy should include these elements: concrete support through the provision of help and resources; personal concern and involvement from significant others; opportunities for making choices; and freedom from a sense of being controlled by external agents. Littlewood feels that this view of autonomy is consonant with East Asian cultures, whose "strong attachment … to their in-groups [e.g. peer groups] and the importance they attach to mutual support and harmony within these groups could provide ideal interpersonal environments for the development of self-regulation" (p. 75).

Littlewood (1999) goes on to distinguish between two levels of autonomy: *proactive autonomy*, which he says is the only one that many western researchers recognize, refers to learners setting their own objectives and taking charge of all aspects of their own learning; *reactive autonomy*, on the other hand, "does not create its own directions but, once a direction has been initiated, enables learners to organize their resources autonomously in order to reach their goal" (p. 75). Interestingly and related, in a large-scale study of 387 Taiwanese teachers of English who were asked to rate a list of motivational strategies, Cheng & Dörnyei (2007) found that:

> "Taiwanese English teachers tend not to approve of the concept of autonomy as framed by Western educators and may even have

a fundamentally different interpretation of this construct from the mainstream view reported in the Western literature." (p. 169)

This finding contrasts with a similar study on Hungarian teachers; in this study, by Dörnyei & Csizér (1998), the teachers recognized the motivational strategy 'promoting learner autonomy' potentially effective. Cheng & Dörnyei (2007) went on to conclude that the low endorsement of autonomy-related strategies by the Taiwanese teachers "might be explained by the fact that participating teachers supported another kind of autonomy, 'reactive autonomy'" (p. 170); they suggested further research into this question.

From the literature reviewed so far, it would appear that many teachers and students in East Asia are open to some kind of communicative approach to learning English, particularly if it involves group or pair work. The following part of this paper considers some possibilities for applications, with specific reference to English for Nursing.

TBL, PBL and project work
Task-based, problem-based and project-based syllabi all seek to provide tasks that involve learners using the target language by moving away from the traditional teacher-centred presentation of a long series of discrete language points. They differ partly with regard to problems learners have to confront as well as in the size and duration of the activities.

TBL
TBL seeks to offer learners meaningful tasks to transact rather than items to learn (Foster, 1999). These tasks may or may not contain a 'problem' for learners to solve. In her book on TBL, Willis (1996) proposes six types of task: listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem solving, sharing personal experiences, and creative tasks (pp. 149-154). While she says that these task types are not exhaustive, she notes that "problem solving may include listing, comparing and ranking"; in other words, there may be a problem-solving element in tasks that have other foci. In some cases, the teacher knows the answers to the problems; such tasks, in other words, are often seen as 'pedagogical' rather than 'real-world' (Nunan, 1999, p. 242). However, the main objective of tasks in TBL is not to solve any problems they may contain but to provide 'carrier', or incidental, content for target language items (e.g. Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 11). Barron (2002) feels that some teachers of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), such as Fournier (2002), overstate the problem-solving elements in TBL and that a language focus is paramount.

PBL
On the other hand, PBL, which was developed in the 1960s and 1970s at MacMaster Medical School (Boud & Felleti, 1997), requires learners to find solutions to real problems that are usually unknown to the teacher, though the teacher may actually pose the problem. For ESP teachers, many of whom feel that they have inadequate knowledge of their students' majors, this decoupling of language and content may well come as a considerable relief.

Proponents of PBL, such as Barrows (2000) (who works in medical rather than language education), claim that learning is discovery-based and that the process of trying to achieve a successful outcome develops learners' problem-solving skills and prepares them for the world of work.

Working as an EAP teacher at university in Hong Kong, Barron (2002) notes that, in PBL, "the emphasis switches to what the students know, rather than a deficit theory" of matching target language points that learners do not know to tasks that are likely to require their use (p. 305); in other words, from a language learning perspective, PBL is likely to activate language that learners already know passively.

Beyond that, proponents posit that, at least at tertiary level, as the posing of real problems connected with the students' content majors is likely to engage their attention, this will motivate them to conduct research in the hope of solving those problems, thus exposing them to new input in the target language. Moreover, in the process of problem-solving, students, working in groups, collaborate and take collective responsibility for the outcome.

Wood & Head (2004) report on an interesting application of PBL in an EAP course for premedical students at a university in Brunei. Citing the widespread use of PBL in medical education for several decades, the crux of their course was to require small groups of students to generate their own problems by choosing a disease, researching it and then presenting to their peers a description of it without naming it; their peers would then have to conduct their own research to try and identify the disease. Apart from the presentations, Wood & Head say that, in the process of this PBL activity, other EAP work is done (academic referencing, paraphrasing, critical reading, academic writing, etc.). They stress that "PBL is not a type of content-based instruction" and that, in their course, "there was no expectation that students would learn any of the medical content that they were using", which is consistent with the traditional aims of EAP courses.

Barron (2002) provides a very ambitious example of PBL used with science students taking an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course at a university in Hong Kong. He and his colleagues decided on a single, broad problem, 'A science problem in Hong Kong' and that the outcome should be a poster that would be assessed by both the EAP and science teachers. Among the study's results was the finding that the majority of the students "liked the group work and problem-solving" and that the posters were deemed to be of very high quality (p. 311). Barron concluded that this outcome illustrates the requirements of problem-solving (pp. 311-312):
- generativity (the students used both Cantonese and English to generate knowledge);
- personal relevance (they integrated scientific discourse and language in a problem that mattered to them);
- personal autonomy (they chose the problem and developed ownership of it);

- active engagement (they made posters and collaborated inside and beyond the classroom);
- reflectivity (they became independent in seeking knowledge and how to present it);
- integration (they shared concepts and ideas across disciplines).

Interestingly, this example of what the author calls PBL but also refers to as a "project" (p. 311) illustrates the fuzzy division between PBL and project work.

Project work

Haines (1989) says that project work involves multi-skill activities which focus on a theme rather than specific language tasks and identifies four types of projects: information and research projects, survey projects, production projects and performance/organizational projects. Sheppard & Stoller (1995) observe that, whatever the project type, they have a common emphasis on student involvement, collaboration and responsibility, and, as such, are similar to cooperative learning and task-oriented activities. Where they differ is in their scale, projects requiring students to work together for several days or weeks both in and beyond the classroom.

Sheppard & Stoller (1995) claim that project work is "particularly effective in … ESP settings" because it lends itself to: authentic language use; a focus on language at a discourse level (rather than at a sentence level); authentic tasks; and learner-centredness. They go on to describe the situation in Italy, where many ESP students are deficient in their ability to talk in English about technical material and their work. Sheppard & Stoller claim that project work can address this problem because it "creates a need to communicate, an information gap" (p. 13). They go on:

> "Once attention is *off* linguistic forms and *on* the task …, students begin to pool their resources to make themselves understood and to understand their interlocutors. On the cognitive level, … they make use of what they know in real time. If topics and tasks can be identified that require real communication in vocationally appropriate contexts around relevant subject matter, then the learning process is aligned more closely with students' long-term communication needs." (p. 13)

However, while Italy may be suited to large-scale project work, does the same apply to East Asia? Ho & Crookall (1995) report on a very large and, from the evidence they provide, successful project involving twenty-one first-year students on a BA in English for Professional Communication (EPC) at a university in Hong Kong along with twenty-six other student teams working in a variety of countries around the world. The project, which lasted seven weeks with several more weeks of preparation and follow-up work, was a simulation. Each team of students was given the role of a particular nation and the participants' overall goal was to negotiate with other country-teams the text of an international treaty on how the world's ocean resources should be managed. This required the preparation of policy

statements, position papers and various drafts of the treaty. (See Ho & Crookall, 1995, for more information on the project.)

In discussing simulation, culture and autonomy, Ho & Crookall identify two characteristics of simulations that they believe can enhance autonomy in ways that are consonant with Chinese culture. First, Chinese 'achievement orientation' can be satisfied in that there is no exam to pass or fail; rather, simulations and other such tasks provide students with plenty of opportunities to formulate their own goals and then assess to what extent they have achieved them. Second, what Scollon & Scollon (1994b, pp. 16-18) call the Chinese notion of 'inside and outside relationships' is realized as students have to work as members of teams or in-groups (i.e. inside relationships) while they also have to negotiate with other teams or out-groups (i.e. outside relationships). Ho & Crookall (1995) conclude that "such a sense of group identity has an intrinsic motivational power" (p. 242).

Sheppard & Stoller (1995) acknowledge that "project work is not appropriate in all ESP settings" (p. 20), saying that factors such as curricular demands, lack of equipment, timetabling and administrative rigidity can preclude the introduction of innovations. Nonetheless, they argue strongly in favour of project work in ESP courses:

> "Yet, if the underlying objective of an ESP program is to build the students' ability to use the language fluently in novel situations, project work will carry them a lot closer to meeting that objective than more conventional work on grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation." (p. 21)

Sheppard & Stoller observe that there are varying recommendations as to how to develop projects (e.g. Fried-Booth, 1986; Haines, 1989; Papandreou, 1994) but that most of them are consistent with eight steps (see appendix for each of these steps as well as a summary of a sample project based on them). They also note that project work requires changes in teachers' and students' roles, "Project work can only be effective when teachers relax control of their students temporarily and assume the role of guide and facilitator" (p. 21). In fact, this shift in the roles of teachers and students is necessary in other learner-centred approaches, including TBL and PBL.

Conclusion

This paper has taken ideas that are commonly advocated in general ELT for enhancing students' communicative competence and explored their applicability in ESP with particular reference to TBL, PBL and project work. In so doing, it has focused on the literature reporting on the use of these approaches in ESP courses in East Asia. Moreover, it has been shown that, while there are those who believe that East Asian cultures preclude the use of learner-centred or learning-centred approaches, there is also substantial evidence suggesting that there are aspects of these cultures, such as group orientation, that can actually enhance the application of these approaches.

References

Barron, C. (2002) Problem-solving and EAP: Themes and issues in a collaborative teaching venture. *English for Specific Purposes* 22: 297-314.

Barrows, H. (2000) *Problem-Based Learning Applied to Medical Students*. Springfield, IL: Southern Illinois University School of Medicine.

Belcher, D. (2006) English for Specific Purposes: Teaching to perceived needs and imagined futures in worlds of work, study, and everyday life. *TESOL Quarterly* 40 (1) 133-156.

Boud, D. & Felleti, G. (eds.) (1997) *The Challenge of Problem-Based Learning* (2nd edition). London: Kogan Page.

Canale, M. & Swain, M. (1980) Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics* 1 (1) 1-47.

Cheng, H. F. & Dörnyei, Z. (2007) The use of motivational strategies in language instruction: The case of EFL teaching in Taiwan. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching* 1 (1) 153-174.

Deci, E. & Ryan, R. (1985) *Intrinsic Motivation and Self Determination in Human Behaviour*. New York, NY: Plenum Press.

Dickinson, L. (1995) Autonomy and motivation: A literature review. *System* 23 (2) 165-174.

Dörnyei, Z. & Csizér, K. (1998) Ten commandments for motivating language learners: Results of an empirical study. *Language Teaching Research* 2 (3) 203-229.

Dudley-Evans, T. & St John, M. (1998) *Developments in ESP: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Foster, P. (1999) Key concepts in ELT: Task-based learning and pedagogy. *ELT Journal* 53 (1) 69-70.

Fournier, R. (2002) Problem-based second and foreign language learning. *PBL in Action: Newsletter of the Asia Pacific Problem-Based Learning Association* 1: 6-9.

Fried-Booth, D. (1986) *Project Work*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Haines, S. (1989) *Projects for the EFL Classroom: Resource Material for Teachers*. Walton-on-Thames: Nelson.

Ho, J. & Crookall, D. (1995) Breaking with Chinese Cultural Traditions: Learner Autonomy in English Language Teaching. *System* 23 (2) 235-243.

Hutchinson, T. & Waters, A. (1987) *English for Specific Purposes: A Learning-Centred Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jones, J. (1995) Self-access and culture: Retreating from autonomy. *ELT Journal* 49 (3) 228-234.

Lee, W. O. (1996) The cultural context for Chinese learners: Conceptions of learning the Confucian tradition. In D. Wilkins & J. Biggs (eds.), *The Chinese Learner: Cultural, Psychological and Contextual Influences*, pp. 25-41. Hong Kong: CERC and Melbourne: ACER.

Littlewood, W. (1999) Defining and developing autonomy in East Asian contexts. *Applied Linguistics* 20 (1) 71-94.

Liu, N. F. & Littlewood, W. (1997) Why do many students appear reluctant to participate in classroom learning discourse? *System* 23 (3) 271-384.

Meszaros, R. (2007) Work-in-progress: A learner-centred approach to teaching English. http://sunzil.lib.hku.hk.hkjo.view/10/1000205.pdf [retrieved 9th February 2007].

Nunan, D. (1999) *Second Language Teaching and Learning*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Rao, Z. (2002) Chinese students' perceptions of communicative and non-communicative activities in EFL classrooms. *System* 30: 85-105.

Richards, J., Platt, J. & Platt, H. (1992) *Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics*. Harlow: Pearson.

Rivers, W. (1975) *A Practical Guide to the Teaching of French*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Ryan, R. (1991) The nature of the self in autonomy and relatedness. In J. Strauss & G. Goethals (eds.), *The Self-Interdisciplinary Approaches*, pp. 208-238. New York: Springer.

Scollon, R. & Scollon, S. (1994a) *The Post Confucian Confusion*. Research Report 37. Department of English, City University of Hong Kong.

Scollon, R & Scollon, S. (1994b) Face parameters in east-west discourse. In S. Ting-Toomey (ed.), *The Challenge of Facework*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Sheppard, K. & Stoller, F. (1995) Guidelines for the integration of student projects into ESP classrooms. *Forum* 33 (2) 10-22.

Thompson, G. (1996) Some misconceptions about communicative language teaching. *ELT Journal* 44: 25-37.

Tudor, I. (1997) LSP or language education? In R. Howard & G. Brown (eds.), *Teacher Education for LSP*, pp. 90-102. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Underhill, A. (2004) Trends in English language teaching today. *MED Magazine* 18: 1-3. http://macmillandictionary.com/med-magazine/April2004/18 [retrieved 9th February 2007].

Wee, L. (2004) *Jump Start Authentic Problem-Based Learning*. Singapore: Prentice Hall.

Willis, J. (1996) *A Framework for Task-Based Learning*. Harlow: Pearson.

Wood, A. & Head, M. (2004) 'Just what the doctor ordered': The application of problem-based learning to EAP. *English for Specific Purposes* 23 (1) 3-17.

Appendix: Sample project

This summary of a sample project on obesity is designed for English for Medical Purposes (EMP) courses in Taiwan; it follows the eight steps that Sheppard & Stoller (1995) have identified as typical of projects and reflects a broad definition of learner autonomy to include 'relatedness' and 'reactivity'. (See Sheppard & Stoller (1995) for another sample project following the same eight steps, on purchasing a computer, designed by two ESP teachers of business English in Italy.)

Step 1: Define a theme

Together, the teacher and students identify a theme that will enhance the students' future work and provide relevant language practice.

Example: Obesity, which is an increasing health problem globally, particularly among young people, and which requires the provision of readily available information about nutrition and life-styles.

Step 2: Determine the final outcome

The class reach a consensus on the final product (e.g. written report, brochure, debate, video, website), its presentation (collective, group, individual) and objectives for both content and language.

Example: In class, groups present posters, in both English and Chinese, designed to be posted in health centres and hospitals in Taiwan. These posters need to contain

information about the dangers of obesity and on how to avoid it; they also need to be designed attractively so as to attract people's attention.

Step 3: Structure the project
Collectively, the class determine the steps that students have to take to reach the final outcome as well as the time frame. This involves identifying the information needed and how to obtain it (e.g. internet and library searches, designing and administering research instruments).

Example: Groups collect evidence showing why obesity is increasing (e.g. attractive advertisements for fast food), design questionnaires and/or devise interview questions to obtain data from various people (e.g. schoolchildren, nurses and/or others working in public health); groups need to consider any equipment they may need (computer, audio-recording equipment, posters, etc.).

Step 4: Identify language skills and strategies
The teacher and students need to consider what language points, vocabulary, and aspects of the four skills would be useful to help students with the process of the project as well as achieve the proposed outcome; they may also need to consider particular study skills and research strategies.

Example: Groups decide to interview schoolchildren and nurses at health centres. While these may be conducted in the first language, the data need to be translated into English and paraphrased and/or summarized. Groups also need to read about obesity, take notes and summarize. In addition, they may need to work on their oral presentation skills.

Step 5: Gather information
Having designed their research instruments, students have to gather information both in and beyond the classroom.

Example: Students use the internet, libraries and magazines, as well as conduct their interviews with schoolchildren and people working in public health.

Step 6: Compile and analyze information
Working in groups with the teacher facilitating, students analyze their data, select their key findings and decide how best to present it.

Example: Students note the main points from their data collection, synthesize it and decide now to present it to their peers and teacher in class; they also have to design and complete their posters.

Step 7: Present the final product
Students present the outcome of their project work. (The way this is done will depend on the form of the final product.)

Example: Students present their findings, unveil their posters and justify their content and design.

Step 8: Evaluate the project
The class discuss the value of the project, what was good about it and what could be improved; the discussion needs to include both the steps needed to complete the objectives and the language and skills required along the way.

Example: Students compare and contrast their experience as well as the content of their posters. Time allowing, a possible follow-up would be for groups to select the best aspects of each of the posters and complete one final, collective version, which could then be offered to local health centres and hospitals.