ASSESSING NEEDS AND PREFERENCES

English for Business

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Needs Analysis

- What is it?

  It is basically about collecting and examining information

- Function:

  To understand "the difference" between CURRENT SITUATION and TARGET SITUATION

- CURRENT SITUATION:

  Where the learners are in terms of communicative competence (strengths and weaknesses)

- TARGET SITUATION:

 Where the learners want (or are expected) to be to meet their business aims

Needs Analysis

CURRENT SITUATION → **Training Gap** → **TARGET SITUATION**

Defining needs

- Hutchinson & Waters (1987) mentioned two kinds of needs:

  a. TARGET NEEDS: necessities, lacks, wants

  b. LEARNING NEEDS: how will the students learn the language

Target and Learning Needs

Lacks

Necessities

Learning needs
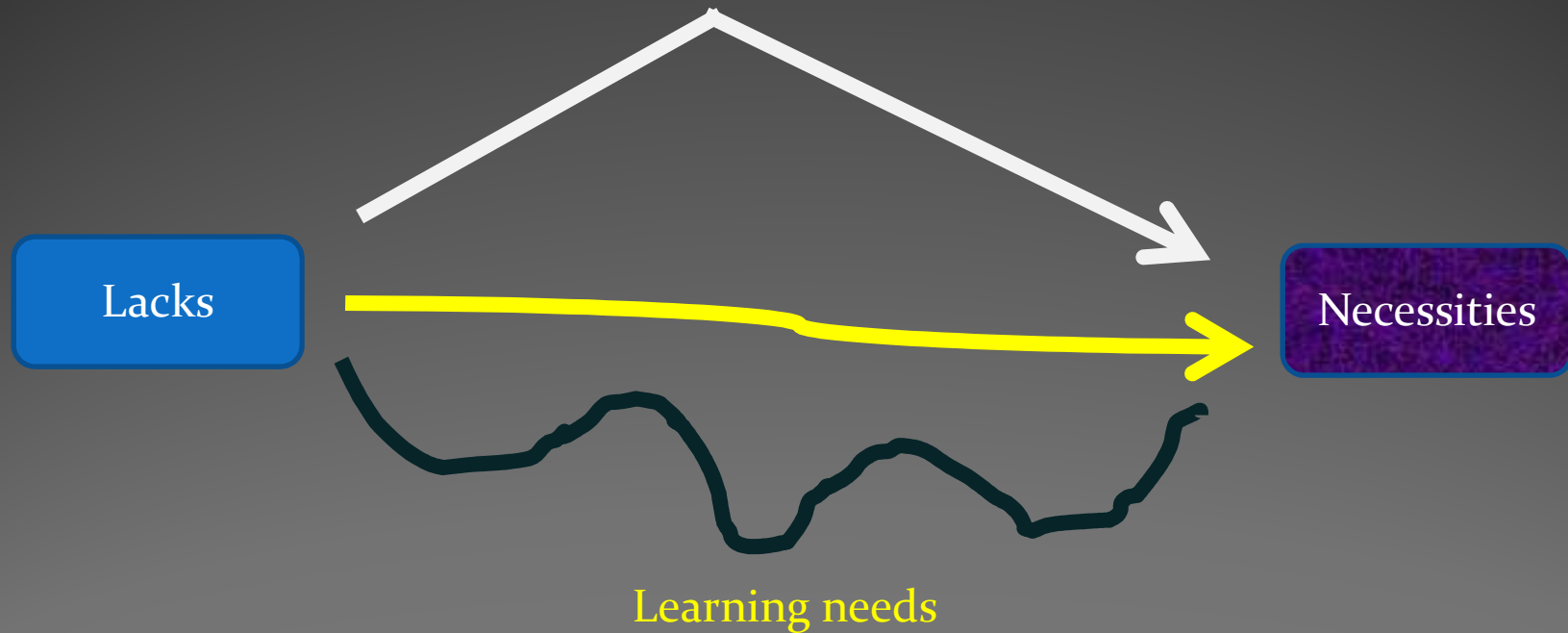
Frendo (2005)

FOCUSING ON LEARNERS:

- **Learner's perceived needs**: needs identified by the 'experts', such as the teacher, the sponsor, or the co-workers

- **Learner's felt needs**: based on the learner's perspective.

Compare:

1. Learners should be able to write business letters
2. I would like to improve my speaking ability

…

- Needs, according to Frendo (2005), can be seen as <u>a list of expected PRODUCTS or PROCESS OF DELIVERY</u>
- The LIST may contain LANGUAGE ITEMS or SKILLS
- The PROCESS includes the WHATS and particularly the HOWS of the learning

Ways to gather information about learners' needs:

- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Observation
- Existing data (documents)
- Informal consultation with sponsors, learners and others
- *(Placement) Tests

Possible frameworks (Adapted from Hutchinson & Waters (1987):

A. **<u>FOCUSING ON THE TARGET SITUATION/NEEDS</u>**

1. WHY is the language needed? For promotion, for work, for training, for status, etc.

2. HOW will the language be used? Orally, in writing, telephone, face to face, emails, technical manuals, etc.

3. WHAT will the content focus be? Marketing, managerial positions, front office, etc.

4. WITH WHOM will the language be used? Native speakers or non-native speakers, people from specific countries, customers, colleagues, business partners, etc

5. WHERE will the language be used? Office, hotel, in meetings, on the telephone, in own country or abroad, etc.

6. The intensity of the language use: frequently, seldom, in small amounts

. . .

B. FOCUSING ON LEARNING NEEDS

1. WHY are the learners taking the course? Compulsory, optional, other reasons to do with motivation

2. HOW do the learners learn? Including learning background, their concept of teaching and learning, their favorite methodology and materials

3. WHAT RESOURCES are available? Number of teachers, teacher's knowledge and competence, materials, teaching aids

4. WHO are the learners? Age, sex, nationality, socio-cultural backgrounds, their interests, their attitude, their subject knowledge

5. WHERE & WHEN will the course take place? About physical setting and convenience

What to consider:

- The language used in the questionnaires or interviews
- Forms of the data collection "devices"
- Clarity of the questions and instructions