



# English for Medical Purposes: Professional Vocabulary Acquisition

*“Tell me what you need English for  
and I will tell you the English that you need.”*

(Hutchinson, 1987)

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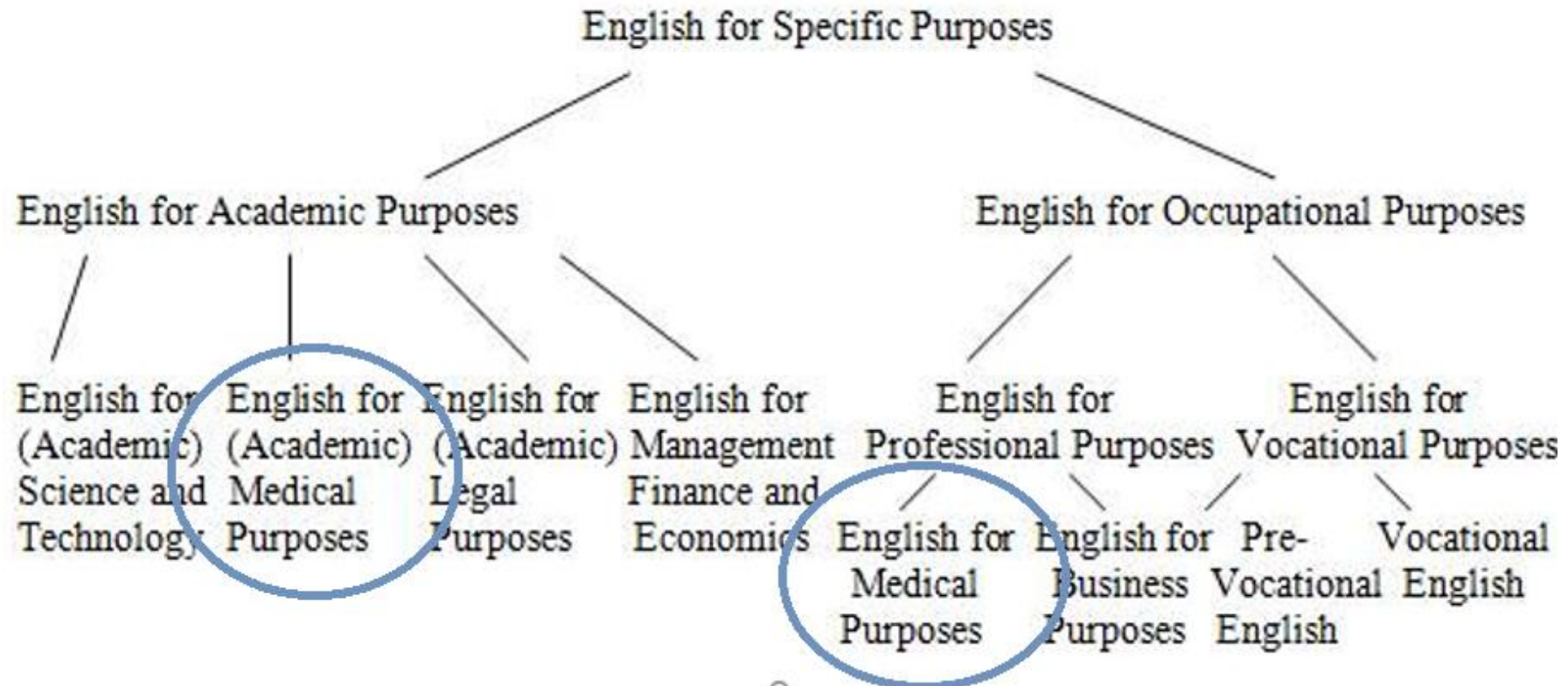
# Content:

- EMP characteristics
- Professional vocabulary acquisition (what vocabulary to teach, receptive and productive distinction, how to teach it)
- Student needs analysis
- Activities for vocabulary acquisition

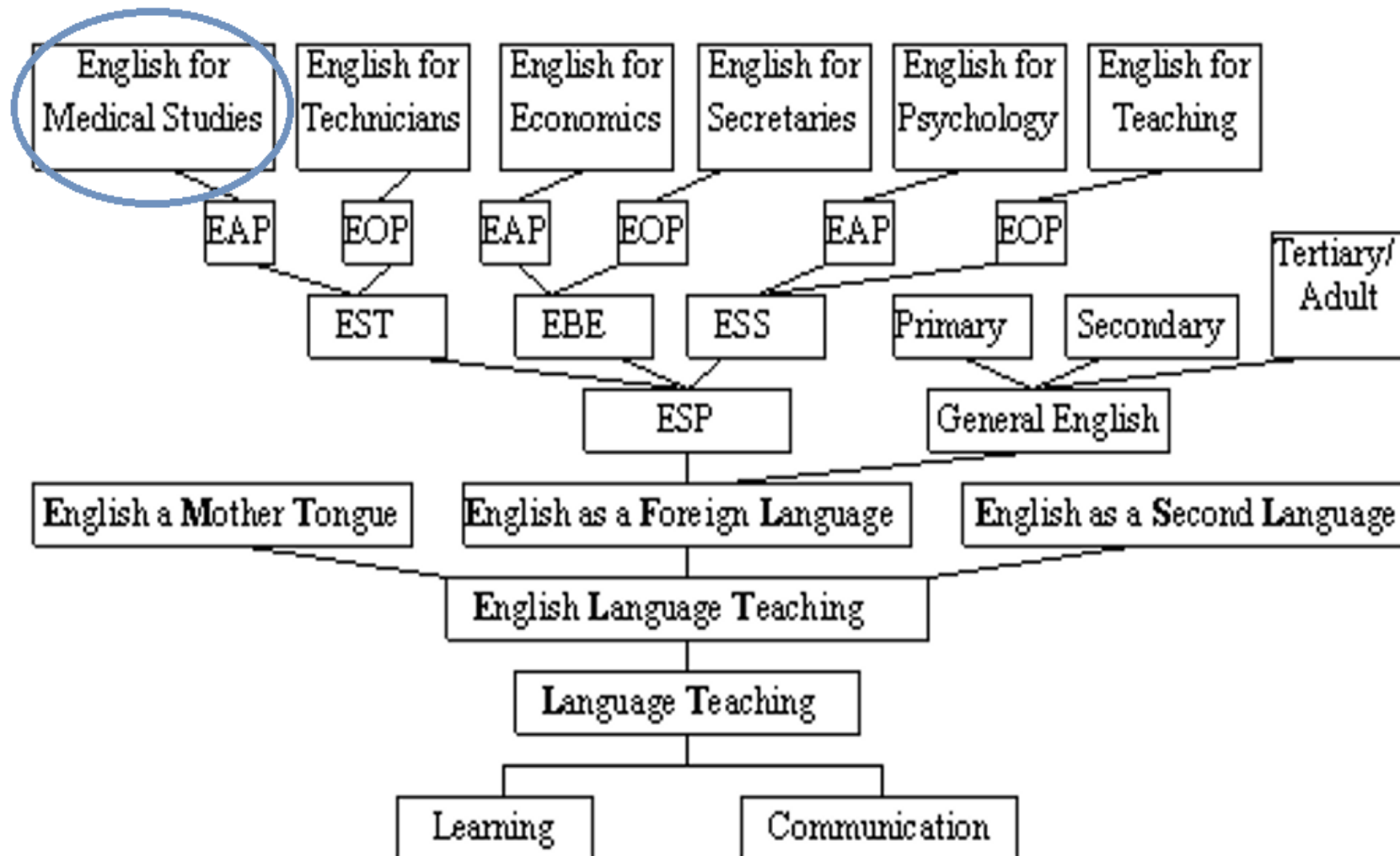


# EMP

*ESP classification by Dudley-Evans – St. John (2012)*



# *ESP classification by Hutchinson – Waters (2010)*



# EMP and EGP overlap

*Types of ESP courses by Dudley-Evans – St John (2012: 8)*

## **GENERAL SPECIFIC**

**Position 1**  
English for  
Beginners.

**Position 2**  
Intermediate to  
advanced English for  
General Purposes  
(EGP) courses with a  
focus on particular  
skills such as  
listening, speaking,  
reading or writing.

**Position 3**  
EGAP/EGBP courses  
based on common  
core language and  
skills not related to  
specific disciplines or  
professions.

**Position 4**  
Courses for broad  
disciplinary or  
professional areas,  
for example Report  
Writing for Scientists  
and Engineers,  
Medical English,  
Legal English,  
Negotiation/Meeting  
Skills for Business  
people.

**Position 5**  
1. An academic  
support' course  
related to a  
particular  
academic course.  
  
2. One-to-one  
work with  
business people.

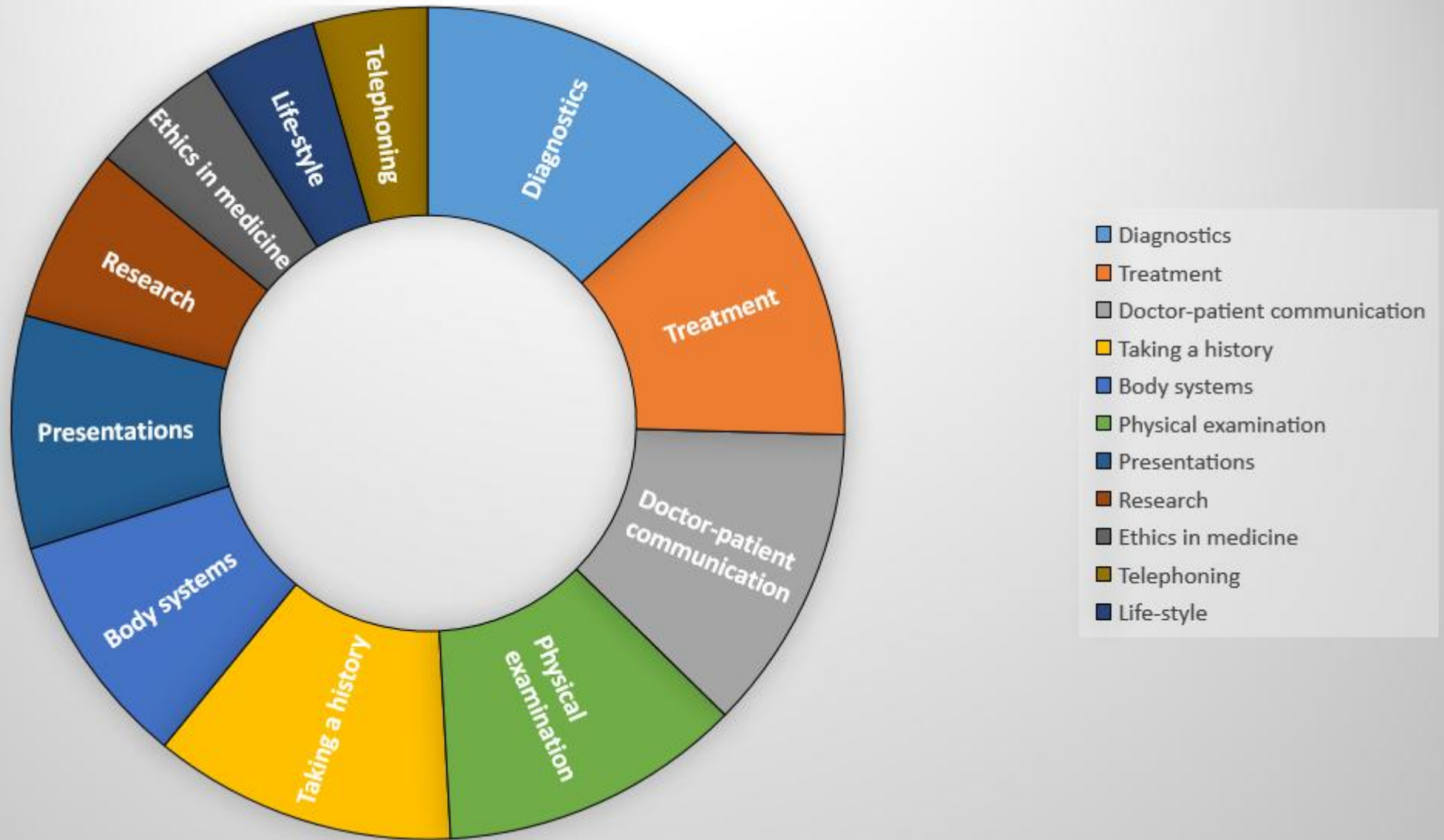


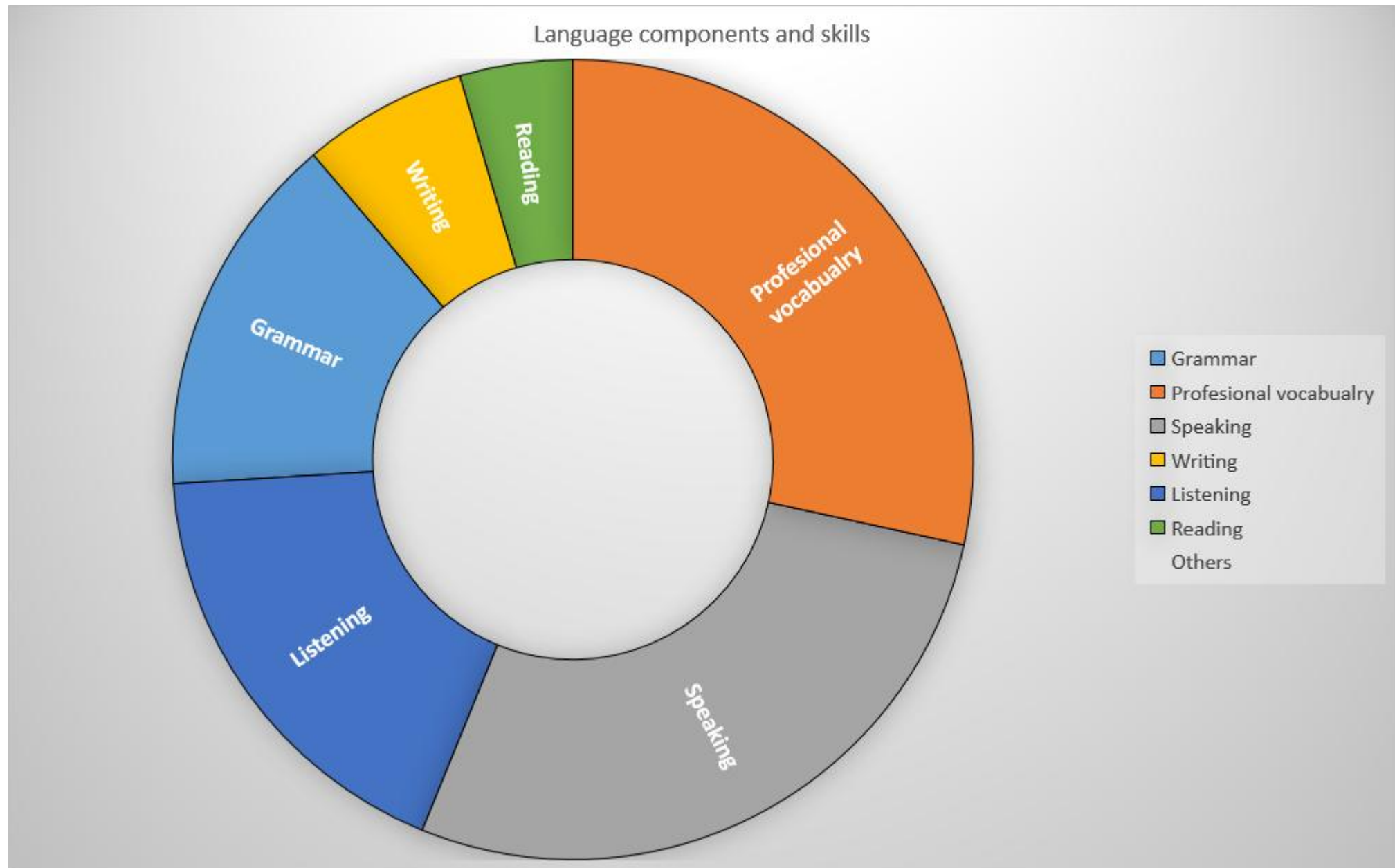
# Student needs analysis

- **Why** the student is learning the language,
- **who** is involved,
- **where** the instruction takes place,
- **what** the student must learn,
- **how** to do it entails methodology.

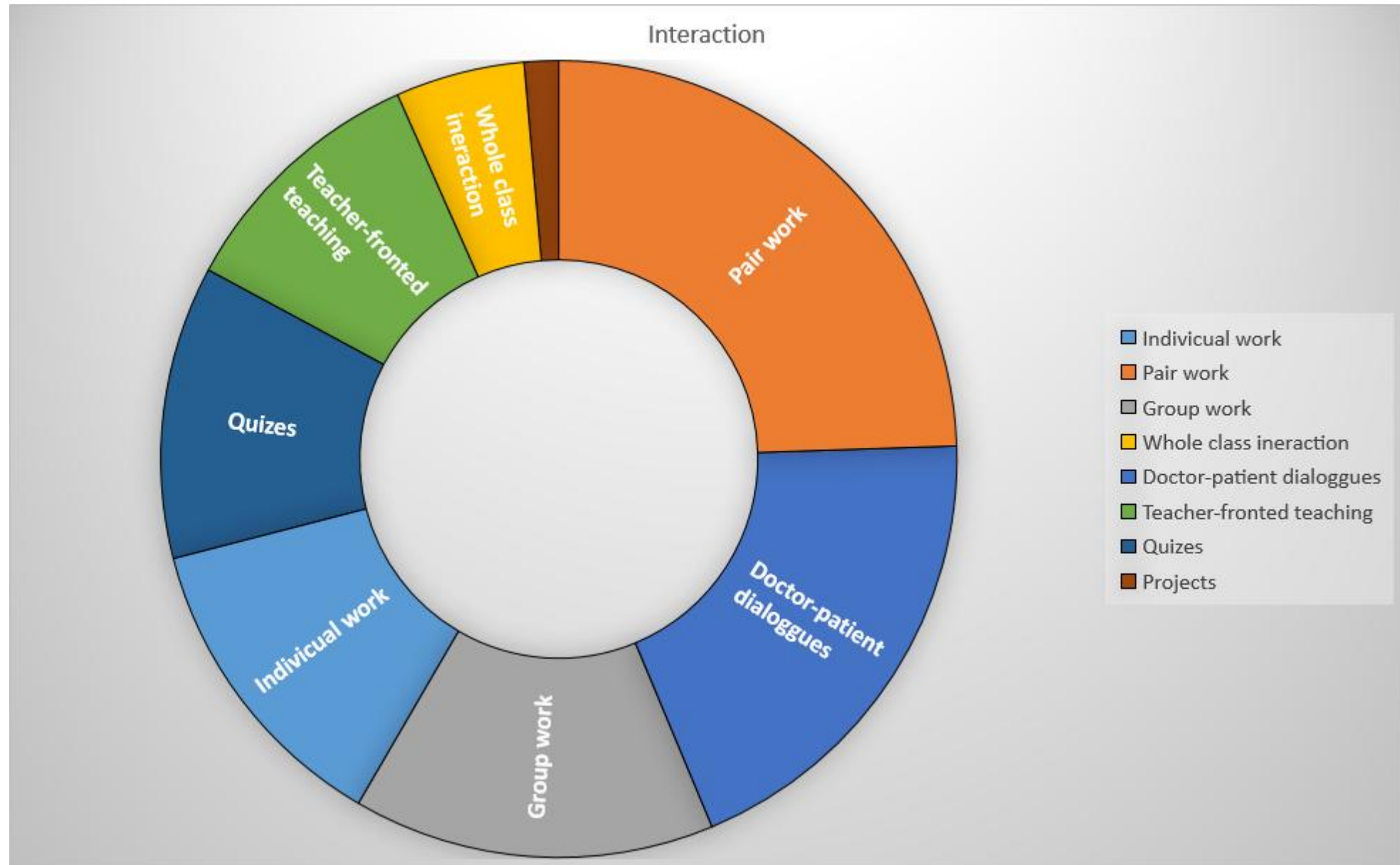


## Professional Vocabulary











# Professional vocabulary acquisition

What vocabulary to teach?

- High-frequency words,
- academic words,
- technical words (special purpose vocabulary, specialized vocabulary, technical, or sub-technical vocabulary),
- low frequency words.



# Receptive and productive distinction

- What does it mean to acquire a word?
  - distinction must be made in for receptive (via listening and reading) or productive (speaking and writing) use
  - acquire the form, meaning, and generative use

# Components of vocabulary knowledge by Nation (2001)

Form	spoken	R What does the word sound like? P How is the word pronounced?
	written	R What does the word look like? P How is the word written and spelled?
	word parts	R What parts are recognizable in this word? P What words parts are needed to express meaning?
Meaning	form and meaning	R What meaning does this word form signal? P What word form can be used to express this meaning?
	concepts and referents	R What is included in the concept? P What items can the concept refer to?
	associations	R What others words does this word make us think of? P What other words could we use instead of this one?
Use	grammatical functions	R In what patterns does the word occur? P In what patterns must we use this word?
	collocations	R What words or types of word occur with this one? P What words or types of words must we use with this one?
	constraints on use	R Where, when and how often would we meet this word? P Where, when and how often can we use this word?

# Form – spoken form, written form, and word parts

In EMP focus on pronunciation of words of Greco-Latin origin

e.g.

- *Gastritis* [gæ'straɪtɪs] in English, the original Greco-Latin [gastri:tis].
- Words beginning with *pn-*, *ps-*, *pt-*, where *p* is never pronounced in English (*'pneumonia* [nju:'mæʊniə], *'psychiatry* [saɪ'kaɪətri]).
- Another typical mispronunciation is Greek [x]. Students tend to pronounce this segment [x] instead of English [k] (*'cholera* ['kɒlərə]).



# Meaning – connecting the form and meaning, concepts, and associations

- Important to connect the form of a particular word and its meaning.
- Students must be given repeated opportunities to retrieve forms and meanings → retrievals strengthen the link between the two.
- Words are not isolated; they fit into many interlocking systems and levels (Nation 2001: 23) → homonyms, homophones, homographs, etc. ; semantic relations between synonyms, antonyms, hypernyms, hyponyms, and meronyms.
- In EMP, many terms (such as '*stomach*', '*abdomen*', '*tummy*', or '*belly*') have multiple synonyms and thus require the student to learn the context-based appropriateness of such items.

# Use – collocations, metaphors, and euphemisms

- Collocations → sequences of words which occur together and convey specific meaning (Nation 2001: 317, Dudley-Evans – St John 2012:85), e.g. *'heart' → 'heart rate', 'heart rhythm', 'heart beat', 'heart attack', etc.* Collocations make fluency in language possible (Pawley – Syder 1983 qtd. in Nation 2001: 56).
- Metaphors → used when participants find certain areas of expression to be problematic (Coxhead 2015: 123-125) or when the need for novel expression arises (Ferguson 2015: 24), e.g. *'the chambered muscular organ controls the blood flow in the pulmonary and the systemic circuits' → 'the heart is a pump'.*
- Euphemisms → widely used to avoid direct reference to distressing, embarrassing, or taboo subjects (Ferguson 2015: 245). e.g. *'die' → 'pass away'.*

# How to teach vocabulary

- Noticing → looking up a word in a dictionary, deliberate studying it, guessing from context, hearing it explained.
- Retrieval → receptive (perceiving the form, retrieving its meaning when the word is met in listening or reading) and/or productive (communicating the meaning of the word and retrieving its spoken or written form), 5-20 repetitions.
- Generative use → encountering and using a word in its various shades of meanings.

# What vocabulary activities to include in the instruction

- Enough opportunities to encounter important words, re-encounter them, and use them generatively.
- Interesting activities (not monotonous) with new and fresh elements of surprise → 'flow' activity (Csikszentmihalyi 2017: 48).
- Activating teaching methods (didactic games, role-plays) are a perfect tool to ensure all the above-mentioned necessities.



# Samples of speaking activities

## **Board games**

1. Noughts and Crosses
2. Magic Circle
3. Ping pong



# 1. Noughts and crosses

The eye	Eye problems	Fever	Epidemiology	X-ray	Diabetes
Endocrine system	Affective disorders	Virus	Endoscopy	CT	Research studies
NS	<del>Substance abuse</del>	Skin lesions	MRI	ECG	Giving bad news
Epilepsy	Senile dementia	<del>Rashes</del>	<del>Ultrasound</del>	Contraception	Case presentations
The motor system	Infections	Skin injuries	Oncology	Bones	Conference presentations
Sensory loss	Heart attack	Immunizations	Symptoms malignancy	Fractures	your wishes

**Aids:** board Table 1

**Procedure:** Student A picks one square with a certain topic. S/he speaks about the topic for 1 minute. If s/he succeeds, s/he can mark the certain square with e.g. ☒. Then it is student B's turn. The game continues until one of the students has 3 marks in a row vertically, horizontally or diagonally.

Table 1- BOARD GAMES

The eye	Eye problems	Fever	Epidemiology	X-ray	Diabetes
Endocrine system	Affective disorders	Virus	Endoscopy	CT	Research studies
NS	<del>Substance abuse</del>	Skin lesions	MRI	ECG	Giving bad news
Epilepsy	Senile dementia	<del>Rashes</del>	<del>Ultrasound</del>	Contraception	Case presentations
The motor system	Infections	Skin injuries	Oncology	Bones	Conference presentations
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## 2. Magic circle

Aids: cards with words, dice, counters



thorax

diaphragm

uterus

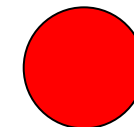
molar

iris

vessel

urethra

femur

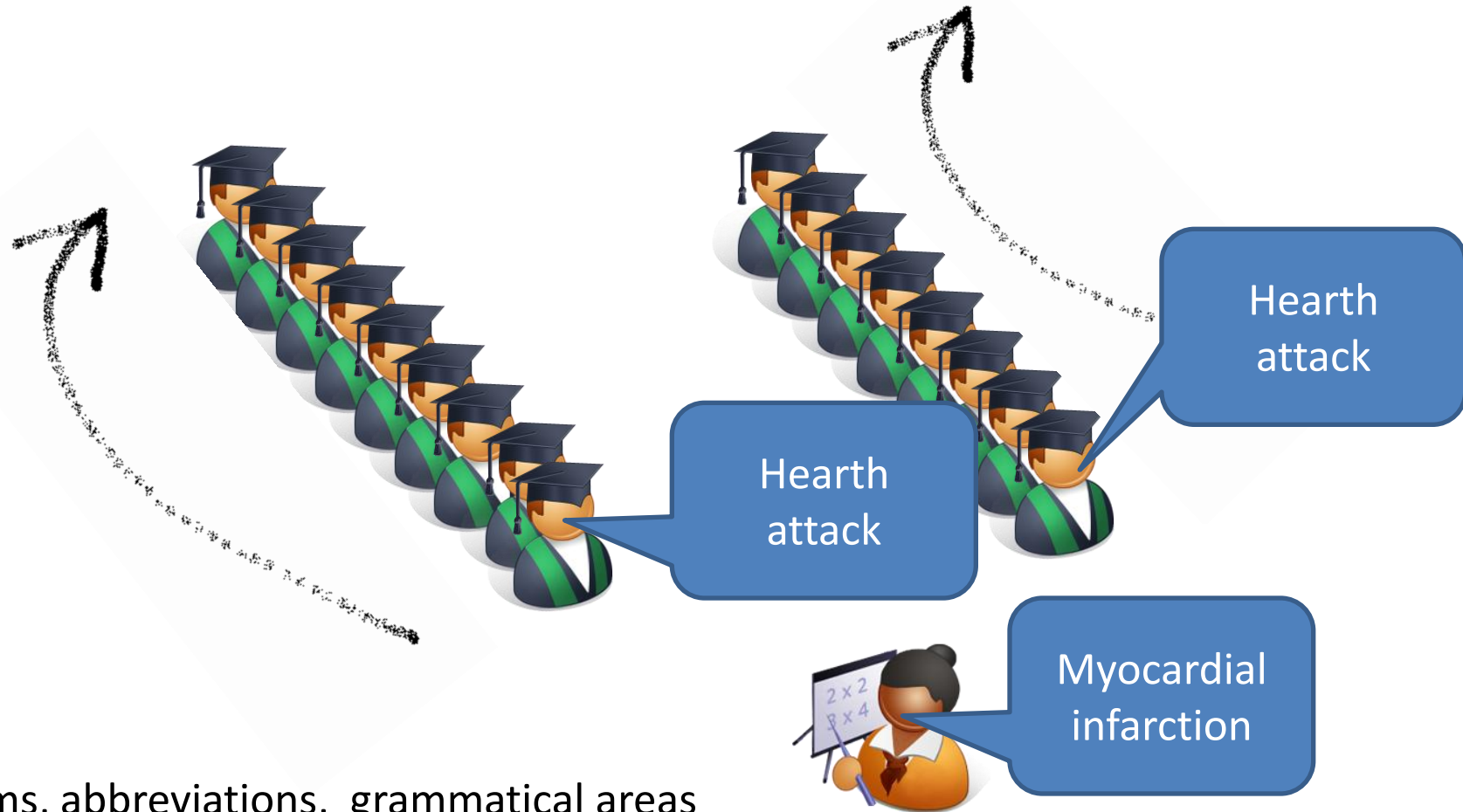


**Procedure:** Student A rolls dice, counts the cards and describes the word. If correct, s/he takes the card, if incorrect, s/he leaves the card in the circle. The activity ends when there are no cards in the circle.

**Interaction:** pair of group work

### 3. Ping pong

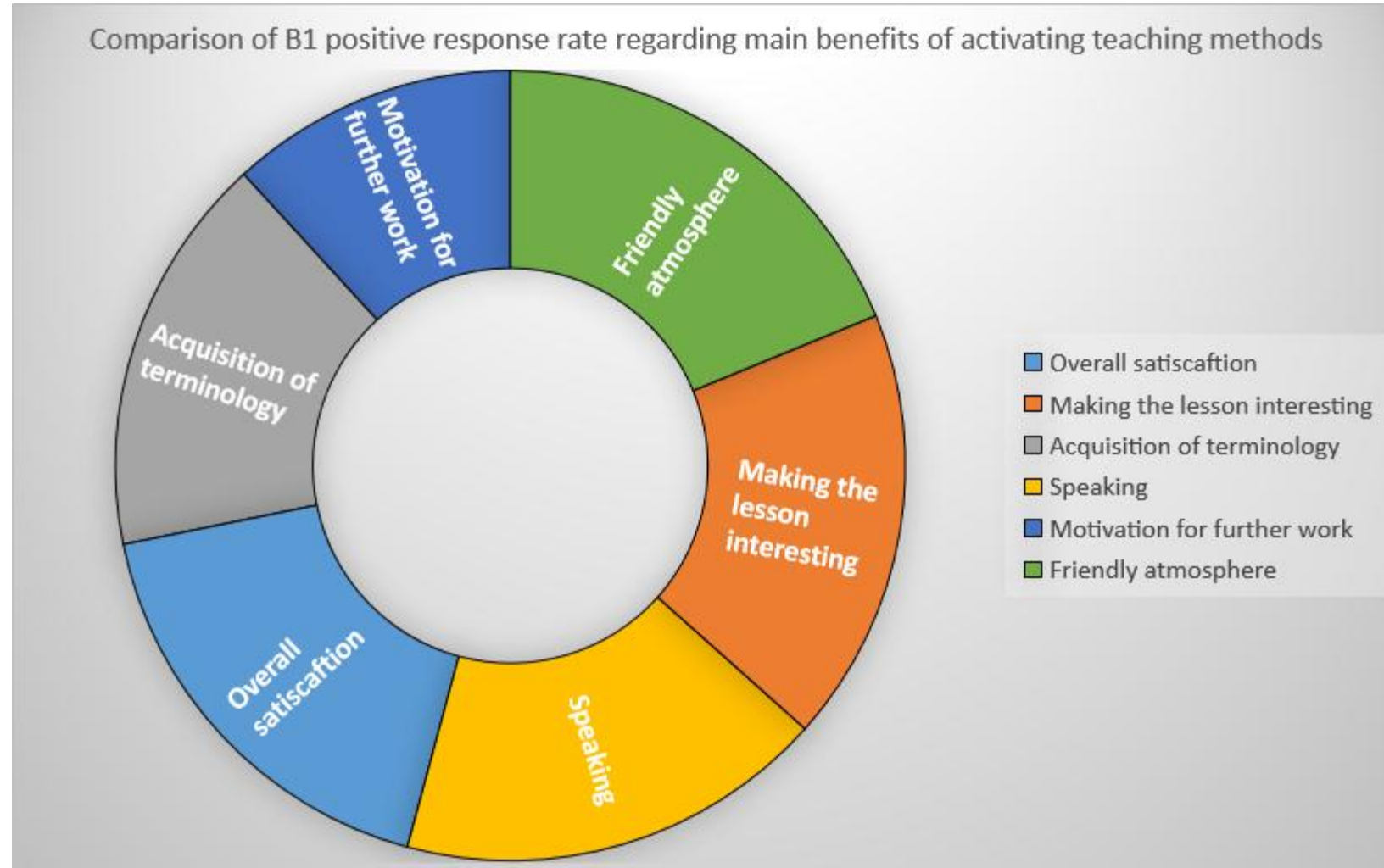
**Procedure:** Students are divided into 2 lines. The teacher stands in front of both lines. The teacher says a word, the first students in the line must come up with, e.g. a synonym, antonym, lay terms... The first two students from each line go to the back and the game continues. The team that gets more points is the winner.



#### USEFUL AREAS:

synonyms, antonyms, abbreviations, grammatical areas

# Evaluation questionnaire







Thank you for your attention.