

## **What it Takes to Design the Best Model for the English for Academic Purposes Course?**

By

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### **Abstract**

The widespread use of learner-centered, tailor-made English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses that encourage students to be as independent in their quest of learning the target language areas as possible have become a norm in the modern institutions of higher education across the globe. Moreover, they have also increased the importance as well as the workload of EAP educators in and outside learning settings whose main responsibilities are to act not only as an instructor, mentor, guide and collaborator in learning with their students but sometimes also as a course designer that requires them to be more informed, prepared, innovative and creative in the design of EAP courses that fully meet the changing needs and requirements of their students.

The instructors of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) play a instrumental part in the can positively intervene into the learning progress and play an important role in learner acquisition of EAP skills. They can analyze students' needs and decide what to teach based on these needs. They can develop a coherent course and sequence of learning, decide on appropriate tasks and teaching methods and in so doing, diminish students' constraints and difficulties in L2 acquisition of EAP. Therefore, the article focuses on designing a model EAP course, particularly an EAP writing course, and demonstrates such an intervention for the effective development of students' formal writing skills. Moreover, the author attempts to show how to successfully present information to students in order to achieve their study goals

Keywords: English for Academic Purposes, course, needs analysis, design

### **1. 3 EAP Course Material Design**

EAP course material design encompasses many essential stages. Zoharian (2015) points out that these may involve needs analysis, identification of aims, formation of ideas about materials, their selection and development of content and tasks. They also include arrangements of materials, tasks and evaluation. Kaur (2007) notes that EAP educators are generally apprehensive when they are

asked to design suitable course materials for different clusters of students. It may be because teaching EAP courses requires lots of preparation and pre-teaching work. Lowe (2009) shares the same idea as Kaur and states that taking on the task of course designing may significantly add supplementary responsibilities that may be hard to cope with. Nonetheless, Chovancová (2014) takes a different point of view and mentions that the additional workload at times may pose issues for EAP teachers; however, it offers valuable experiences to the educators in the long run. These important observations may help EAP teachers to recycle their experiences to meet potential instructional responsibilities and be more prepared to deal with a variety of learning needs effectively

As depicted in Figure 3, language descriptions, learning theories, and evaluation of learners' needs are the areas that significantly influence the process of EAP course design.

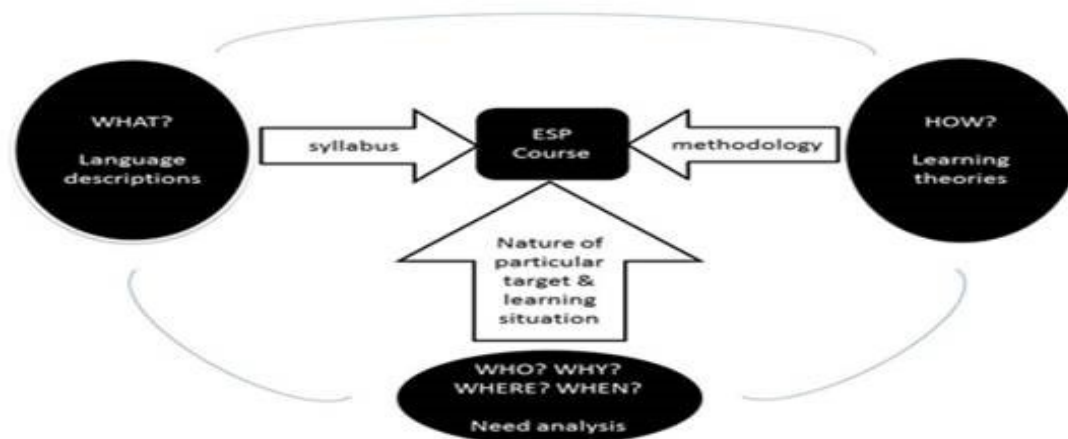


Figure 1.3  
*Factors affecting EAP Course Material Design (cf. Nelson, Devardhi & Tadesse, 2012, p.128)*

It is the responsibility of EAP course designers to make sure that the problems related to these three issues are effectively addressed. Conversely, Nelson, Devardhi & Tadess (2012) argue that it is not as simple as it seems because it requires a lot of effort and investigation. It is for the reason that EAP needs a detailed evaluation of the learners' specific wants and the EAP course development is an ongoing process. Therefore, it is not possible to assume that EAP course designers may easily be able to develop the course that meets all their students' target language needs (Chovancová, 2014). Examining the specific wants of students is an introductory step in an EAP course design. It is for the reason that it identifies the "What and "How" of EAP courses.

Spasić-Stojković (2015) emphasizes that it is the prime responsibility of EAP course designers to investigate and determine the needs and requirements of students. In addition to needs analysis, the identification of main aims and purposes needs to be included in the designing phase of an EAP course. It is also the responsibility of course material designers to make sure that aims are practical and purposes are relevant and suitable to the aims.

EAP course material design involves preparation and organization of learning content and activities with the specific aim to achieve the desired language outcomes. Therefore, Yan (2017) emphasizes that EAP course design is required to include a range of instruction-based educational observations which are aimed at enabling students to achieve a specific level of language acquaintance. Nonetheless, Bakry (2018) takes a different view and states that teachers' own educational experiences may help them become better prepared to teach. Enabling learners to achieve a specific level of the target language understanding requires that the course outlines and learning content are identified by the earlier investigation of the discursive wants of learners. As a result, the recognition of students' wants is considered as the primary stage in the design of the EAP course.

In addition, effective assessment of the EAP course can help identify the positive sides and the weaknesses in the course design. Zamin & Asraf (2017) note that based on evaluation results, the required changes in the course need to be made. Another important stage in the EAP course design is the execution of needs analysis. As per Chovancová (2014), needs analysis is carried out to identify the particular aims and objectives for the students to engage in EAP course. It also aims to assist EAP course designers by gathering information and pertinent knowledge so that they can be used in content development. Since the whole idea of a successful and productive EAP course design lies, among other things, in the execution of a proper needs analysis, it is discussed at length in the following section.

### **1.3.1 Needs Analysis in EAP**

A need may be described as a space between what is and what should be (Boroujeni & Fard, 2013). Needs analysis is the foundation in the process of developing an EAP course and it is the first stage in course development that offers legitimacy and significance for all ensuing activities related to

course designing (Nelson et al. 2012). What follows are some of the most influential models of needs analysis in EAP.

### **1. Register Analysis**

The notion of “register analysis” is based on the learners’ needs related to syntax, semantics and vocabulary in various situations. Alousque et al. (2016) describe register analysis as an attempt to examine the linguistic bases of the language used in specified circumstances. In other words, it analyzes the ways in which the language we speak or write varies in different circumstances. Register analysis assumes that people involved in recurring discourse situations are most likely to make specific choices pertaining to grammar and lexis. Kothalawala et al. (2015) highlight that the outcome of the set of choices made by people is acknowledged by the society as a specific register. Thus, register analysis is carried out to identify the statistically significant lexicogrammatical characteristics of a linguistic assortment. Cai (2017) notes that register analysis was the first of its kind to be used in EAP to pinpoint the needs and requirements of learners. Initially it was used to examine grammar and vocabulary in order to make instruction more relevant and targeted to the wants and requirements of learners. Using register analysis to identify the communicative features of governmental language in terms of “narrative versus non-narrative communication” by evaluating the purposeful relationship between the situational and lexicogrammatical features as well as contrasting these features with methodical research contents and articles from newspaper is a good example of its utility. Some questions to execute register analysis may include:

- Do the linguistic features of the target language entail monologue or not?
- Is the target language context dependent and does it involve lexically dense noun phrases or light clauses?
- What is the physical distance between the interlocutors and what are the possibilities of contact between them?
- What is the distance between the use of language and the activity it realizes?
- Does language prompt the participants to collaborate?

## 2. Munby's Model of Needs Analysis

The 'Communicative Needs Processor' (CNP) mentioned in John Munby's book *Communicative Syllabus Design* entails the foundations of Munby's approach to needs analysis (Munby, 1981). Addressing the discourse requirements of the student is the prime objective of Munby's model. This model encompasses certain units which are vital for its existence. Suffice it to say that without them, the model has no productivity or use (Munby, 1981). The Communicative Needs Processor has several levels and once the data related to students are fed into CNP and processed, the results precisely outline the account of the needs of students and the required use of the target language. Boshier & Smalkoski (2002) note that the vital parts of this model are participants, purposive domain, setting, interaction, instrumentality, dialect, target level, communicative key, and profiles. On the other hand, Songhori (2008) argues that its key objective is to investigate the potential language type which could aid students in functioning effectively in their work settings.

Munby's main objective in CNP was actually creating a comprehensive account of the target language forms that second language learners would most probably use in their prospective learning situations. In fact, for learners to be able to function efficiently in the target language situations, they need to be taught according to the data which has been produced by the means of Munby's CNP. An example of this could be a situation with a learner who is a head waiter at a hotel whose main responsibility is to attend the customers' order. The related micro-functions may be suggesting, advising, and describing. The productive language forms may include the teaching of: May I suggest the...? May I recommend the....? You may find the..... Too spicy etc. Some questions that may be asked in CNP may include:

- What are the topics of the target language?
- Who are the participants?
- How do they learn?
- What sources are available, where and when will the course take place?
- What is the medium of instruction and how should the target knowledge be covered?
- What are the linguistic needs of the target situation?

## 3. Target Situation Analysis

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Very closely related to CNP is Target Situation Analysis (TSA), which is based on Munby's Communicative Needs Processor (Munby, 1981). In this model, learners are asked certain questions pertaining to the reasons for the use of language, the ways in which the target language is to be used, the target knowledge areas that need to be covered, on the details of the target environment for language use (Anthony, 1997). The significance of acknowledging the learning needs is also emphasised through this model in order to identify the competencies that are needed to achieve the required level in the target language. Flowerdew (2018) emphasizes that it is considered essential in the course design phase to have a thorough understanding of the target situation. EAP educators with a comprehensive knowledge of the target situation may identify the precise requirements of what exactly students intend to do with the acquired language competencies upon the accomplishment of the learning program. Once these are identified, educators endeavour to achieve the target outcomes by means of learning tasks and content that are devised based on authentic learning situations. Some questions that can be asked may include:

- Why is language needed?
- How will the language be used?
- What will the content areas be?
- Who will the learners use the language with?
- Where and when will the language be used?

#### **4. Present Situation Analysis**

As the very name indicates, Present Situation Analysis (PSA) is the counterpart of TSA. Whereas in TSA, the analysts consider the learners' expected target situation linguistic features and expected language proficiency level, in PSA they identify learners' existing knowledge and expertise in the target language at the start of the course. Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998) note that if the language outcomes that need to be achieved by learners are required to be defined, it is important to establish the initiating point with the help of PSA. PSA approximates the strong and weak points of the learners' capabilities and skills in the needed competencies and language areas. The use of entry tests is popular for the execution of PSA. Nevertheless, Rao (2016) argues that, to some extent, acquiring information related to learners' observations in the target language and

academic credentials may also be helpful to establish the existing skills and expertise of learners in the required language area. Some of the questions that can be asked in PSA include:

- How long have they been learning English?
- What is their language level?
- What is their level of education?
- Which skills in English have been well-developed?
- Which skills have to be worked on?
- What is their knowledge of structures and lexis? Do they require strategy training?

## **5. Deficiency Analysis**

Deficiency approach attempts to investigate learners' future and present needs, which could be done by Target Situation Analysis (TSA) and Present Situation Analysis (PSA) (Songhori, 2008). Deficiency Analysis is actually an analysis of what it takes to bring the students from their present situation to the target situation. Zohoorian (2015) describes it as a choice to deviate from PSA to TSA. This type of analysis is carried out while making sure that the wants and requirements of EAP learners are addressed accordingly. Therefore, it may be suitable for establishing the foundations of the EAP course. In addition, Highland & Hamp-Lyons (2002) points out that Deficiency Analysis provides information about the areas related to present and target language competencies that require more attention or focus. With the help of this model, what exactly learners need to learn in order to achieve the desired level of language competence is identified and analyzed. In the past, educators were the ones who were tasked to pinpoint the knowledge gaps for the learners. Alsamadani (2017) notes that it was not that effective because instructors' assessment of their students' needs was significantly influenced by their knowledge, beliefs, relationship with learners, roles and responsibilities. In this model, needs of learners are considered as a gap between learners' existing knowledge and required capabilities in a specific communicative learning setting. Some questions that may be asked in Deficiency Analysis may include:

- What are their specific language needs and how exactly do they plan to use the target language?

- For how long have they studied the target language areas and which structures or components do they find difficult or easy to understand?
- Which target language areas do they think they need to focus on more?
- What are their weaknesses in the target language?
- How do they plan to use the target language knowledge and in which contexts?
- Which contexts of the target language do they find challenging?

## **6. Ethnographic Needs Analysis**

When it comes to Ethnographic Needs Analysis (ENA), it is specifically carried out to identify learners' wants for language acquisition. As per Belcher (2006), ENA has helped establish understanding of the needs to consider domestic pressure and observe domestic circumstances within the context of the analysis of cultural phenomena of students and other participants in language acquisition. The principal idea of this type of needs analysis is based on the consideration that course designers are required to work in collaboration with other participants of learning. These participants may include learners, instructors and program designers (Songhori, 2008). Therefore, in this approach to needs analysis, EAP course designers are required to investigate the broader social structure first, and then the used target language later as a part of this structure.

In comparison with other models of needs analysis, ENA may offer a greater level of knowledge. As per Flowerdew (2018), it could be because of its capability to scrutinize issues pertaining to the target language by means of a vast array of instruments i.e. tests and examinations, discussions, analysis of texts, interviews. Redesigning a postgraduate EAP writing course to better meet the needs of the student population by means of interviews with learners and instructors may be a good example of Ethnographic Needs Analysis in action. Moreover, inclusion of course documents and observations in order to understand the types of genres that are important to these students in their postgraduate study may also be a good illustration of this type of needs analysis. Some important questions to execute Ethnographic Needs Analysis may include:

- Which specific language areas are more relevant to their academic and professional needs?
- How do they use the target language and who is the target audience?
- What are the cultural characteristics of the target language?



- How do they interact with one another in the target language outside of question-and-answer engagements?
- What are the social relations involved in the use of the desired language, and how do these relationships prompt learners to interact in the target language?

## **7. Rights Analysis**

Rights Analysis is a model for comprehending and reacting to power relation involving students' prerogatives to confront the learning content. This type of needs analysis is carried out by investigating the way power is employed and opposed to in a given learning condition together with instruction and course syllabus (Belcher, 2009). This model takes students' rights into account to identify suitable and required learning. The focal point of Rights Analysis is the egalitarian inclusion of each and every participant of EAP course such as learners, educators, sections, establishments and lawmakers. This is done to exhibit their concerns and execute their rights when it comes to making choices as regards the way in which EAP program is designed and executed (Benesch, 2008). Therefore, detailed interactions among the participants of the EAP courses are required to take place. These interactions are specifically aimed at making choices about the desired language knowledge, instruction and ways to conduct examinations and assessments by including particular language requirements of each participant. The questions that may be asked in Rights Analysis may include:

- What are the target language areas and goals that are required to be taught?
- How to teach those target language areas and what learning content to cover?
- How should assessment and evaluation of individual learners' needs take place?

## **8. Stakeholder Needs Analysis**

The main goal of Stakeholder Needs Analysis (SNA) is to obtain feedback from all stakeholders in the learning process to identify the precise needs and requirements of learners. Development of an ideal EAP programme entails input from all the stakeholders such as instructors, professionals, government organizations and those who require a particular language course (Chovancová, 2014). Obtaining stakeholders' input is important to satisfy the needs of students. SNA is executed at the start of the EAP course design phase in order to control and manage stakeholders'

concerns and anticipations to all the way through the EAP course design phase. In general, knowledge included in the examination of wants assists the EAP course designers to connect with EAP participants (Alsop & Nesi, 2009). It also reinforces communication pertaining to the preparation and implementation of the course. SNA endeavours to respond to the queries related to stakeholders, issues and challenges that each participant or stakeholder experiences, their expectations and designed language outcomes that they intend to realize. The questions that may be asked to execute SNA may include:

- Who are the stakeholders? What challenges or barriers does each stakeholder currently face?
- What improvements or benefits does each stakeholder group wish to achieve during language learning?
- How clearly do the goals and objectives address each stakeholder's needs?
- What information does each stakeholder need or expect to receive and what communication channels can reach each stakeholder most effectively?
- Is the stakeholder supportive, oppositional or neutral and how much power does the stakeholder have to convince others towards their own position?

After the needs analysis, designers of the EAP courses are required to identify the desired results and purposes of the EAP program. Achievement of the desired results, which is contingent on the successful execution of an EAP course, and the reasons for learners attending the particular EAP program, may be interpreted as the goals of EAP course (Benesch, 2008). It is important to note that a needs analysis ought to be considered as an important condition when it comes to the way the desired educational results or goals are arranged. Having unambiguous and appropriate desired language outcomes from an EAP course are mandatory in order for the EAP course design to move forward in terms of stages. Goals and objectives in EAP courses are specifically aimed at enhancing students' discursive skills and EAP programs are more concerned with students or the environments in which the target language is used by the students (Gatehouse, 2001). Therefore, goals are required to be aligned with the specific requirements of the students and not only that, they should also reflect the communal conducts of learners.

EAP courses generally consider communicative competencies as important as attaining the eventual desired language outcome and, for this reason, EAP course designers acknowledge communication as the most important objective to achieve. Dudley-Evans (2001) notes that it is always a good practice to consider the identification of the general or specific pedagogical goals as the primary stage of the development of any language course. These pedagogical goals should always be aligned with what learners aim to achieve from the given course. In order to realize this, the examination of the learners' needs is conducted to discover the actual requirements. Hutchinson & Waters (1992) mention that there should also be a focus on the use of learning materials which help preparing learners to use the target language for the fulfilment of their respective jobs. Keeping the EAP educators motivated for the target language instruction and gaining the relevant and required competencies to execute EAP courses successfully are also considered important goals for EAP course design.

Suffice it to say that needs analysis is a complex process, involving much more than simply looking at what the students will have to do in the target situation. Within the context of the Polish university settings, Reichelt (2005) notes that most of the second language learning courses are not based on needs analysis and are not relevant to the students' learning and target situation needs. The drawbacks in EAP materials are due to the absence of needs analysis practice in the process of syllabi design. Therefore, the implementation of needs analysis in the process of course design is essential to assure that EAP programs are relevant to the students' actual needs.

### **1.3.2 Learning Materials for EAP Instruction**

In general, EAP course materials mainly include books, accompanying learning materials, authentic materials, tailor-made materials and online materials. EAP learning materials may also be sourced from several resources i.e. language textbooks, academic and professional English textbooks, the internet, electronic and print media etc. However, it is important to note that the use of books has been the most popular way of obtaining materials for EAP courses (Wiśniewska, 2012). The important and principal role of textbooks is indisputable irrespective of the nature and types of EAP courses though the single authentic substitute for a textbook appears to be the internet. The EAP specific learning materials may include the learning content that is particularly catered to meet the specific language requirements of learners. McGrath (2002) proposes that they

should also offer real-life content, particularly chosen and developed to assist EAP educators. That is so that they could expose learners to the authentic use of the target language. Generally, the learning content is produced by educators and learners.

Despite a wide variety of learning materials for teaching EAP courses, textbooks remain the most widely used type (Imane, 2013). The main reasons for their popularity are that they address precisely the learning wants that need to be fulfilled and, of course, they significantly assist in carrying out the assessment for the language acquired.

**1. EAP course textbooks---** it is important to note that the EAP textbooks respond to the key variations related to the way foreign language instruction works (Nitu, 2002). In the 80s, the major focus of the EAP textbooks was on the precision of the target language including semantics, syntax or specialized texts. Harwood (2005) points out that textbooks are also specifically aimed at catering for discursive competencies, especially verbal ones. However, Spasić-Stojković (2015) argues that in modern times listening, reading, writing, and speaking are considered mandatory to study in order to achieve university qualification. Therefore, modern EAP books are required to include not only real-life examples and related content, but authentic body of words and exercises related to meaningful activities involving target language use.

For instance, *Academic Writing Skills* (Chin et al. 2011) walks students through the process of ensuring the information in their essays is logically organized, written in a suitable academic style, and free of plagiarism through structured integration and citation of properly written paraphrases, summaries, and quotes. *English for Academic Purposes* (De Chazal, 2014) offers an overview of research in the field of EAP. It presents typical and best practice and provides practical suggestions for developing materials. *Academic Vocabulary in Use* (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2016) reflects changes in education, technology and communications, includes a selection of new reading passages, and gives explanations of new vocabulary, along with a variety of practice exercises. *English for Academic Purposes: An Advanced Resource Book* (Hyland, 2006) provides students and researchers the knowledge required for the advanced study in the core areas of English.

**2. Non-textbook learning materials---** non-textbook learning materials offer learners the activities that meet the specific needs of their future or current jobs. As per Nelson et al. (2012), in-house produced, non-textbook materials are extremely valuable. It is for the reason that they are inevitably more precisely geared to the needs of students than published materials. Nonetheless, Paniya (2008) points out that when determining what tasks to include in EAP materials teachers should strive to select and/or design tasks that will simulate the learner's real-life business situations as closely as possible. The choice of whether to use easily accessible books or non-textbook based learning materials, devised in accordance with the specific needs and requirements of learners, is something that depends on the target language areas that need to be focused during the EAP course. However, Edwards (2000) notes that if the target language is universal and wide-ranging, it is more likely that the appropriate and relevant subject material will be available. Therefore, EAP educators' choice about the material will be in favour of the textbooks.

In addition, Hyland & Hamp-Lyons (2002) point out that it is commonly observed that EAP educators' choices for materials are generally in favour of the idea to use textbooks. On the one hand, if EAP educators decide to use textbooks, the choices regarding the framework, body of language, competencies and purposes are limited. However, Macalister (2008) argues that the use of specifically catered learning content may offer educators an important choice to include a mixture of the body of words, purposes and forms. Especially, in situations where the learning goals are aimed at achieving a set of specific academic skills, non-textbook materials combined with textbooks may help educators expedite the target language learning process.

**3. Use of online materials---** when it comes to using the online learning content, the most significant benefit for EAP educators is that they can make use of educational content related to the wide range of the means of mass communication including language learning and practicing websites, online discussion forums, articles, eBooks, audio and video repositories of language learning etc. As per Wiśniewska (2012), it is important to note that similar to other types of learners, EAP students also have a varied range of learning manners and approaches. Therefore, the idea of selecting the best-suited online materials is also dependent on the way EAP learners acquire knowledge. Minasyan (2016) points out

that EAP students offer educators the opportunity to use a wide range of media resources. Because EAP learners, like any other learners, differ in their learning styles, teachers ought to select and/or design materials that will cater best for different learning styles, such as auditory channel learners, visual learners, and so on.

In the recent times EAP instruction has become more technology-oriented especially in the advanced economies. Ahmed (2016) emphasizes that for developing up to date contents, computers, overhead projectors, audio-video equipment and other resource facilities increases the opportunities for language proficiency development in a modern classroom. Consequently, materials become much diversified. Some of the useful online materials for EAP instruction may be sourced from the following links in the table below:

Table 1.1

*Names and links of EAP-specific online materials (cf. BALEAP, 2018)*

| Name   | Description  | Online Source   |
|--|--|---|
| Academic English Online  | A website of interactive learning objects, designed to assist students in higher education with their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills in Academic English. | <a href="http://aeo.sllf.qmul.ac.uk/">http://aeo.sllf.qmul.ac.uk/</a>   |
| Association des Professeurs de Langues des Instituts Universitaires de Technologie | An online repository of teaching materials for Academic English Practitioners with focus on technologies   | <a href="http://apliut.com/wordpress/">http://apliut.com/wordpress/</a>   |
| Association of University Language Centres   | An online forum that offers extensive collection of presentations, papers, videos and podcasts related to academic English.  | <a href="http://qmlanguagecentre.on-rev.com/baleap/archive">http://qmlanguagecentre.on-rev.com/baleap/archive</a>   |
| British Council CPD for Teachers of English  | A learning forum where teachers discuss and exchange EAP learning materials for their own professional development as well as learners                                     | <a href="http://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org/continuing-professional-development/teachers">http://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org/continuing-professional-development/teachers</a> |
| Doctoral EAP   | A blog with resources that EAP contributors have found useful on their way to completing their doctoral study in the hope they will help others.                           | <a href="https://doctoraleap.wordpress.com/">https://doctoraleap.wordpress.com/</a>   |
| European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing (EATAW)                  | A scholarly forum to help in tutoring, research, administration and development of academic writing in higher education.   | <a href="http://www.eataw.eu">www.eataw.eu</a>  |
| Higher Education Academy   | HEA is a national body focuses on improving academic English teaching approaches and individual teaching practices   | <a href="http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ukpsf">www.heacademy.ac.uk/ukpsf</a>  |
| Using English for Academic Purposes: A Guide for Students in Higher Education      | Comprehensive advice, materials and exercises on the four skills. Produced by Andy Gillett.  | <a href="http://www.uefap.net">http://www.uefap.net</a>   |

|                       |   |   |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Writing for a Purpose | A website that includes information about the types of writing and purposes for writing, exercises to help learners write and examples from assignments that successful students have written | <a href="http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/writing-purpose/writing-purpose">http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/writing-purpose/writing-purpose</a> |
|-----------------------|---|---|

### 1.3.3 EAP Material Selection

When it comes to EAP materials selection, there is not one specific standard that can be used to make sure that the chosen materials are fit for the specific purposes of the course (Anthony, 1997). However, as Hasimi & Priftanji (2013) suggest, identifying materials based on how useful in the acquisition of the target language as well as how interesting they could be for the learners may always fetch productive outcomes. The process of choosing learning content for EAP courses is significantly different from the way learning materials are selected for all-purpose language learners. What follows are some of the key standards used as the bases for choosing the learning materials for EAP:

**1. Students' characteristics and competencies in the target language---** learners of EAP come from different educational and working backgrounds. Therefore, it is very important for EAP educators to differentiate between those learners who possess no working knowledge or experience of the target course with the ones who have some or lots of knowledge about the course (Gatehouse, 2001). The outcomes from the comparison should assist EAP educators in their decision regarding the selection of the materials.

**2. Appropriateness---** another important criterion for materials selection is their suitability for learners. The content, tasks and activities must be relevant (Imane, 2013). They also need to be responsive to the specific needs and requirements of EAP learners and should be able to help them gain the authentic exposure to the target language.

**3. Learners' educational, professional and cultural backgrounds---** it is important to take into account the learners' educational, professional and cultural backgrounds while selecting the learning materials suitable for EAP courses. Kaur (2007) notes that it is for the reason that the categories, scope, and impact of learning content, tasks and activities

vary amongst learners from various age, vocational and cultural groups. This means that there is no particular set of learning activities or content that could satisfy the specific needs and requirements of all EAP learners in a single class.

**4. Instructional methodologies and learning strategies---** on the one hand, the instructional methodology is an important standard for material selection (Gatehouse, 2001). Also, EAP educators are required to test various materials in order to select the one which needs to be used with the specific types of learners and once the methodology is chosen then learning materials can be selected too. On the other hand, knowing students' learning strategies is also very helpful and can essentially serve as a valid standard for EAP material selection (Harwood, 2005). Considering EAP students' learning strategies as a standard and selecting the learning materials based on them may prove to be quite effective for increasing students' motivation, learning output and satisfaction.

In the end, it is important that the chosen learning materials are synced with the target language goals and objectives of the EAP learning programme (Edwards, 2000). They must contain suitable and selected vocabulary and knowledge too. Wisniewska (2011) notes that if learning materials do not offer challenging learning tasks and activities, it becomes very difficult for EAP learners to remain interested and proactive throughout the language acquisition process. Consequently, unwillingness and demotivation of learners may severely hamper EAP educators' instructional plan to achieve the target language outcomes. In addition, it is also recommended that EAP course materials follow the specific order, be linked with the in-class learning tasks and encompass adequate enriching routines and norms.

### **1.3.4 Evaluation of Materials in EAP**

Comprehensive evaluation of the learning materials in the designing phase of the EAP course is one of the most significant steps in course design. As per Hutchinson and Waters (1992), it is carried out to make sure that the learning content is specific, customized to fulfil the learners'



needs, and aligned with the aims and objectives of the EAP course. It is important to note that evaluation is normally executed at the end of the development phase of EAP course. However, in some situations it becomes an ongoing process, specifically, when EAP-based learning materials are constantly being updated to reflect the changing needs and requirements of learners (Bernard, 2010). In general, according to Alduais (2012), either EAP teachers or course designers are the ones who carry out the evaluation of the learning materials. Based on the outcomes, necessary adjustments can be made for the EAP teaching content to become more relevant and appropriate for users. Badeleh et al. (2017) argue that since, EAP courses vary greatly in terms of nature and purpose, evaluation plays an important role for EAP educators. It also helps them to make the right choices so as to achieve the optimal learning outcomes. The evaluation of material is not a straightforward procedure. It generally includes the following important stages:

**1. Gathering---** EAP educators collect materials that are in line with the needs and requirements of students and that are suitable for evaluation (Nitu, 2002). Next, they need to examine and compare them with the designated benchmarks. Wisniewska (2011) highlights the importance of keeping the text focused at the target learners' particular needs. Based on the results, they are obliged to make choices about the selection of the materials that fulfil the particular language demands of students.

**2. Analysing---** this is one of the most complicated stages in the evaluation of the EAP materials. Edwards (2000) notes that it is for the reason that based on the outcomes from this stage, EAP educators can have a fair idea about the negative and positive aspects of the chosen materials. Once all the aspects of the materials are known to the teachers, educators can continue on to validate their suitability for the instructional purposes. Hutchinson & Waters (1992) recommend considering the following aspects:

- target students and objectives of learning content;
- materials concerning the way language is used in real world target areas of the language, amount of efforts each language area or skill requires for development, varieties of content involving main topics, their related types, and perceived level of learning;
- methods including instructional approaches, techniques, and varieties of learning assignments and activities.

The whole procedure of evaluation needs to revolve around the above mentioned points in the list. It ought to be done to make sure that the chosen learning tasks, texts and activities help learners to meet their desired language goals.

**3. Comparing and deciding---** the procedure for evaluation is required to be methodical. As per Ellis et al. (1998), to a certain extent, it should be viewed as a harmonizing activity or synchronization of the examined requirements with the existing results. Subsequent to all the previous stages, educators make a choice based on whether the content fulfils the needs and requirements of students (Nitu, 2002). Moreover, their selection is also based on whether educators use the learning materials in their original forms or customize them according to the goals and objectives of the course.

The learners' impulse and the required language outcomes significantly impact the way the assessment of pedagogical content is conducted. As per Rothman et al. (2015), learning materials greatly aid in helping and motivating instructors to achieve their teaching goals. However, Farhady et al. (2017) argue that quality learning content does not only assist in instruction, but it also enables students to gain knowledge that is highly valued and desirable. The productivity and usefulness of the knowledge acquisition may be measured with the assessment of the conditions of an EAP course. Consequently, it may help teachers and learners to accomplish certain targeted aims and language outcomes. In an ideal situation, productive learning content facilitates educators to achieve the desired instructional targets and choose the appropriate learning materials (Ebadi & Naderifarjad, 2015). To achieve this, a rigorous and efficient evaluation process is needed. It is important to note that the vital function of the learning content is to bridge the gap between the learners' established knowledge and the new knowledge. Therefore, the current and potential language competencies cannot be considered significantly apart.

When it comes to the evaluation of learning materials, it should strive to identify whether the content is appropriate and whether it possesses interesting information needed to keep learners motivated throughout the course. More importantly, content ought to be well-connected with the previously exercised learning abilities (Mohamadi et al. 2011). Furthermore, it is essential to examine whether the materials are flexible, adaptable and whether they accommodate a varied

range of class activities to acquire a specific set of knowledge. Finally, the examination of whether the learning content is culturally-sensitive also holds utmost importance in the evaluation process.

## 2. Evaluation Models, Types and Standards

Evaluation of course materials is a well-researched topic and numerous scholars have put forward their viewpoints pertaining to the way evaluation models, types and standards may be interpreted, differentiated and used in EAP instruction. In the following table, some of the most important ones are outlined:

Table 1.2

*Evaluation models, types and standards for EAP course materials (cf. Robinson, 1991; Hutchinson and Waters, 1992; Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998; McDonough and Shaw, 2003)*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They describe evaluation similar to posing queries and responding to those queries.</li> <li>• Assessment is initiated by deciding for the knowledge that needs to be collated and based on that knowledge, transformation of present and prospective learning tasks take place.</li> <li>• Assessment is split into summative and formative.</li> <li>• In formative evaluation, the required changes are made in the learning content.</li> <li>• In summative evaluation, assessment takes place once the EAP program has been executed.</li> <li>• The impact of summative evaluation does not influence the learning program because the main purpose of using summative assessment is to measure the EAP program's productivity.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Hutchinson and Waters (1992)</p>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment is considered as a tool to sync wants with the assessable resolutions.</li> <li>• It is important to elucidate the principle or standard by which EAP course materials need to be judged or chosen.</li> <li>• Assessment is carried out on individual opinions, understanding, standpoints, feelings, and decisions of EAP course designers about the EAP materials.</li> <li>• Assessment needs to be carried out based on quantifiable, visible and factual knowledge related to the EAP course materials.</li> <li>• Carrying out evaluation involves matching wants to the existing resolutions within the context of EAP learning materials.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Robinson (1991)</p>                  | <p>EAP course materials assessment can be carried out in three stages as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial stage--- in this stage, assessment of EAP course materials is carried out at the start of the EAP program</li> <li>• Summative stage--- assessment is carried out at the end of the EAP program</li> <li>• Formative stage--- assessment is executed while the EAP program is in process</li> </ul>   |

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
|                                  | <p>The key feature of this type of assessment is that it may be executed by learners, educators, EAP course designers, industry professionals and other stakeholders.</p>   |
| <p>McDonough and Shaw (2003)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initially, the external assessment is carried out which includes the investigation of the way learning materials are arranged as per the developer of the learning content.</li> <li>• The investigation also involves the arguments put forward in the title page, initial chapters and list of topics.</li> <li>• Based on this particular type of assessment, knowledge related to the target readers, level of knowledge in target language areas, the background in which language is practiced, exhibition and arrangement of learning content, writers' reviews related to the content and methods, the way learning content is used, details of the body of words, catalogue, assessments and so on, are evaluated.</li> <li>• In this phase, the way competencies are exhibited, ranking and the way learning content is organized, validity of the listening and communicative content, suitability of assessment exercises, aptness in regards to learning content suitable for the ways learners acquire knowledge, are evaluated.</li> <li>• In the end, assessment is executed within the context of the way learning materials are utilized, their ecological validity, and flexibility.</li> </ul> |

Evaluation brings numerous stakeholders together and makes them aware that their feedback and opinions about the given EAP course are valued. Rothman et al. (2015) note that EAP courses may be evaluated based on various standards and models. However, in reality, the use of assessment outcomes, surveys, discourses, in-person meetings, voluntary reviews and authentic language users' comments are some of the popular techniques (Hassan & Kareem, 2017). These techniques are particularly useful in gaining insight into how the stakeholders perceive the efficiency of the EAP course. Both formative and summative types of evaluation can be either qualitative, i.e. depending more on subjective judgment (e.g. interviews, observation) or quantitative, i.e. numerically expressed (e.g. surveys, exam outcomes) (Alfehaid, 2011). The concluding assessment in the form of surveys is a constructive way of gathering information for the purpose of needs analysis. It may prove to be effective to pinpoint the vital characteristics of learning programs that were liked and disliked.

Mazgutova & Kormos (2015) argue that formative assessment is an ongoing process which helps monitor progress by recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of all aspects of instruction and learning. Nonetheless, Zamin & Asraf (2017) maintain that in reality most evaluations represent a combination of formative and summative approaches. If we are interested in judging

the ultimate worth of a programme, we are usually open to explanations of why it is or is not working, and what recommendations for improvement can be put forward. This implies that the two types of evaluation are seen as complementary rather than contradictory.

#### **1.4 Conclusion**

Many major changes and significant developments in the sphere of language teaching can be attributed to the growth of EAP in the past few decades. Recognition and acceptance of EAP by second language educators in the development of listening, speaking, writing, reading, and grammar use as essential for students in academic settings is one of the evidences of its global popularity. As per Farhady et al. (2017), EAP appears to take into account all the variations in the context of the language use and the culture in which it is required to function. This exclusive feature of EAP is not found in any other form of language teaching. The users of EAP are diverse in terms of cultural, academic and professional backgrounds, needs and requirements, level of knowledge and skills in the target language. For this reason, Hassan & Kareem (2017) emphasize that EAP courses need to be more flexible and adaptable to the requirements of its students. The diverse nature and complicated structure of EAP can be observed by looking at the various functions that EAP practitioners are required to perform.

The pedagogical methods in EAP teaching contain more originality and knowledge empowering capabilities than traditional teaching approaches (as confirmed by Zohoorian, 2015). The involvement of information technology into language teaching has not only overhauled the whole process of language acquisition and made instructional approaches more effective but it has also created numerous challenges for EAP educators. It is important to note that not a single language teaching technique can be completely accurate, appropriate and fit for all purposes (Atai & Fatahi-Majid, 2014). However, within the context of EAP, the key consideration is to achieve communicative competence (Airey, 2016). Moreover, it has been observed that the initiation of communicative instructional methodology has significantly influenced the way second language instruction is carried out. . In addition to this, as per Badeleh et al. (2017), the use of authentic learning materials and use of technology are also gaining momentum and attaining significant

amount of importance in the EAP pedagogy due to the fact that these teaching approaches enable learners to have ample amount of the target language exposure.

With the help of real-life learning content, EAP educators can effectively hone their learners' communicative skills. Collins (2017) notes that EAP courses are the tools to achieve the target language outcomes. Therefore, it is essential to make sure that the target aims of the course are in accordance with the results obtained from target situation and students' needs analyses. Furthermore, it is important to select the best-suited pedagogical methodology and the learning materials which are appropriate and which fit the specific purposes of the language acquisition process (Ding & Bruce, 2017) The choice of materials for the EAP course can be facilitated through the use of various sources of information, mainly text books, print and electronic media or the internet. Ebadi & Naderifarjad (2015) observe that there is no particular course which is suitable for the instruction in a varied range of target environments because the requirements and situations of every context are different from one another. Evaluating and examining each and every component of EAP syllabus, and then adjusting the course materials in accordance with the needs and requirements of the learners and the target situation may provide a viable solution to the issues of appropriateness and efficacy of the EAP course development and implementation.

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