# Professional and Academic English

Journal of the IATEFL English for Specific Purpose Special Interest Group

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# EDITORIAL

## Editorial

Welcome to Issue 53 of the IATEFL ESP SIG Journal: *Professional and Academic English.*

It is my pleasure to introduce you to Issue 53 of the journal. As in previous issues, we continue to provide a forum for discussion of ESP, both EP/OP and EAP, around the world.

In Issue 53, we have three articles set in various ESP - in this case EAP in higher education - contexts from Bangladesh, Armenia, Russia and South Africa. We start with Rezwana Islam & Md. Mukibuzzaman Khan's discussion of factors that affect medium of instruction on undergraduate EAP courses in Bangladesh. This is followed by a look at extensive reading in an ESP context in Armenia by Amalia Babayan. Next we have an example of how m-learning can be brought into an ESP classroom at tertiary level in Russia by Elena Velikaya & Vasilisa Danilova. And finally, we have a detailed description of a writing centre at a university of South Africa by Gift Mheta & Sibongile R. Nhari.

We also have a range of book reviews and conference reports from around the world.

I hope you find these articles interesting and useful and we hope that reading them will encourage all our readers to submit articles to the journal. If you have any suggestions about what we can include in the journal, please get in touch. Please visit http://espsig.iatefl.org for further information.


Happy reading


Andy Gillett


Photographs: Front cover: "Autumn in Ashridge, Hertfordsire, UK" by Kay Gillett.

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## Message from the ESP SIG Coordinators

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to Issue 53 of our journal, *Professional and Academic English*. We are delighted to be able to present you with a wide range of ESP topics from around the world. Our heartfelt thanks go to the editorial team, Andy Gillett and Mark Krzanowski, for their hard work in putting the issue together.

 As this issue goes to press, we are in the final stages of selections for our Pre-conference event in Manchester, taking place on 17th April 2020. The theme, ESP in the world of tomorrow: Academic and professional perspectives, considers the field of ESP and the changes, opportunities and challenges it may face in the future from two main perspectives: ESP in tertiary level education contexts, and in professional contexts. There is still time to send in your proposal (deadline: 16.00 BST on Friday December 6th 2019) – check our website and social media pages for details.

In addition to preparations for the IATEFL main conference, we have an exciting programme of webinars to whet your appetite. We are also planning a number of future face-to-face events in 2020 (UK, Switzerland and more).  Once again, our social media pages will be keeping you up to date on all of these.

We hope that you enjoy this issue of our journal and can join us for the events we have in the pipeline.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all our readers happy holidays and look forward to seeing many of you in 2020 in Manchester!

Ayşen Güven & Caroline Hyde-Simon

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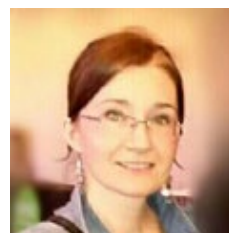
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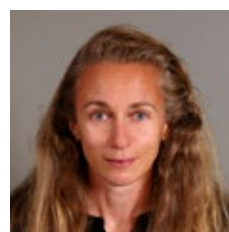
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# Factors Affecting Medium of Instruction on Undergraduate EAP Courses in Private Universities of Bangladesh

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## Abstract

While many researches exist on the challenges and possibilities of implementing L2 (English) only or mixed-medium classroom instruction on university EFL (English as a foreign language) courses, methods and other external factors remain less researched, especially for EAP (English for academic purposes) courses. This study investigates the external factors that affect a successful delivery of instruction in the tertiary level English language classroom, regardless of medium. To obtain data, 150 students from three private universities were surveyed through questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. The results show that not only the medium of instruction but also some other factors such as a foreign language learning anxiety, attitude of both instructors and learners, methods of instruction, and patterns of verbal communication between teacher and student also play a vital role for successful interaction in the EAP classroom. The study suggests that a basic pedagogy of classroom instruction methodology is required for enhancing learner engagement and a better understanding of content in the classroom.

**Keywords:** Medium of instruction, method of instruction, English for academic purposes, external factors, learner's perception, effective communication

## Introduction

The written test based education system and the growing need for fluent English speakers in the job market of Bangladesh have resulted in learners' increased focus on academic writing and the speaking skill. In schools and colleges, learners focus more on content development rather than skill development (Hasan, 2004). On the other hand, most of the international universities offer EAP courses at undergraduate level to shift focus from English as a subject to English as a language. At that particular stage, emphasis is not placed on task achievement any more: rather it is about skill development which requires understanding the instruction better. As observed by Chowdhury and Kamal (2014), a learner's academic experience at higher secondary level is not sufficient to fulfil the demand of tertiary level education. That is why, after attending private universities and being exposed to English as a medium of instruction on EAP courses, learners struggle to adjust to and settle into an academic environment. Even in the case of mixed medium (i.e. (Bangla as L1 and English as L2), instructions are not always clear to them. Unfortunately, only the medium, not the method(s) used by the teacher with learners for giving and receiving instruction is considered to be the major factor behind the effective classroom communication.

By addressing learners' needs regarding the structure, medium and method of delivering instruction, this study intends to focus on the external factors influencing instruction in the EAP classroom. The findings are likely to play a significant role by increasing effectiveness of Bangladeshi university EAP courses which will, *inter alia*, maximize learner participation and student engagement.

## Literature Review

According to Hadley's (2015) description of English for academic purposes, EAP is considered to be an English Language training method which prepares both native and non-native learners for higher education (p. 23). As a part of this process, to fully understand the instruction through the medium of English, students need to be aware of multiple factors: the way lectures are organized, type of language and context in lectures, the main points of teacher's instruction, how to find meaning from context and how to recognize implications based on speaker's attitude (Dvoretskaya, 2016).

Ha and Wanphet's (2016) study separates instruction giving from other classroom interaction activities between teacher and student. When it comes to EAP courses, a medium of instruction has been recognized as a challenge for learners. However, Çelik's (2018) study of Turkish ESP students shows how learners are comfortable with both mixed medium and only L2 instruction. Half of them preferred a mixture of L1 (Turkish) and L2 (English) for giving instruction while the other half considered only English for a medium of instruction. The study proves that instructional language or medium does not become the main barrier for effective communication. Teacher talk needs to be adjusted and adapted according to the student level. Besides, there are other factors, related to methods, which affect the

dynamics of classroom instruction.

## Factors Affecting Effective Instruction

According to Duta (2015), successful interaction between teacher and student in the classroom is obstructed because of seven types of communication barriers: physical, perceptual, emotional, cultural, language, gender and interpersonal barriers. These barriers can hinder the process of communication between teacher and learner in a foreign or second language classroom. Besides, academic burnout at tertiary levels affects learners' performances by creating emotional exhaustion, lack of interest towards academic issues and inability to cope with the pressure (Maslach et al., 2002, cited in Esfahani & Rezvani, 2017). In addition, Brown (2000, p. 162) stated the role of "global, situational or task-oriented" motivations in the language learning process. It can be vital for the learner's level of concentration in classroom instruction.

## Instructional Strategies

According to Penny Ur (2009), how well the teacher explains any material can have a major impact on the "success or failure of a lesson". She proposes six strategies for giving proper instructions: planning the instruction with documentation (if possible) before class, giving instruction before forming groups or providing worksheet, repeating it in different ways (verbally, in writing, paraphrasing), making it short and clear to avoid "limited attention span", using "dry run" (a demonstration of the activity), asking learners for detailed description of the instruction in case of overly positive response. Instructional tactics should be "in sync" with learner needs.

Following the existing studies, it is evident that there are visible challenges for a learner when it comes to understanding instruction in the classroom. Therefore, what are the factors which affect the delivery of instruction in both native and English language? Specifically, what types of barriers or external factors are affecting the successful communication between teachers and students in the EAP classroom at private universities in Bangladesh, regardless of medium? This study attempts to answer these research questions by investigating students' perceptions about the common components that influence the classroom instruction.

## Methodology

Data for this research has been collected through a survey conducted among 150 EAP students of three private universities in different semesters and from different departments. Participants were asked to respond to a seven-point Likert-scale (Always, almost always, very often, about half of the time, sometimes, rarely, never) type questions and some other multiple-choice questions

to collect objective responses. For the subjective responses, 20 students were interviewed applying a semi-structured design as suggested by Nunan (1992). Some of the participants were also asked to participate in small groups for focus group discussions (FGDs). Collected data has been interpreted using pie graphs to get an apparent distribution of the responses of each question. Furthermore, key points from the interviews and focus group discussions have been analysed.

## Findings

### Analysis of Quantitative Data

The following questions were used by the researchers in the questionnaire to elicit information from the learners about the process they go through and the barriers they face for effective comprehension of instruction.

*1. What language is easier for you to understand the instruction better in EAP classroom?*

This question was asked to identify participants' preferred language for a medium of instruction. Figure 1 shows that most of the learners (69%) chose the mixed medium
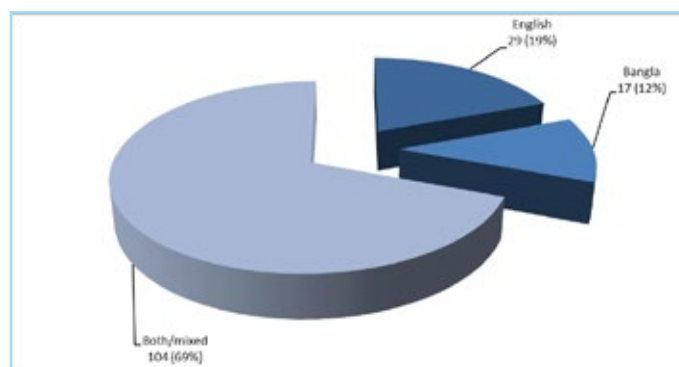


**Figure 1.** *Preferred Language for Classroom Instruction*

while some of them preferred only English in the classroom. A small number of students wanted only L1 or L2 based instruction for better understanding.

*2. What type of instruction is easier for you to understand?*

When asked about the most effective method for delivering instruction, almost 50% of the students show dependency on the teachers' explanation rather than
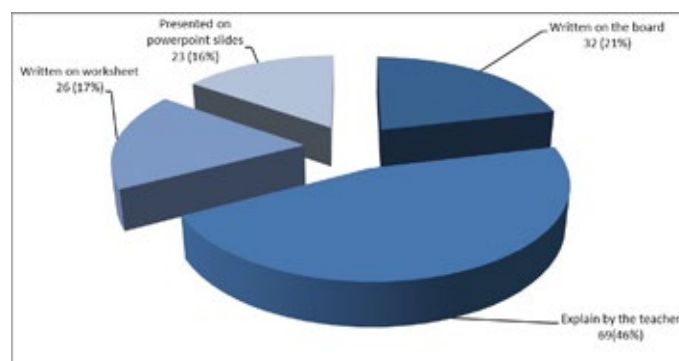


**Figure 2.** *Preferred Mode of Instruction*

other audio-visual medium and fewer than 20 per cent students consider written instruction on worksheet to be helpful (see Figure 2).

*3. Do you understand the instruction immediately after the teacher says it for the first time (without any repetition/no clarification by the teacher a second time)?*

This question attempts to measure the pace of the participants' understanding in the classroom. Fewer than 50 per cent learners are capable of understanding the instruction immediately while others struggle often or half
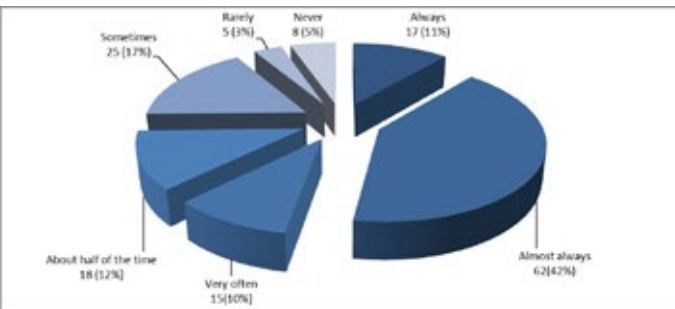


**Figure 3.** *Learner's Natural Pace of Understanding*

of the time (see Figure 3). Most of the learners need time to comprehend and process the information given by the teacher in the formal context.

*4. How often you ask the teacher to repeat /explain the instruction one more time?*

This question was selected to find out how much students interact with the teacher when they do not understand the instruction. Figure 4 shows that majority of the learners sometimes communicate with the teachers and ask for
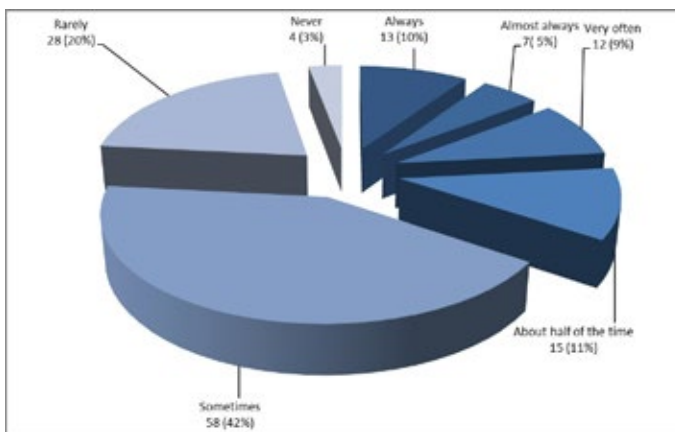


**Figure 4.** *Percentage of Teacher-Student Interaction for Instructional Purpose*

clarification of the given instruction. Only 10% of the students always try to understand the instruction with teacher's help.

*5. How often do you start working before listening to the full instruction given by the teacher?*

This question was designed to measure students' levels of concentration when the teacher delivers instruction. Results from Figure 5 show that most learners (28%) concentrate sometimes and listen to full instruction before
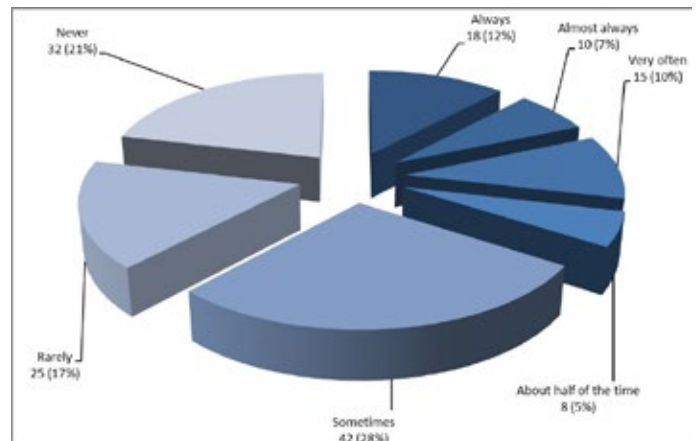


**Figure 5.** *Learners' Level of Concentration Towards Teacher's Instruction*

the task. Otherwise, they tend to focus on the task before listening to the teacher properly.

*6. How often is your response affected by your teacher's personality and attitude in the classroom?*

This question was asked to ascertain whether learner's understanding of instruction is affected by teacher's attitude in the classroom. Results from Figure 6 demonstrate that the personality of a teacher always contributes to 37% learners' response. More than 50 students say that they interact and negotiate the
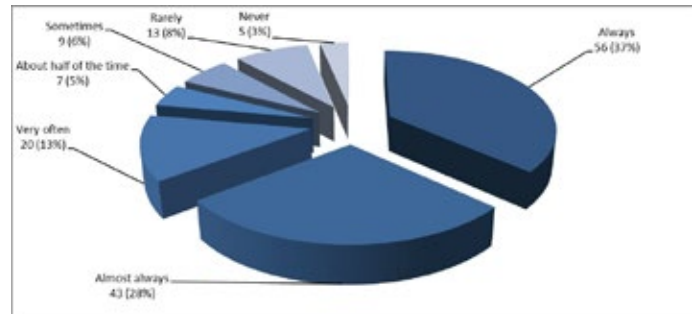


**Figure 6.** *Effect of Teacher's Attitude on Understanding of Instruction*

clarification of instruction only if the teacher is friendly and communicative.

## Analysis of Qualitative Data

As part of the data triangulation process (Cohen & Manion, 1994), 20 students of three private universities participated in a semi-structured interview and focus group discussion. According to the subjective data, different issues were identified, such as: educational background and medium of instruction, role of teacher, structure of instruction, student's attitude, materials and content.

**Educational background and medium of instruction.**

Students described how the English language classes in schools and colleges were focused on theoretical

learning, not on the practical use of language. Speaking and listening skills were not practised because learners were more inclined towards performing well in written examinations. Participants from an English-medium background showed more interest towards responding in the class than participants from a Bangla-medium background. Newly-admitted undergraduate students supported the idea of using both L1 and L2 instruction in the classroom. In case of using English only, they wanted easier synonyms or a further clarification of the instruction. According to the participants, they need to form a habit of listening in English by attending more classes. One of the participants said,

> In case of homework or a task, if we get the entire instruction in English, we do not understand. So, the lecture may be in English but the instruction should be in Bangla. Otherwise, I need to do a listening course before this course or a listening part should be included in my existing course.

### Role of teacher.

Out of 20 students, almost 12 students recognized the effect of teacher's personality in the classroom on their lack of response. Learners pointed out that a proper delivery of instruction depends on the teacher's pace of talking/speed of delivery and accent. Most of the learners identified it as a difficulty with L2-only instruction. Both respondents from the first semester and other semesters described the negative impact of different accents in non-native teachers' L2 speech as well as the impact of L1 in an instructor's L2 pronunciation. One participant mentioned,

> Different teachers use different pronunciation for same word. We become confused about the actual pronunciation.

### Structure of instruction.

Students identified their lack of knowledge of instructional patterns, vocabulary and grammar as the biggest challenge in the EAP classroom. The absence of demonstration, too much focus on worksheets or tasks and discussion with peers can work as barriers for listening and understanding instruction. Four students described the advantage of teachers following a specific routine for giving instructions in every lesson. Students also complained about the pattern of instruction. One student said,

> In case of continuous instruction in English, I get the first couple of sentences. Then I completely lose track.

Another learner added,

> Sometimes teacher gives a lot of instructions together. When I start doing one task, I almost forget what I have to do next. Even if those instructions are in Bangla (L1), I cannot remember

all of them. I ask the teacher again for repeating instruction anyway. So, after finishing one task, we should get the instruction for the next task. Besides, some of us get bored or feel pressurized if we hear about doing too many tasks.

To describe the struggle with only a partial understanding of instructor's directives, one participant said,

> If I miss part of instruction, then I cannot concentrate on the next part. I keep thinking about that missing part or ask friends for clarification.

Another participant stated that

> Most of the time, if the teacher is giving a lot of instructions, I miss the main point. No matter whether is it in Bangla or in English, the pace of the speech makes it difficult to understand. Some of the teachers speak in a low volume, which is difficult to hear.

### Student's attitude.

Students explained how their lack of response, overly positive answers and overall communication with teachers were influenced by either peer reaction or their educational background (Bangla medium or English medium). A participant stated that

> If I don't like the task, I don't concentrate. I keep waiting for the class to end. Then again, if the teacher is friendly and makes the class interesting, I feel attentive in the class despite a boring topic.

### Material and content.

Learners identified the role of content quality as an important variable of classroom instruction. Students lose interest if the material is not properly graded (too easy or too hard) according to their competence level. Familiarity with the topic, use of audio visual methods and the length of material also affect their level of concentration in the classroom.

## Discussion

In Bangladesh, normally the focus is given to the language skill development, not on 'learner facilitation'. This study aims to highlight that more focus on learner is required in the classroom for the better processing of instruction. In line with Ha and Wanphet's (2016) observation, the findings of this study only point to the instruction related methodology. This investigation also identifies two components of instruction: medium and method. The data supports Çelik's (2018) claim that learners have diverse needs when it comes to the medium of instruction (both L1 and L2 or only L2) and that they display an acute awareness of the strengths and limitations of the existing instructional methodology. Based on learner perception, this study identifies the non-language factors affecting the understanding of

instruction.

The findings shed light on the challenges of adult learners in an EAP classroom instructional setting. Adults are mostly passive recipients in an academic environment where the sole aim of learning is task completion. Mostly they struggle with academic vocabulary, peer pressure, let alone a teacher-centred environment in the classroom. Besides, learners' over dependency on their teachers makes them solely focus on instructor's verbal commands.

Normally listening to lectures merely involves comprehension while listening to instruction in fact requires an immediate task execution. In this case, Bangladeshi EAP learners are facing difficulty with lengthy or elaborate instructions or confusing directions. Missing part of the instruction or conducting the task without listening to the teacher properly has become a routine practice for EAP learners. Through the voice of learners, this study reflects the need for implementing Penny Ur's (2009) instructional strategies which showcase the need for short, concise and step-by-step instructions with demonstration.

Despite EAP courses' claim of catering for learner needs, learner differences are mostly ignored when it comes to instructional practices. Similar to Çelik's (2018) observation, this study attempts to highlight the challenges faced by Bangladeshi EAP learners when it comes to being exposed to Teacher Talk (TT). Individual syntactic structures, vocabulary, accent and the speed of delivery in the TT of a given tutor are not appropriate for all learners. For example: the accent and pronunciation of non-native EFL teachers from different backgrounds (with degrees and living experience in home or abroad) are heavily influenced by L3 (third language) or L1 most of the time. When such tutors teach a class full of mixed-ability learners from both L1 and L2 medium backgrounds, their instruction becomes 'hazy' and thus less effective for the learners. This is why both learners and teachers are leaning towards a mixed-medium of instruction instead of differentiated instruction.

This data gives possibly a clearer picture of the existing situation in non-native EAP classroom instruction as observed in Bangladeshi universities. The findings hopefully provide scope for further researches into instructional strategies, EAP classroom management, listening strategies, and EAP learner differences.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of the above-mentioned investigation into the existing practices in the EAP classroom in selected Bangladeshi universities was to demonstrate that on average Bangladeshi the undergraduate courses in question need teachers capable of executing better instructional strategies while teaching their students. The findings suggest that in general learners consider

a teacher's attitude and the use of L2 to be the most decisive factors for a successful delivery of instruction. However, these students are self-aware of the external barriers in the instruction-related interactive activities. These findings provide the following insights:

- More emphasis should be placed on identifying learner's 'needs and wants' on local EAP courses in Bangladeshi universities.
- Pre-entry listening course is required prior to any EAP courses to equip learners with strategies for better processing of instruction.
- Training for and workshops on instructional strategies need to be available for EAP course instructors.
- Materials fine-tuned to learners' culture and context should be provided to create an engaging and interactive learning environment.
- Training students in understanding Teacher Talk and the language of instructions may also be needed for a Bangladeshi EAP classroom.

On EAP courses, materials, methods and lesson delivery are more specified and focused than on EFL courses. Therefore, it is vital that Bangladeshi universities consider learner adjustment curriculum and pedagogy modifications and innovations so that a more effective instruction processing model is implemented in the local EAP classroom(s).

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# Extensive Reading in ESP

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## Abstract

The article discusses the issue of incorporating extensive reading into the ESP curriculum, the scope and intensity of the implementation of extensive reading in the ESP classroom, the forms of its application and outcomes based on the research conducted at the Faculty of International Relations of Yerevan State University. The participants of the study were second, third, and fourth year students, as well as university teachers. The data were collected through questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations. The study illustrates that the teaching staff both welcomes extensive reading in ESP and applies it in their teaching practice regularly, placing emphasis on professional literature. However, the research indicates that granting students full autonomy in coping with original material, along with multiple benefits, bears the risk of mounting the tension in students' efforts when shifting to linguistically more complex theoretical literature. The paper proposes that this can be eased by introducing guided extensive reading at initial and mid stages. The findings also reveal students' growing awareness of the importance of incorporating extensive reading into the ESP instruction, despite the challenges generated by the proportionate increase of the difficulty connected to reading bigger chunks of professional literature. It highlights students' readiness to overcome those challenges as well. Further, the investigation draws attention to the characteristic parallels between extensive reading and multimedia material, suggesting to employ the synergy of both in the ESP classroom for greater efficiency.

**Keywords:** ESP instruction, curriculum design, teaching methodology, extensive reading, ESP, ER, IR, multimedia materials, guided instruction.

## Background to the Research

Two highways lead to the command of a foreign language. The first, the relatively easy one, implies extensive exposure to the foreign language on a daily basis, known as immersion, and provides language learners, (in this case a better choice of the term would be 'language acquirers'), with a tension-free natural linguistic environment favourable for accumulating a decent amount of language stock. While the second road heading to foreign language acquisition is through a laborious and lengthy learning process in a non-native speaking environment (NNSE) at school or privately, under the instruction of the teacher.

A mighty tool used in this strenuous language learning endeavor in NNSE is reading. Starting from the very first attempts of identifying and perceiving foreign words up to the proficient use of the language, reading forms an indispensable part of the new language acquisition process forming its backbone. All the other language learning skills – listening, speaking and writing in NNSE are, in their own way, anchored on reading, be it reading very short units – words, sentences, short passages, or longer texts and extensive pieces of writing – stories, articles, books, etc.

So, it is a truism that reading is essential in foreign language learning (FLL), and a wealth of ELT literature is devoted to this issue. Research has shown that students who read in English improve in every area of language learning at a faster rate than students who don't read (Stanley, 2012) and the well-established premise that we learn to read by reading (Day & Bamford, 2002) underlines the fact that in teaching foreign language reading students should be allowed to read, read and read some more.

A fair part of the discussion on reading is around its two distinct types - intensive and extensive reading. Each of them stands out with a set of explicit features, advantages and disadvantages. Intensive reading (IR) refers to the detailed focus on the construction of reading texts that take place usually in the classroom, while extensive reading (ER) is the opposite of the obligatory 'intensive reading' we practice in school, crawling like snails over texts and leaving inky slime trails of annotation over every page (Prentice, 2002). Compared to IR, ER is broadening students' knowledge (McConn, 2016). Though Prentice's description of IR is typical, we have to acknowledge the primacy of IR, as it infers from the logic of the learning process itself, especially when referring to FLL in NNSE. IR is an irreplaceable tool for building brick by brick the language blocks used in language perception and production.

Unfortunately, though, following the inertia of the positive, apparent and direct impact of IR, the habit of relying heavily on IR often persists throughout the foreign language learning and teaching process, allowing little space, if any, to ER. The reasons are many and evident. The enquiry-based research by Alan Maley states that teachers worldwide quote insufficient time, little relevance of ER to the syllabus and the examination, downward

pressure on teachers to conform to syllabus and textbooks, lack of understanding of ER and its benefits and non-availability or high price of reading materials, etc. And, last but not least, is the decisive factor of the resistance of teachers, who 'find it impossible to stop teaching and allow learning take place' (Maley, 2008).

Nevertheless, the importance of ER is paramount in FLL, no matter how dedicated some EFL teachers are to intensive reading. Nuttall argues that 'the best way to improve your knowledge in a foreign language is to go and live among the speakers. The next best way is to read extensively' (Nuttall, 1982, p. 168). N. Prentice asserts that 'Extensive reading is real language in real use and demonstrates that books will always be the best and most stimulating teachers!' (Prentice, 2012, p. 1) Such quotes are abundant in the professional literature. They accentuate the fact that extensive reading is a fundamental and indisputable asset for learning a foreign language in NNSE.

ER has certain features, that IR lacks. ER significantly changes the language learning mode of the learner, enabling him/her to submerge into the language domain effortlessly and navigate in it as the learner finds fit. Scholars name various characteristic features and benefits of ER as compared to IR. With ER students are reading for the content of the text (Stanley, 2012) and read a large amount of content in a foreign language, becoming better readers (Donaghy, 2016). ER frees students from the daily routine of textbooks (Prentice, 2012) and develops learner autonomy. It is, in fact, a student-centered and student-managed activity. ER enhances general language competence, helps develop general world knowledge, extends, consolidates and sustains vocabulary growth, helps improve writing, creates and sustains motivation to read more (Stanley, 2012), and students read for pleasure, information or general understanding, while the teacher acts as a guide monitor and a role model (Donaghy, 2016). 'Research results proved that an ER-based approach is more effective than EAP teaching that is based on intensive reading and translation' (Bekir, 2009, p. 65).

The umbrella trait of all these features is their close association, relevance and appeal to the deep-set psychology of the learner with its basic lot of subconscious human qualities involving the sense of freedom, apprehension of the right of choice, and the emotions group standing for the feelings of joy and pleasure, sometimes – compassion and fear, through which catharsis is experienced, when the learner emotionally lives through the lives of characters and events danger-free for himself (Vygotsky, 1925/1971).

ELT specialists worldwide are unanimous in the belief that ER "should be a standard practice"'(Nuttall, 1982) and should be a part of the curriculum of any foreign language teaching course, especially GE and ESP (Day & Yamanaku, 2007; Shin et al., 2018).

## Aim of the Research

Having the background knowledge in mind, the aim of our research has been to look into the ratio of the use of ER in ESP at the Faculty of International Relations, the incorporation of ER into the framework of the academic program, students' involvement and their attitudes, as well as the extent of the overall impact of the teacher support, teacher guidance and feedback when integrating ER into ESP instruction.

## Research Questions

Proceeding from the main objectives of the study, the following research questions were addressed:

To what extent are teachers and students aware of the vital importance of ER in ESP?

What is the impact of the use or non-use of ER in ESP?

Is guided or non-guided ER implemented in the ESP classroom?

What is the correlation between the implementation of ER and the parallel use of multimedia materials in the ESP course?

## Methodology

The target audience of the research were students of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th years of the baccalaureate and university teachers. In the quest for the answers to the research questions interviews and discussions were conducted. On the issue of application of guided or non-guided ER practice a questionnaire was used for university teachers. The findings of the study were reviewed and analyzed with the participants to measure against their perception and evaluation of the role of ER in ESP. A study of the applied ER materials with ESP bias – theoretical literature, press releases, transcripts of interviews and debates and TED lectures was also carried out.

## Discussion

To have a clear and comprehensive picture of the results, we have arranged the acquired data into one detailed table (Table 1), without splitting the information into several separate ones. This has allowed us to have a thorough grasp of ER implementation in the curriculum of the ESP course and has eased further comparative analysis. In the table there are certain points bearing the results of different interviews or questionnaires which refer either to students or teachers only. We believe that such a layout does not distort the general impression but adds up to the perception of the issue instead.

While rendering the teachers' block, we conclude that teachers are well-aware of the nature and importance of ER 'for evident reasons' when teaching both GE and ESP, and incorporate ER in their ESP course in the task forms of home reading, report and presentation

**Table 1.** *Composite Table*

| Questions | Teachers | 2nd yr. | 3rd yr. | 4th yr. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| What is ER? | 100% | 62% | 83% | 95% |
| How important is ER in ELL? | | | | |
|     Very important | 97% | 9% | 44% | 79% |
|     Important | | 51% | 39% | 15% |
|     Can be avoided | 3% | 13% | 6% | 1% |
|     Not sure | | 27% | 11% | 5% |
| Is ER important for GE or ESP? | | | | |
|     GE | Both | 32% | 18% | both |
|     ESP | | 68% | 82% | |
| Is it important to have ER incorporated in your ESP course? | 100% | Probably–72% | Yes - 97% | Yes – 100% |
|     If 'yes' – why? | For evident reasons | Don't know–28% | To become a good specialist | For professional growth |
| Did you do ER before coming to university (students only) | - | Yes – 7% <br> No – 93% | Yes – 8% <br> No – 93% | Yes – 7% <br> No – 93% |
| Do you need ER for your profession? (students only) | | Yes – 94% <br> Probably – 6% | Yes – 100% | Yes – 100% |
| Is ER incorporated in your course? <br>     Yes <br>     No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| What forms of ER are used in your course? | Home reading <br> Research for presentations <br> News review | Home reading <br> End-of-term report | Presentation <br> News review | Presentation <br> News review |
| If applied, how much time do you allocate to ER in the classroom or at home? | In the classroom: End-of-term reports/ presentations <br> News review – regularly | At home: <br> 2-3 hours a day during a month before the test time | At home: <br> 3-5 hours weekly | At home: <br> 5-9 hours weekly |
| Do you refer to the assigned ER in classroom outside the test time? <br>     If 'yes' – how often? (teachers only) | No – 43% <br> Yes, partly – 48% <br> Yes, regularly – 9% | - | - | - |
| Rate the level of difficulty and pleasure while engaged in ER. (students only) | - | Difficulty – 73% <br> Pleasure – 22% | Difficulty – 70% <br> Pleasure – 57% | Difficulty – 82% <br> Pleasure – 70% |

preparation and news reviews.

The 3% of the answers that were ticked against the line 'can be avoided' concerning the importance of ER in ELL might have been brought about by either some specific professional background or previous personal unpleasant experience associated with ER, which the teacher projects onto the teaching practice. However, when the same teacher's answers to the subsequent questions are considered, an apparent contradiction to the point of view expressed for question 2 is evident.

As to the question about the time allocated to ER discussion, teachers' answers cover the classroom time spent during the end-of-term reports or presentations and the classroom time dedicated to regular news review sessions. Outside this time range teachers leave ER to individual practice. This leaves us to deduce that ESP teachers are unanimous in endorsing ER for ESP courses, they incorporate it in their practice, though in different proportions.

The student data clearly witnesses progress both in awareness and application of ER from year to year. The relatively poor indicators of second-year students gradually turn into higher figures with undergraduates, which is an apparent proof of both the efficient work of the teachers, and the students' speedy path of personal development so vibrant in young age.

Still, we can observe that, despite the increase of the level of pleasure gained from ER, the figures showing

the degree of strain that ER puts on students is even higher with 4th year students. The increase of the level of difficulty is certainly connected with the much greater volume of professional literature they have to cover in English and the implicit academic requirement that final-year students should be able to understand and tackle any theoretical literature, the language of which, depending on different authors, can sometimes be rather complicated or intricate. This reminds us of Hughes's words that "reading in a foreign language can feel like work" (Hughes, 2018, p. 1).

Nevertheless, there are certain techniques and approaches to ER which can significantly mitigate the accompanying tension, and turn ER in the ESP classroom into a way more effective and pleasant practice. What we mean is the teacher-guided ER and the addition of audio-visuals into the ER repository of materials, along with graded readers and other literature pick of today.

## Non-Guided and Guided ER in ESP

Browsing through the vast literature on ER, we often come across two, from the first sight, contradictory concepts. One of them argues that ER is a purely individual endeavor, free from teacher guidance or instruction. To a great extent it is true when it covers the cases which totally exclude the teacher's role. Along with this assertion, however, on the other end are many articles on ER which emphasize the necessity of the teacher's guidance in the process, defining it not as classroom supervision but rather a lead-in into individual reading. As student's activity is more complex in ER than in IR, the appeal to resort to teacher's guidance aims to "maximize pre-reading support" (Pulverness, 2003), to open up and facilitate the difficult paths of ER, because 'effective reading instruction can develop engaged readers who are knowledgeable, strategic, socially interactive and motivated (Sweet, 2000, p. 6). The findings of several research studies have also proved that "learners that received explicit reading strategy instructions could comprehend second language better than those that did not receive such training" (Shin et al, 2018, p. 131). Likewise, in the professional literature we come across many discussions of various pre-reading, during-reading and after-reading tasks for the teacher to perform (Clandfield & Budden, 2011; Stanley, 2012; Ur, 1996), as well as advice to help students to recall their prior knowledge on the subject of ER. As Sweet states, "It is evident that activating prior knowledge is of special importance to reading comprehension, and EFL student readers should be encouraged to use their prior knowledge and experience to generate predictions regarding the content of the text" (Sweet, 2000, p. 14).

At the same time, no argument can be found claiming that either the truly individual ER or ER with the teacher's guidance is deficient, contradicting the other one or the whole concept of ER, or is non-applicable. Why is this so?

The truth is that both modes of ER ( guided and non-guided) are regarded as parts of one and the same process – language acquisition, much of which is carried out under teacher's instruction or his/her help, and the student is open for and welcomes any facilitation of his/her tough job, which language learning in NNSE has always been. The guided ER is especially appropriate in the instances when the material to overcome is complemented by 'hurdles' of professional language at the initial and mid stages of taking up ESP. In the case of ESP material in ER, teacher's guidance is often redeeming. With as little intrusion as possible, steering students towards critical, associative approach to the new language acquisition through ER, the teacher can facilitate students' job by eliciting the vague language, through hints and concept correlation patterns, drawing explicit links between prior knowledge and important information in the text and guide students' line of thinking towards a particular path or technique of language perception relevant for the given ESP material.

In its practical implementation it translates into the following: through accurately structured guidance, during the occasionally held guided ER classes, the teacher helps students to gradually reduce the difficulty level of the ER component of the course. He/She uses the rich armoury of pre-reading, during-reading and after-reading tasks (see the Appendix), due to which the ESP students steadily become more independent readers, mastering more secrets of learning how to learn. Students start to experience lower level of difficulty and higher level of pleasure and develop an urge to take up more ER both for professional and general knowledge. Gradually extensive reading starts to build up a momentum of its own (Tennant, 2017).

## Multimedia Treasure Chest and ER

Traditionally, ER refers to the printed material, now also including the information downloaded from the web. From the physiological point of view, the main reception channel of ER is the visual one. But in today's world people have much wider opportunities to get big volumes of language learning material from TV and the net, which very much resemble ER in certain characteristic features. The rich material of films, conferences, speeches of prominent personalities, debates, lectures, interviews and a lot more, that provide a huge language input and a wealth of professional and artistic information, presents the opportunities of personal choice, individual work, absence of time limitation, are watched for the sake of the content, and are considered to be a source of joy or pleasure. At the same time, the percentage of the language input and comprehension of this material is much higher due to the trio of simultaneous sense perception - the audio, the image, complemented with

visual aids (often texts, in the form of accompanying transcripts or captions, enrich the visual image), and the emotional block. The well-known basic psychological rule implies that the efficiency of data fixation is proportionate to the quantity of senses operating simultaneously: the bigger their number, the deeper the imprint is. This prompts us that it would be unwise, or, at least, not practical for the ESP teacher, to discard the benefits of these opportunities. A clever pick of big chunks of material from about 20 minutes to 2-3 hours long will have as good an effect in the language acquisition process as ER. This is why we believe that incorporating multimedia materials within the framework of ER will sharply increase the efficiency of language learning. However, the findings in our ESP research disclosed that only the 'printed' component of the web materials is being used by students with the aim of collecting information for their reports and presentations. Using the opportunities of the 'treasure chest' of multimedia materials could widen the concept of ER in ESP, making it EAIR (Extensive Audio Image Reading), to put it hypothetically, where watching and further guided reference to or discussions of films, debates, interviews, lectures, speeches, and the language used will add up to the vital experience of ER, bringing more joy to students and galvanizing the language learning skills.

## Conclusions

The outcome of the research restates the importance of incorporating ER in the ESP curriculum.

The ER literature circulated in ESP teaching is varied. However, as a common trait, we can note its distinct bias toward specialized, professional materials.

Due to the specifics of ER in ESP, and in order to avert further difficulties the students might face while coping with original literature, it is advisable to turn to exercising a certain degree of teacher guidance at the initial and mid stages. It will steer students in the direction of learning practical paths that lead to relatively effortless comprehension and perception of big volumes of the ESP language matter they challenge.

To mark the two modes of ER, distinct wordings of non-guided ER and guided ER might prove to be sustainable in use.

Since many peculiarities of the nature of multimedia materials bear much in common with the characteristics of ER, they may be looked at as a rich source of information that could be integrated into the framework of ER in the ESP block of the curriculum.

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# Appendices

The Appendices are compiled from different sources of instructional material mentioned in the References section.

**1.** *Pre-Reading Activities*

| Title/instruction | Activity |
| --- | --- |
| Guess the story from the cover | Students guess the story and write summaries, making associations, evoking prior knowledge, etc. |
| Jumbled chapter titles | Students are given strips of paper with the chapter titles to work out in pairs or groups. |
| Find out about the author | Students come up with relevant information, using various sources, such as www.biography.com, encyclopedias, etc. |

**2.** *During-Reading Activities*

| Title/instruction | Activity |
| --- | --- |
| Comic strips | Students are offered to choose a suitable chapter to make into a comic strip with speech bubbles for characters. |
| Radio play | Students select a part of the book to make into a radio play. |
| News articles | Students become journalists and report on this or that part of the story. |
| Video parallels | If the book has a film version, spot the differences in the plot between the book and the film. |
| Horoscopes | Students write horoscopes for the characters predicting their future. |
| Making predictions | Students are on the watch to predict what is going to happen next. |
| Integrating prior knowledge | Prior knowledge should be called upon to facilitate comprehension. |
| Paraphrasing | Students paraphrase of interpret texts to verify what was comprehended. |
| Monitoring | Students evaluate whether the reading of the text meets their goals. |
| Character interviews | Student role-play an interview with one of the characters. |

**3.** *After-Reading Activities*

| Title/Instruction | Activity |
| --- | --- |
| Book review | Students rate the book, look at the style and language, etc. |
| Quiz time | In groups students prepare questions about the book's plot and characters to use in an inter-team quiz. |
| Book discussion | The discussion is based on the story elements: title, setting, characters, problems, major events and the conclusion. |
| Summarizing | Students summarize their reading effort, give their evaluations, make suggestions etc, |
| Completing the text | Students come up with different endings for the book or add characters and events to the plot, extend or modify the text. |
| Role-playing | Students write a script for the book and perform it. |

# Bringing m-Learning into an ESP Classroom at Tertiary Level

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## Abstract

Teaching languages is a challenge and a profession for millions of people around the world. Most English teachers are keen on their work and perform well at primary, secondary and higher institutions modifying their skills and making amendments to teaching materials, which they develop themselves and use. This is a typical picture of teachers of the 20th century when the focus was on simple technologies – tape-recorder, board, and video film. The 21st century is the time of new technologies and gadgets, mobile phones, which are now used as reliable communicators and have taken over.

The purpose of this article is to look into new opportunities of using mobile devices for teaching English to ESP students and develop an understanding of possible ways of incorporating these ideas into a classroom at tertiary level. The research is based on prepared in advance questionnaire. Results of this study show that the majority of 1st year students would like to be taught using new technologies but the offered tasks, which can be done in mobile learning, are limited to online tests and learning vocabulary and speaking. A number of 1st year students of the Institute of Foreign Languages of the Higher School of Economics (HSE), Russia are reluctant to any changes since they find the traditional way of teaching English more efficient. A few 4th year students of Design school of the HSE regret not having been taught with mobile devices because they could make the learning process more convenient, faster and more interesting.

The article offers a number of ideas and tasks in mobile learning, which can be implemented in an ESP classroom at the tertiary level.

**Keywords**: English language teaching, m-learning, MALL, mobile devices, ESP, language development

## Introduction

Mobile phone penetration into people's lives nowadays is estimated at 96% globally (ITU, 2013). There is a strong trend to own more than one phone and a tablet. For the majority of people of all ages these gadgets give opportunities not only for making phone and video calls but for socialising, learning and working across real life settings. Due to these devices, people access information and resources, connect to and communicate with each other and create and share media. The world, in fact, is going online, and more users access information and data through mobile devices. Such online activities and courses in other than English subjects are already popular with the students of the HSE. They provide access to lectures and workshops in Economics, Banking, Finance, Sociology, and Mathematics. English courses are rare. The only existing are three in Intercultural communication, Lexical and Semantic typology and Semantics. A course in m-learning can be both interesting and useful and also demanded because it is not only learning with mobile devices but constant access to self-study, for example, from almost anywhere on a daily basis. Mobile learning ought to be also differentiated from e-learning, which is based on computer, laptop and web usage. It can probably be treated as part of e-learning using mobile devices such as mobile phones, tablets, digital media players, e-readers, and gaming consoles, which, even though used locally, can provide permanent global mobile context and a flexible version of e-learning. This global context, created by mobile devices, develops a learning context based on interconnected elements of user-generated contexts (Cook, 2010) or learner-generated contexts (Cook, 2010; Luckin 2010), which, when approached internationally, helps people to turn their real-world contexts into learning contexts with interaction with teachers and peers.

The paper will look at mobile learning opportunities, technologies and ESP students' attitude to incorporating m-learning into classroom activities. It will also examine teaching language skills with mobile devices and develop a variety of tasks which can be implemented with 1st and 4th year Bachelor students.

## Mobile Learning in the 21st Century

The advantages of m-learning are obvious: language learning is opened to millions of people; language learners choose themselves what to learn, with whom and how; built-in dictionaries ease the process of learning, which can translate or explain the unknown word and provide its transcription; m-learning opens new perspectives to disabled people. According to some

authors (Warschauer, 2011), there are three issues which are associated with m-learning. They are transforming teaching and learning; developing 21st century skills and promoting social justice.

## Transforming Teaching and Learning

Introduction of digital technologies is associated with new teaching programmes, educational approaches, methods, techniques, curricula, and lesson plans. With the spread of learner-centred approach, the teacher adopted a structuring and guiding role. Students become more active and freer to choose their content and context, plant their assignments on information system for feedback from peers before submitting to the teacher. Even though there is no or little evidence to the fact that mobile learning is better than formal or classroom learning, m-learning increases the autonomy and engagement of students in university studying and communication with teachers. A course on Coursera, for example, can be supplemented by one tutorial per week for additional discussions with students, which can be useful to those students who cannot attend traditional classes because they already have a part-time job.

## Developing 21st Century Skills

According to some authors, 21st century skills include "creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem-solving, collaboration and teamwork, autonomy and flexibility, and lifelong learning, all bundled together with digital literacies (Dudeney et al., 2013; ISTE, 2012; Mishra & Kereluik, 2011; NCTE, 2013). These skills are important for everyone but in many countries, specifically in Asia, they complement the existing traditional education systems. "New literacies and new skills don't only improve the chance of self-realisation but increase the richness of personal and social lives" (Pegrum, 2014, p. 35).

## Promoting Social Justice

"Social justice is bringing the social and educational  - and economic and political – development benefits of digital technologies to … populations" (Pegrum, 2014, p. 40). The focus is on improved educational opportunities for people who live in remote areas, for the disabled and children with dyslexia; on the development of regions where people are socially disengaged and can improve literacy and education perspectives, learn another language, specifically. English as a language of international communication; on the improvement of digital literacy among older population. The last idea got materialized in the Federal programme of the Moscow government (www.mos.ru/age) in Russia, according to which older citizens are offered to improve health conditions, obtain new knowledge and skills, develop creativity, sporting centres, creative laboratories and classes in each of Moscow central and outskirt districts

are free, and all pensioners are invited to join them.

# Mobile Teaching in the 21st Century

## Needs Analysis

Needs analysis is an important phase in preparing education programmes. Basically, needs analysis is used to find out, for example, what language skills students of Design of the HSE need in order to perform their social roles in future lives; or to determine whether the existing course and programme truly address the needs of future specialists in Environmental design, Communication design, Graphic design or Industrial design; or whether ESP students are happy with the teaching methods used at English lessons. As for the English Language programme for students of Design, it goes in line with other ESP programmes of the HSE, which are based on academic skills development, IELTS exam preparation and ESP. The specificity of the English Language programme for students of Design is that their entry level can be low since they do not have to take the State School Exam on leaving school, but the motivation to know the language is high. Under these circumstances, it is a great skill of the English teacher to fulfil the programme and make the English lesson interesting and memorable.

## Data Collection and Analysis

In order to find out students' opinions on the usage of new technologies in teaching, 52 1st year students of the Institute of Foreign Languages (HSE) and 22 4th year students of the School of Design (HSE) were interrogated. Students were asked slightly different questions but that was done due to the fact that the former are at the beginning of the course of English and the latter are finishing it. Both groups of students got access to the usage of only CD recorders for listening tasks in their courses. The questionnaire included the following questions:

For 1st years:

1. Would you like to use mobile devices at your English lessons? Why or why not?
2. What skills could you develop using mobile technologies?
3. What techniques could be used to develop necessary skills?

For 4th years:

1. Do you regret not having been taught using mobile devices at your English lessons? Why or why not?
2. What skills could you develop using mobile technologies?
3. What techniques could be used to develop necessary skills?

Research showed that out of 52 interrogated 1st year students, 39 students appreciate the idea of being taught

with the usage of mobile technologies and devices. The main arguments for this are: it could enlarge the vocabulary; this can improve listening and speaking skills; search skills can develop quicker; learning in general can become faster and more convenient and up-to-date; students can answer questions online and make notes on the devices; lessons can become more interesting. Nevertheless, 13 students answered in the negative: they admitted using these devices in everyday life; they agree that English lessons are already interactive; students also think that phones are not very convenient and reading from the screen is less attractive than reading from a book or paper; students also expect that the devices will distract them from doing classroom tasks. Answering the 2nd question, students decided that using mobile devices can develop their writing skills; improve presentation skills; develop vocabulary and grammar understanding; help to search for information efficiently; develop quick thinking, decision making and fast typing; it can also help to filter relevant and irrelevant information and be good for self-study. In reference to the 3rd question, students suggested that they could do online tests and quizzes; watch films and organise discussions; download materials and use such tools as "Socrative.org" and "Siri". Results of this study are given in Figure 1.
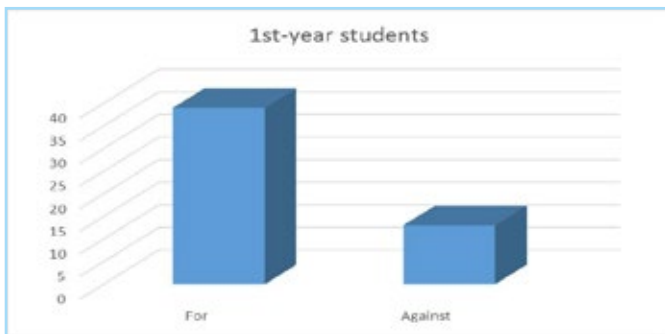


**Figure 1.** *1st Year Students' Results*

Out of 22 4th year students, only seven expressed regrets about not having been taught with the usage of mobile devices. They think that they can bring an interactive element to the lesson; make learning more interesting; can provide quick access to the Internet; facilitate learning; can provide more individual practice; and they can be good for extracurricular activities. 15 students, on the other hand, have no idea how mobile devices can be used in English classes; they admit that standard training provides all necessary skills; lessons were interesting, entertaining and educative without mobile devices and with printed books and materials; they anyway spend a lot of time with  mobile devices every day. Answering the 2nd question, students decided that mobile devices could develop imagination and visual memory; they can improve vocabulary, grammar, and conversational skills; they are good for listening tasks and better communication; give access to fast Googling, reading and typing; develop creativity, time management skills and

multi-tasking. In their answers to the 3rd question, most students suggested that mobile devices can be useful for interactive games, quizzes, movies, podcasts or social media; for watching films with subtitles, searching for books with a modern view on English lessons; different gaming technologies; can provide access to vocabulary development (Lingualeo), mobile applications, Skype, Ehatrulet; do project creating tasks. These results are shown in Figure 2.
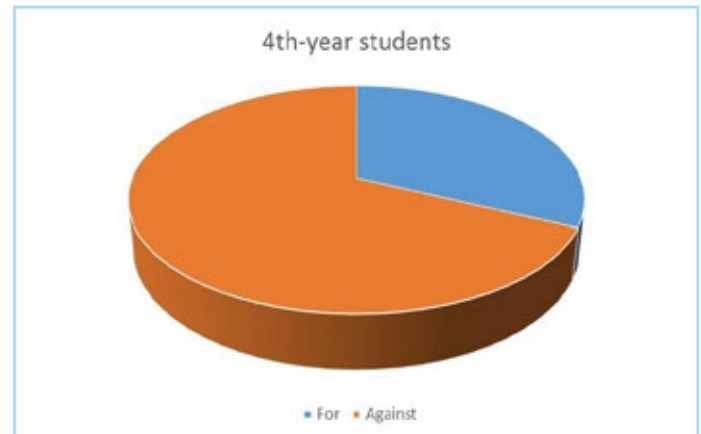


**Figure 2.** *4th Year Students' Results*

According to Pegrum (2014, p. 95), the trajectory of teaching in the 21st century demonstrates "increasing levels of pedagogical sophistication and increasing potential for transforming teaching and learning", "from a behaviorist (repetitive drilling of vocabulary, spelling, grammar and pronunciation) through a communicative towards a sociocultural paradigm". The first and simplest use of technologies in this kind of teaching is *language content* composition in the form of reading and listening texts. Examples of such sources are m.wikipedia.org and Yoza.project and Worldreader mobile project (in Africa and Asia), Mobiledu (in China). These sources provide glossaries or dictionaries, read-about options, multimedia materials, inbuilt quizzes, annotation tools and discussion channels (Pegrum, 2014, p. 99). The mobile teaching in tutorials, in order to drill vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation Podcasts are used. Students can train these skills both inside and outside the classroom at their own pace. Mobile teaching can also include communicative and sociocultural activities, which can be useful for both teacher and learner development. Examples of these are SIMOLA and MULU, where students can read short chunked texts and news stories at the required easy or hard level, listen to them, obtain immediate translations of words and phrases and answer quiz questions. They can also participate in discussion forums about stories they have read, "interacting not only with other learners but with native speakers, if they choose" (Pegrum, 2014, pp. 153-154). Mobile devices for communication involve learners interacting with teachers, peers and speakers of other  languages, so they have become global since they also help to develop pragmatic competence and intercultural insights.

# Skills Development with Mobile Devices

## Teachers' Difficulties in Using Mobile Devices

Some English teachers are very reluctant to using mobile devices at their lesson. There are several reasons to it: firstly, it is very different from what they have been doing before; secondly, even though they would like to get involved into using new technologies, they are still afraid that something will go wrong or they will not be competent enough to deal with possible difficulties. This fear can be overcome if the university develops a certain policy in reference to the usage of mobile devices at the lessons, making them part of the educational process. At the same time, a special training ought to be organised on a regular basis for all teachers, specifically in the initial stages. This can help to build up confidence and self-esteem and help the teachers to integrate the mobile devices into their teaching.

## Teaching Reading and Writing

Teaching *reading* with mobile devices gives a lot of opportunities. The devices (even e-books) help students with vocabulary providing links to dictionaries, sometimes grammar, pre-and post-reading tasks. For example, the personalised intelligent mobile learning system (PIMS), which was developed for learners of English in Taiwan. It provides an ability to estimate learners' reading levels and recommend appropriate news articles, accompanied by Chinese translations (Chen & Hsu, 2008). *Annotation techniques* are also available and refer more to reading since they can imply a number of activities with vocabulary and translations.

There is also a variety of educational apps which allow students to improve their vocabulary by offering translation and audio of pronunciation for every single word. For example, *Ortsbo* - a new e-reader translation app from a Toronto-based firm could eliminate the language barrier when it comes to reading books in a digital format. Text-to-audio translation will correctly pronounce accent marks and uses a human-sounding voice. Another app of this kind is *Kybook Reader*, which allows tapping a word and shows a context menu containing several options, among them the translation (Educational Technology and Mobile Learning, 2018).

With *Google Classroom*, an online platform, ESP teachers at the HSE can incorporate interactive reading lessons for students to work on comprehension and fluency skills, using an extension tool Read&Write. It includes text-to-speech, text and picture dictionaries, dictation, word prediction, and many more features.

For *writing* skills development, mobile software offers detection of errors, spelling and strokes in Chinese characters and also mastering handwriting (Tam & Huang, 2011). Students can also compose short texts on various situations, upload pictures and detailed descriptions. One of the most popular apps to improve writing skills is *Grammarly*. It is an online grammar checker and proofreading tool that can help avoid grammatical errors. It is also a robust spell-check tool that keeps the writing mistake-free. *WhiteSmoke* is also a handy app which improves the quality of academic writing and helps to finish an essay or research paper on time. This app detects the most common spelling and grammar mistakes for avoiding them in the future (Educational Technology and Mobile Learning, 2018).

Students can also compose short texts on various situations, upload pictures and detailed descriptions. Insert Learning, a Chrome extension is used by teachers at the HSE to add instructional content to any web page. Teachers can differentiate instruction by scaffolding text with questions and media, and students can participate in embedded discussions. Insert Learning can assist with interactive writing by the teacher adding writing prompts for students on web pages.

## Teaching Listening and Speaking

Listening online tasks can be easily downloaded as radio podcasts or talking books. These provide pre- and post-listening tasks and also translations. For example, *The LearnEnglish Podcast* is an app produced by the British Council. With interesting and engaging interviews with people talking about real-life things (celebrities, food, and more). The audio comes with a moving script and comprehension questions for each episode. Additionally, *English Listening Practice – World Talks* is focused on teaching English through listening. With over 1100 interviews, listeners also have the option of listening to mixer lessons. These mixer lessons allow the listener to hear six different people respond to the same question, which lets the listener hear various dialects (Educational Technology and Mobile Learning, 2018).

Online platforms such as *Edmodo, Moodle, Canvas, Google classroom* allow teachers at the HSE to use online material adapted from Internet sources (TED talks, IELTS academic listening etc.) to create listening tests for students.

Speaking tasks involve working on pronunciation, drilling sounds and even recording own pronunciation to compare with a model one of a native speaker (in reference to pitch contours), which is important basically for such a language as Chinese (Chun et al., 2013) and working on prosody in different languages (O'Brien, 2006). A list of mobile apps is successfully used to improve speaking skills. For instance, *English Listening and Speaking* is an app for those wanting to learn how to communicate in English. The app includes thousands of English conversations with audio and transcripts. Another example is *Speak English Fluently*, which is

designed to assist users in learning how to speak English conversationally in an American accent. In addition to the audio of conversations and common sayings, there is also a recording tool for users to record themselves and listen back to their pronunciation (Educational Technology and Mobile Learning, 2018).

For English classes at the HSE, *Fluency Tutor* is especially useful. It is a web-based application, used with Google classroom that provides tools to enable students to practice reading aloud and to record pre-assigned texts called "assessments" or tests.

## Teaching Grammar and Vocabulary

Mobile messaging is the most common way of obtaining necessary *vocabulary* due to the regular transmission of words and phrases, accompanied by translations, examples, definitions or quiz questions (Pegrum, 2014, p. 131). It is illustrated, for example, in the British Council via Nokia Life, which is designed for three levels (easy, medium and difficult). Many apps provide an opportunity to learn vocabulary through a game. For example, *Knudge* offers a lot of exercises and games that will assist in learning new words and improving English vocabulary. *Quizlet*, designed as a quiz game, comes with flashcards that test vocabulary skills. Quizzes are divided into time, memory, and learn modes. There is also an audio transcription for learning the pronunciation (Iftakhar, 2016).

One more example is *Bookwidgets*, an app which can be integrated into any learning management system (LMS), including that of the HSE. It has many templates for questions and games (flashcards, crossword, hotspot etc.) that get automatically graded and that are visually much more appealing to students than standard paper worksheets (Menon, 2019).

*Grammar* is often treated in a similar to vocabulary in MALL exercises. A good illustration of this is MASELTOV (Mobile Assistance for Social Inclusion and Empowerment of Immigrants with Persuasive Learning Technologies and Social Network Services) project where grammar is evaluated along with vocabulary and other aspects of language. One more illustration is the *LearnEnglishGrammar* app, which offers a more practical way of learning English grammar. The app is designed for learners of all levels. Each level has more than 600 grammar activities, divided into about 25 grammar topics like Simple past, Past continuous, Question tags, Prepositions, Conditionals and Future perfect to assist in learning English grammar systematically. *Grammar Up* is one of the most appreciable English learning apps for iOS. It provides the multiple-choice quiz system featuring more than 1800 questions across 20 grammar categories. It can be immensely helpful in improving your grammar, word selection and vocabulary.

With the introduction of new automated spelling tests, using Text-to-Speech technology and BookWidgets

testing now takes 15 minutes, students at the HSE are given instant feedback on how they performed and even look through their results to compare their input with the correct answer.

## Examples of m-Learning Tasks

Mobile learning is acknowledged as a key training delivery format by organisations across the world. It provides a way for educational institutions to deliver knowledge and educational content to students on any platform and at the time of need. Students use mobile apps and tools to complete and upload assignments to teachers, download course instruction and work in online social groups to complete tasks.

A variety of learning management systems (LMS) and online services can be used by teachers to create different types of interactive content to assign to students. The content can be easily shared with students in many formats, and it is also possible to get detailed analytics on student performance. With the usage of Google classroom (LMS) and *Bookwidgets* app, several mobile learning solutions for teaching English at the HSE were created.

In general, exercises are divided into four categories: vocabulary, grammar, listening & watching, reading & writing.

### Vocabulary.

1. Flashcards - a vocabulary game which is an excellent way for students to learn vocabulary and to test themselves. Teachers can use it in class to test student's knowledge about a subject matter, for example, through an oral exercise

2. Crossword - a crossword puzzle, generated from a list of words and descriptions. It can be used for all sorts of exercises. For example, definition exercise, language exercise, etc.

3. Hangman - the classic hangman game, where the list of words is provided. It can be used for all sorts of exercises. For example, a spelling exercise, vocabulary exercise, a guessing exercise.

4. Word search - a puzzle which is a great way to introduce new terms or vocabulary to students. It is effortless to configure and to use. It can be adjusted to the level of the student by making the puzzle easier or more complicated.

### Grammar.

5. Table - a fill-in table exercise is mainly used for drilling grammar forms, for example, irregular verbs, tenses etc.

6. Gap filling - an exercise where students need to fill in the blanks, which is especially useful for learning English grammar.

7. Drag and drop - a category and filter exercise aimed at revising grammar.

### Listening & watching.

8. Multimedia worksheet - a video material which is embedded right into the course. It allows students to stream HD YouTube movies from the Internet without leaving the iBook and answer the question after watching. Classic movies or educational videos can be used to make the lesson more interesting.

### Reading & writing.

9. Text questions - a worksheet which includes reading material and a list of questions after it. Each question is supposed to have one answer and can also be used for vocabulary and translation exercises. Multiline text question allows writing any written task such as essays, articles, proposes, letters etc.

10. Multiple choice - a form of quiz where respondents are asked to select the only correct answer from the choices offered as a list.

All m-learning exercises can be sent out to the students with a link (similar to a YouTube video) which can also be shared through a LMS or social media. Students who receive the link will be able to complete the activity, regardless of the type of device they are using. When students submit an assignment or test, it is possible to give feedback on each student's answer beneath each question.

Illustrations of the tasks are shown in Figures 3, 4 and 5.
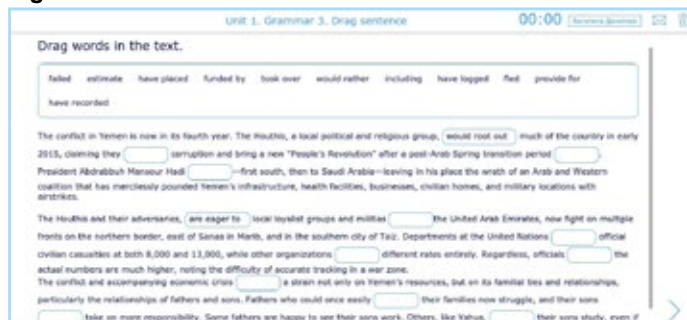


**Figure 3**. *Crossword*



**Figure 4.** *Drag and Drop*

## Students' Opinions and Analysis

1st year students of the School of Design (HSE) were asked to fulfil interactive assignments and give their opinion about the content. 63 students were interrogated by answering the following questions:

1. Which exercise did you like the most? Why?
2. Which exercise did you like the least? Why?

Students could choose one or several exercises or skip the question.



**Figure 5**. *Text Questions*

According to the investigation, the most esteemed exercises were considered to be multimedia and flashcards, as 56 out of 58 (multimedia) and 55 out of 56 (flashcards) students were pleased to use them as a part of homework and classroom activities. Students decided that the usage of video content is very interesting, educational and can improve their perception of English speech. Flashcards make the process of learning new vocabulary easier and more visual. On the other hand, the least valued assignment was the gap filling, as 21 out of 39 students voted against this method of learning grammar, regarding it to be too traditional and unexciting. Other exercises were mainly highly appreciated by students. Overall, m-learning assignments were estimated as a useful and amusing way to learn the English language. These results are shown in Figure 6.
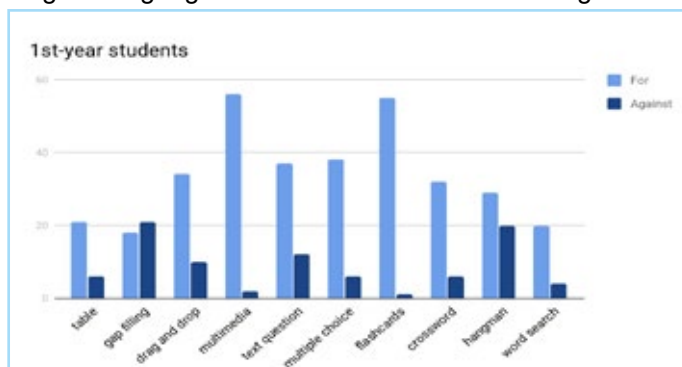


**Figure 6.** *1st Year Students' Results*

## Conclusion

In the 21st century, there is a demand for the usage of mobile technologies. Between traditional learning and mobile learning university students tend to choose the latter, which they find interesting, unusual and useful. Some students treat it as fascinating because it is still

not very common at tertiary level. The research showed that students enjoyed using mobile technologies both in class and as home assignments. Multimedia and flash cards were most appreciated by the students and gap filling – least. In other words, mobile learning is making its first steps in university education, so teacher training is becoming very urgent. Digitally trained teachers can professionally help students to progress in mobile learning and improve the efficiency of English classes. Further research can also focus on the effectiveness of mobile teaching and learning and the evaluation of it can be disseminated through social networks in order to spread the 21st century skills.

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# Successes, Challenges and Solutions: The Reflections of the Durban University of Technology Writing Centre Practitioners

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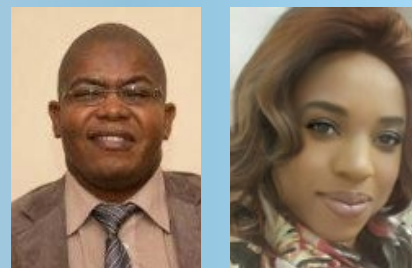
## Abstract

In Higher Education(HE), academic writing generally poses challenges to students, staff and the alumni. This challenge has become even more pronounced in a world in which HE has opened its doors to previously disadvantaged students, often referred to as non-traditional students in literature. Consequently, higher education institutions (HEIs) have established writing centres, which focus on English for Specific Academic Purposes, academic literacies and English in the disciplines. The Durban University of Technology (DUT) in South Africa is no exception. This paper presents reflections of DUT Writing Centre practitioners on the successes and challenges that they have experienced. It also proffers possible solutions to the challenges bedevilling their writing centres (WrCs).

**Keywords:** English for specific academic purposes, academic literacies, English in the disciplines, writing centre, higher education, successes, challenges, solutions

## Background (context)

The Durban University of Technology (DUT) Writing Centres, officially launched on the 11th September 2013, are spread across five campuses, namely Steve Biko, ML Sultan and City Campus in Durban, Indumiso and Riverside in Pietermaritzburg. The WrCs provide writing companionship to students, staff and the alumni. Their thrust is on English for Specific Academic Purposes, academic literacies and English in the disciplines. Student-centredness and engagement underpin the WrC work. Along with the valuing of student academic development, the DUT WrCs value the development of postgraduate tutors as emerging academics.

Several factors which have their origins in the apartheid system necessitated the existence of WrCs in our South African context. One key developmental area adversely affected by the colonial system was that of education. The system, to a large extent, affected 'black' South Africans who were systematically 'denied' access into institutions of higher education. However, since independence which was ushered in by a democratically elected government, HE has been more accessible to previously disadvantaged groups. One of the government's strategies to redress the imbalance was the massification of higher education which saw university intakes rise to accommodate the sections of the population who had not previously enjoyed such liberties. Not too long after, the universities encountered challenges such as access with success and throughput which were understood as emanating from the under-preparedness of students to navigate university systems. This paved the way for the existence of WrCs in SA and in this case DUT Writing Centres.

## Successes

### A Good Learning Environment for Students, Staff and the Alumni

Unlike the experience of other WrCs that are "located in dingy basements or tiny rooms nobody else wanted, squeezed between the restroom and the stairs, or even in 'temporary' shelter two or three blocks off campus" (Leahy, 1990, p.43), our DUT WrC facilities are within the campus walls, not hidden in any basement, often occupying prime locations, easily accessible and visible to users.

Harris (1985, p. 7) suggests that "ideal centers are open, airy, and noisy because of all the people coming and going, the discussions buzzing in different parts of the room, and the laughter of a few lab groupies who come in just to chat for few minutes". Four of the five WrCs are housed in the libraries on the four campuses. The four WrCs which are housed in libraries generally experience lower noise levels due to library restrictions. On the contrary, the City Campus Writing Centre, which is housed in the Faculty of Arts and Design is free of library restrictions, and as such, experiences slightly higher levels of noise. In addition, the furniture in our WrC is new and modern with a budget set aside for its maintenance. Each tutor has a work station equipped with a comfortable chair and a computer. The high speed internet is useful during consultations, for example, when a tutor needs to demonstrate to a student how to search for information, journal articles or simply the use of an online dictionary. The consultation rooms are well lit and for the most part quite spacious affording opportunity for group consultations as well.

## One-On-One Consults

Text Student–centeredness and student engagement is one of the DNA strands in DUT's strategic plan and our approach at the WrC encapsulates this in various ways but more evidently in our commitment to one-on-one consultations. Any approach a tutor follows is punctuated by this ideal in the strictest sense. Students are viewed as individuals and not judged or rated in terms of what year of study they are in, but rather tutors endeavour to identify where the student is in their development as a writer and guide them from that position. North (1984, p.39) expresses that a tutor's ability to shift their gaze from the subject matter to the student is the key to success. In essence, North pointed out that the subject in WrCs is the student underscoring our obsession with engagement. This model has afforded us the opportunity to measure our success through the development of the individual students/writers who have become regular patrons of the WrC. This is particularly vital in our context as the majority of our students are second-language writers and hail from previously disadvantaged backgrounds.

It would be imprudent of us not to intimate the fact that more often than not our students (first time consultations) consider our one-on-one consultations with mixed feelings and apprehension. These are often fuelled by the misconceived expectations and perceptions resulting in attitudes toward writing that vary from fear, anger, anxiety, and eagerness. Anxiety is one of the most common particularly as students are not sure what to expect and for students struggling with the basic conventions of the English language these feelings are exacerbated.

Furthermore, the one-on-one sessions discourage passivity on the part of the students. Through dialogue, tutors can acquire much needed information from the student which will assist them in steering the consultation in the right direction and improving the quality of each engagement. This is essential because most students coming in for the first time share some of the misconceptions highlighted earlier. We encourage our students to own their writing through active participation in the consultation sessions. The tutor is able to observe closely the student's reaction to comment, listen to their individual responses and watch their body language and other non-verbal cues. This personal interaction also affords the student the opportunity to express anxieties not necessarily captured by the piece of writing. The tutor is also able to "work primarily with the writer as a person, even when the paper is there on the table between them" (Harris, 1995, p.29).

We have found the one-on-one approach particularly beneficial in our context where the majority of students encountered by tutors emerge from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. These are often second language writers, making them very conscious about their use of the language. It is not uncommon to have some of these students literally cry in a consultation session as they often feel that the obstacles (English and disciplinary Knowledge) are insurmountable. It is where an experienced tutor, who often times, at some point in their academic journey has faced similar challenges and overcome, will be able to address the student from a point of experience rather than from a point of knowledge alone. Non-discriminatory judgemental spaces are created for students in our WrCs; a fundamental attribute underscored by an assertion by Harris (1995, p. 29) who advocates for a similar approach by suggesting that,

> The power of the tutor's position outside the evaluative setting is also apparent in student evaluations that acknowledge tutors' expertise. There are always impressively high ratings, positive comments, and effusive notes of appreciation…

Additionally, the approach affords the tutor and student the opportunity to design each consultation and fashion it to suit the needs of the student. Each student is understood as being distinct in personality, needs and ways of learning

## Writing Competition

In line with promoting both academic and creative writing among students, the DUT Writing Centre organises an annual writing competition for its undergraduate students. The competition is a student development initiative, and all DUT undergraduates with a passion for writing are eligible. The competition is divided into three genres, namely short stories, poetry and essays (opinion pieces). To motivate students to participate in the competition, first prize winners in each category are awarded laptops, second prize winners walk away with notepads and third prize winners receive e-book readers.

The creative writing competition has been running since September 2013 and due to its great impact on student development, it has become an annual event. In 2013, it was conducted in honour of the late Chinua Achebe. In 2014, it was held to remember the late Nelson Mandela and in 2015, it was held to celebrate the life and literary achievements of the late South African writer and Nobel prize winner, Nadine Gordimer. In 2016, the

competition was conducted to commemorate the life and achievements of Lewis Nkosi, a DUT alumnus, writer, critic and political activist. The competition has received buy-in from DUT students, staff and alumni. It has also been covered in newspapers such as the Daily News and reported on the DUT website. In 2017, the competition was held in honour of Ngugi wa Thiongo, an internationally acclaimed writer, academic and political activist and the 2018 competition was in honour of Zakes Mda. This year's competition was in honour of John Kani, renouned South African actor, director and playwright.

The annual writing competition has had a great impact on student learning. The fact that students are reading and writing outside their disciplines through this competition is an achievement on its own. Furthermore, the winning entries in the competition are being used in the Cornerstone Module of the General Education Programme at DUT. This provides students with the opportunity to learn from what fellow students have written. Students can easily connect with literature (short stories, poetry, essays and opinion pieces), written by their contemporaries. The anecdotal evidence collected, indicates that students appreciate both the themes and styles of writing by fellow students.

For more information on the magnitude of the 2018 creative writing competition, which was by far, the most successful of our competitions, follow the hyperlinks below.

http://www.dut.ac.za/zakes-mda-to-deliver-a-public-lecture-at-dut/

http://www.dut.ac.za/prof-zakes-mda-calls-for-heritage-preservation/

https://www.dispatchlive.co.za/news/2018-08-29-dont-only-celebrate-anc-struggle-heroes-says-zakes-mda/

https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2018-08-29-dont-only-celebrate-anc-struggle-heroes-says-zakes-mda/

https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2018-08-29-dont-only-celebrate-anc-struggle-heroes-says-zakes-mda/

## Quality Tutors

The tutors at our WrC remain the centrifugal force of our operations with which centripetal forces in academic discourse continually relate to in an effort to ensure that we achieve our aims and objectives. Individuals who are "dedicated to helping fellow writers" (Harris, 1985, p.7) are afforded the privilege to join our team of tutors. Tutors evidently inhabit a world between student and lecturer (Harris, 1995 p.28) giving them neutrality when consulting with a student. They can work with students in ways a lecturer cannot as they are viewed as a resource that can effectively assist students surmount hurdles that lectures have otherwise set up for them. Therefore, we have apportioned due diligence when appointing tutors within our WrCs. The tutors are recruited through a rigorous and

highly competitive interview process designed to detect attributes that will respond to the various needs of our university community. Such attributes include proficiency in the English medium, excellent writing practice, high level of critical thinking, excellent listening, integrity, professionalism, diligence and accountability.

Furthermore, a balanced mix of tutors can be found within our WrCs at DUT. For example, we are careful to include members of the two major gender classifications (male and female) in order to address the demands of gender sensitive users. Due to various cultural backgrounds, some of our tutors have encountered male students who are uncomfortable with receiving direction/ instruction from a female. Hence having a male tutor in each centre addresses what in some contexts may be viewed as retrogressive thinking. It is also imperative that our tutors are registered students, working towards a post-graduate qualification (masters/doctorate) because our WrC tutors assist students (1st year – PhD candidates), faculty, staff members and the alumni with all forms of writing.

Another key attribute of our tutors is flexibility and the ability to embrace change. Tutors have to satisfy the different and dynamic needs of students, faculty, staff and the alumni. Our WrCs are staffed with tutors who are well-versed in the disciplines studied on each campus. For example, the City Campus Writing Centre has tutors with backgrounds in journalism, design and fine art, for example. This is because those are the disciplines majored in on that campus. This makes it easier for the student seeking discipline-specific writing and more content-based commentary to receive assistance. As such, a journalism student would readily receive tutorship on journalistic writing as this differs significantly from expository prose. Group tutorials have also been entertained in our WrCs as lecturers, predominantly in the Management Sciences appear to frequently utilise the collaborative writing approach due to the large numbers of students that they are dealing with. The flexibility and adaptability of the tutors is particularly valuable in deterring against ossification and entrenchment which would prove to be endorsing redundancy in the dynamic environment within which we operate.

Practitioners such as Williams (2002, p. 79) have suggested that WrC tutors "…are often unprepared to deal with second language writers in spite of the fact that at some centres, the majority of sessions are with second language writers". Another vital attribute our tutors possess is that at least 95% of them are second language writers. The majority of students enrolled at the institution are second language writers. Therefore, it is not unusual that the majority of the students visiting our WrCs are second language writers as well. The misconception holds that since a second language writer is in university, language problems were addressed before they matriculated and proficiency is not a concern. The opposite is closer to the truth. It then becomes

the responsibility of the tutor to meticulously diagnose the problem and then devise a strategy to address the challenge. Where other tutors with dissimilar backgrounds and experiences "simply do not know what else do with them" (Williams, 2002, p.80), our tutors are hardly phased. Even where we have not provided training on how to assist second language writers or background theories to guide our tutors with second language learning, they seem to excel. Williams (2002, p. 74) suggested in a study on second language writers in the WrC, that tutors were perceived as being "immediately more helpful, more approachable, more practical and more personal" than lecturers.

## Extended Operating Hours

The operating hours at the DUT WrC are as follows (Table 1):

**Table 1.** *DUT WrC operating hours*

| Day | Opening time | Closing time | Total hours |
|---|---|---|---|
| Monday to Thursday | 08H30 | 19H30 | 11 per day |
| Friday | 08H30 | 15H00 | 6.6 |
| Saturday | 09H00 | 15H00 | 6 |

We have successfully operated on the extended hours system as this was imperative to address some of our concerns. One of our immediate concerns was servicing students who are registered on the evening parallel program. This program is designed to address the demand posed mainly by the working class for an opportunity to acquire a higher education qualification. This was done by the university by offering evening classes/ lectures for disciplines such as Human Resources Management and Operations Management some disciplines. These students are able to make bookings at the WrC and attend consultations at their convenience. As such, students who are registered in these courses would also require the services of the WrC. The services can also be accessed by students who are enrolled in the normal day program. Most of them find themselves held up in lectures during the day and the longer operating hours have graciously afforded them this privilege as well. The operating hours every weekend further afford the student body the convenience of visiting the WrC.

## Challenges and Solutions

Below we reflect on some of the challenges DUT WrCs frequently encounter. Solutions to these challenges have also been presented in the discussion.

### Lack of a Shared Understanding of the Role of the WrC in Facilitating Student Development

Writing centres worldwide are faced with a plethora of challenges, most of which emanate from a lack of a shared understanding of the role of the WrC in facilitating student development. As North (1984, p. 433) postulates, "misunderstanding is something one expects and almost gets used to in the writing centre business". In the same vein, Grimm (1996, p. 523) laments the fact that faculty members are often suspicious about what actually happens at the WrC. This has been and continues to be a challenge DUT WrCs' face.

Students at all levels face heterogeneous challenges when attempting to write a paper. They have varied expectations some of which lead to inaccurate perceptions about the WrC and the services it provides. Grimm (1996, p. 523), utilises the laundry metaphor to describe the process through which a paper undergoes when it is brought to the WrC. As such reinforcing the misconception about WrC practice which depicts it as assisting with editorial work or existing to clean up documents before submission. Hence we have observed that students, faculty, staff and alumni alike commonly expect that once a paper has been brought to the WrC, it will be "perfected" by the tutor in readiness for submission. However, there are constraining conditions such as the dominant culture of viewing the WrC as a clinic where students' writing has to be fixed. This culture pervades the HE landscape in South Africa. It is aptly described by Clarence (2014, p.1) who observes that "students are often viewed by academic lecturers and tutors as lacking or deficient, and through being made to come to a writing centre 'to sort out [their] grammar'…, they are often made to feel deficient, lacking or outside of 'mainstream' university life." Clarence (2014, p. 1) further argues that this deficit discourse is problematic and unhelpful but what we can do as AD practitioners is to "be vigilant in listening out for it, and in critiquing it". Clarence solution is corroborated by North (1984, p.438), who contends that the idyllic WrCs' goal is "to make sure that writers, and not necessarily their texts, are what get changed by instruction" (Devet, 1990).

Central to our strategy for creating a shared understanding of the role of the WrC in facilitating student development is the notion of dialogue with WrC staff and lecturers. Using Southwood's (2012, p. 89) words, "[I]t is argued that through dialogue, spaces of development can be opened up and realms of possibilities can be re-imagined." Following Alexander's (2005, p.1-4) cues, as presented by Southwood (2012, p. 90), dialogue is here imagined as an integral and guiding principle of effective teaching and learning; it is an educative process which encompasses "the interaction of mind and ideas as well as words… transcending the boundaries of time, space and culture…[it] entails imagination, empathy and making of connections". Thus a dialogical orientation to address the apparent misconceptions of the role of the WrC as a clinic has been found to be beneficial. Below are presented some statements uttered by students and lecturers to illustrate an authentic reflection of paradigms and pedagogical abbreviations framing the way in which WrCs are viewed in our context.

The following statements have been recorded as uttered by students when they have come to the WrC for assistance.

"My lecturer asked me to come to the WrC to have my grammar corrected"

"My lecturer told me that if I come here you will teach me how to reference"

"I don't know why my lecturer said I must come here but if I don't I will lose 10% of my mark"

"I need you to tell me if I am on the right track"

"Our class was told to come here and you would edit our work"

"I need you to proof-read my work"

The following are a few comments derived from our online booking system when students were asked what they would like to achieve during the session or what they would like to work on during the session.

"High marks"

"Gain more knowledge"

"Grammar and spelling check and Referencing"

"Correction for my writing and structuring of the essay"

"Punctuation, grammar, content"

"I would like to work on the format, grammar and any other mistakes I have made."

The statement below has been commonly communicated by lecturers:

"I am sending my students to correct their language and grammar."

The traditional monological relationships between the

WrC and the lecturers create tension which militates against the collaborative efforts geared towards assisting students with their writing. Using our agency as WrC practitioners, we challenge such a dominant culture by what Southwood (2012, p. 91) calls "participatory notions of teaching and learning as dialogue, a partnership in which all parties take active responsibilities". We re-imagine a dialogue on WrC practice where fellow WrC practitioners and lecturers will participate as valued partners. This entails concerted efforts to understand what the lecturers' and students' expectations are vis a vis those of WrC practitioners. We recognise that, as a consequence of a lack of 'consensus ad idem' the university forfeits the opportunity to weave WrC work into the academic strategy of the institution.

## Resources

I kept asking why? And why not? Why isn't there more money? Why can't we hire more tutors? Why can't we set up a course for tutors? Why can't we extend hours? Why can't we pay our tutors more? Why can't we get a larger room? Why can't we paint the walls? (Summerfield, 1988, p. 3)

In her paper Summerfield (1988) offers a familiar chorus of "why" questions which appear to be age-old and universal in the majority of WrCs. The scarcity or unavailability of resources seems to underscore the argument we have tabled concerning a lack of common understanding with regards the role and value of a WrC within a university system. Durban University of Technology boasts a student body in excess of 30 000 students. The five WrCs have a tutor compliment of 40 individuals in total. The student tutor ratio is 1 tutor: 750 students, with all of them potentially requiring WrC services. Financial resources geared at hiring more tutors, further extending operating hours and paying tutors more are still scarce and arguably unavailable. We argue that these resources would heighten the impact we have on student development as more students would readily benefit from our services.

## High Tutor Turnover

Another challenge we are consistently facing is that of high turnover of our tutoring staff. This, we attribute to the fact that the DUT WrC always endeavours to recruit the very best personnel. As a result, these tutors are sought by other programmes on the various campuses for tutoring or teaching. The nature of their contracts (part-time) further mitigates against us as they are constantly seeking permanent employment in other departments in the University and often times with other institutions as well. In addition to this, the remuneration is not as competitive as other tutoring positions offered within departments paying up to between 50% -75% more than what the WrC budget allows. This becomes a push and pull factor for turnover. Which has meant that we are

constantly recruiting and training new tutors in order to meet the growing demand for WrC services, regardless of the apparent misconceptions. Furthermore, the contract offered to tutors is ten months long, from February to November. We have often 'lost' tutors over the holidays as they have sought other contracts.

## Conclusion

There is a diminishing minority who still view WrCs as superfluous and a waste of financial resources. Our efforts to initiate dialogue between and among stakeholders within our institution have begun to yield positive results. Our existence affords all writers including second language writers a fighting chance within HE institutions' by facilitating the development of writing and reading of the English language for academic purposes in order to serve the needs of all members of the DUT community. The Writing Centre successfully sets the stage for a safe, responsive and collaborative teaching and learning environment. The friendly academic environment allows users to feel comfortable to discuss and develop their writing and reading. Teaching and learning is enhanced by offering writing and reading companionship in different disciplines. Our individualised writing consultations have been a winning strategy in ensuring student engagement and ultimately student development. We continue to support and collaborate



with lecturers in reflecting on and developing the role of reading and writing in their course syllabi.

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Gift Mheta (PhD Linguistics, University of the Western Cape; Master of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics, University of Zimbabwe; Master of Arts African languages and Literature, University of Zimbabwe; Bachelor of Arts Honours in African languages and Literature, University of Zimbabwe; Diploma in Higher Education for Academic Developers, Rhodes University).

Dr Mheta is the Writing Centre manager at the Durban University of Technology. He is based at the Steve Biko Writing Centre. His research is mainly focused on corpus development and maintenance, computational lexicography and language technology applications for the development of African languages. His other research interests are sociolinguistics, lexicography, translation and African literature. Of late he has developed an interest in communication studies and academic literacies. One of his recent publications is a textbook entitled, <em>Language Society and Communication: An Introduction</em> (2nd Edition).

Sibongile Ruth Nhari holds an MA in Public Management from the Durban University of Technology with a thesis entitled <em>Investigating internal service quality at Durban University of Technology Writing Centers.</em> She is a PhD candidate exploring further the internal service quality construct. She has been engaged in the Writing Centre arena since 2015. Her research interests are focused on enhancing service delivery to students through optimizing internal service quality at institutions of higher learning.

# Reports

## Report 1

### BALEAP PIM: Knowledge in EAP – Aiming to Challenge the Status Quo and Drive the Field of EAP Forward.

#### University of Northampton, UK: June 22, 2019

Paul Breen, University of Westminster, UK

Email: p.breen@westminster.ac.uk

#### Background

On Saturday 22nd June the University of Northampton hosted a *Professional Issues Meeting (PIM)* on the topic of Knowledge in EAP. This was done in association with BALEAP, an organisation that supports the professional development of those involved in learning, teaching, scholarship and research in English for Academic Purposes (EAP). This PIM was styled in the manner of a *World Café* methodology where the speaker is a facilitator rather than a presenter. In this format, the speaker generates discussion and the attendees discuss and write down their thoughts whilst working in a series of interchangeable groups.

#### Aims Of The Professional Issues Meeting

This BALEAP PIM aimed to explore and exploit the existing knowledge, experience and beliefs of the BALEAP community to interrogate the position of knowledge in EAP, with the intention of challenging the status quo and driving the field of EAP forward. As such it was a natural follow-up from the University of Leeds April 2019 BALEAP Conference themes of *Innovation, Transformation and Exploration,* which came at a critical juncture in EAP history. This is because these events have happened at a time when EAP is going through an ongoing struggle to define its identity in the ever-changing landscape of higher education in the UK and overseas. A great deal of literature in recent times has focused on the role of knowledge in EAP teaching as in the work of Ding & Bruce (2017) who focus largely on practice and Breen (2018) who focuses on theories of teacher knowledge. A further ambition of this PIM was to synthesise theory and practice so as to position each in the everyday work of EAP teachers now and in the future. Doing so will be a further step on the professional development journey starting at the BALEAP Conference in Leeds in April 2019.

#### Structure Of The Day

The day followed a world café format, with session hosts rather than presenters. Hosts took on the role of leading a discussion in a room furnished with round tables and paper cloths on which the audience could write. Hosts then introduced the participants to an area of specialist knowledge within EAP and then facilitated exploration of this theme through a short series of related questions.
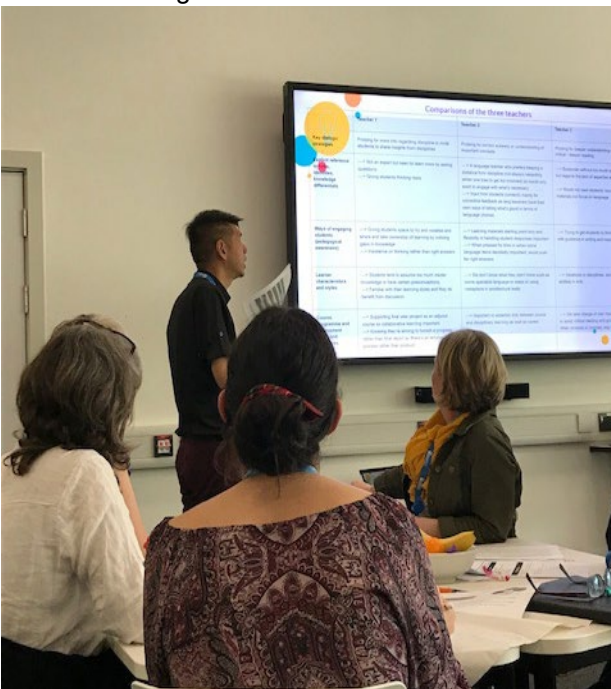


#### Sessions On The Day

After an opening address by Susie Cowley-Haselden from The University of Northampton, the audience was provided with a short talk by Steve Kirk of Durham University. The title of Steve's presentation was "*What do we actually mean by 'knowledge*'? Some opening thoughts for today", which set the tone for the events that followed. The first of these was a parallel session with Jo Kukuczka from University of Northampton International College presenting on "*Embracing knowledge: empowering EAP*" whilst Christina Healy gave her presentation on "*The Three Ls Cafe (Learners, Language and Learning).*" Each of these sessions generated substantial food for thought in 65 minutes leading up to the lunch break.

After lunch, Paul Breen from The University of Westminster led a single session on the question of "*Where do broader theories of teacher knowledge fit into EAP practice?*" As part of this, a discussion emerged about whether or not there is a need or a desire to create a periodic table of EAP teacher knowledge. The influence for this comes from an article by Lee Shulman in which he advocated the creation of a periodic table of knowledge

for teachers (Shulman,1987, p.4). Such a table would define the areas of knowledge that teachers need to become more expert in their practice (Shulman,1987, p.4). Paul Breen's suggestion of an EAP-specific periodic table was well-received by the audience and further work is expected to continue on this proposal through the autumn.

Following on from this single session immediately after the lunch break, the café then broke up into two parts once again. In one session, Emma Lay from Arts University Bournemouth discussed *"The Knowledge base of EAP practitioners"* and in the second session Will Nash from The University of Sheffield discussed *"EAP practices"* with a particular focus on the BALEAP Competency Framework. The afternoon then ended with a session that had a more international perspective thanks to a presentation from Albert Wong of Hong Kong University in which he discussed *"Dialogue in the EAP classroom: practitioners' and learners' collaborative knowledge-building."* This was an important aspect of the day because it showed the importance of BALEAP as a global community and one that has a reach far beyond the United Kingdom context.



## Conclusions

Though only a small-scale event taking place over a single day, this event has made a major contribution to discussions on the role of knowledge within EAP teaching. A benchmark has been set in terms of defining and capturing a sense of EAP knowledge. This in the long run will hopefully serve to earn EAP the same status as other disciplines and subjects within higher education because the standards of knowledge, though different, are just as high as in any other field. Further work on developing a periodic table of EAP teacher knowledge

will continue through the autumn. Anyone interested in contributing to this can contact Paul Breen at p.breen@ westminster.ac.uk

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# Report 2

## EALTHY Spring Symposium

### University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt, Austria: May 27, 2019

Désirée Verdonk, EALTHY General Secretary, University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt, Austria

Email: desiree.verdonk@fhwn.ac.at

The University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt, Austria hosted this one-day symposium on behalf of EALTHY (**European Association of Language Teachers for Healthcare**). EALTHY aims at supporting the professional development of teachers and researchers in English for healthcare while aiming at enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in this field.

This tri-national EALTHY event brought together three universities from three central European countries to give insight into their teaching and research in the area of English for healthcare.

The Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences at Palacký University Olomouc in the Czech Republic, the Department of Languages for Specific Purposes, Medical School, University of Pécs in Hungary and the Institute of Languages of the University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt in Austria joined forces to share their expertise in stimulating presentations and workshops. The event also provided ample opportunities for international networking with participants from other universities.



The day opened with a short introduction of the three hosting universities (Pécs, Olomouc and Wiener Neustadt), followed by two research-based talks. Gabriella Hild (University of Pécs) presented IMET (International Medical English Test), a project supported by the ERASMUS+ Programme of the European Union. The aim of this project is to develop an innovative methodology for testing English for Medical Purposes in line with CEFR descriptors. Lukáš Merz (University Olomouc) reported on the award-winning HELP – Healthcare English Language Programme (help-theproject.eu) and its follow-up project HELP2, both Erasmus+ funded.

The afternoon focused on "Hot Teaching Tips". These practical workshops started with Timea Németh (University of Pécs) introducing gamification in medical English classes with a focus on the integration of various gamification tools (Quizlet, Kahoot, interactive videos) into medical English classes to increase students' motivation. Her colleague, Alexandra Csongor, demonstrated how to create and use diagrams in Quizlet as an engaging and helpful way of illustrating and learning different concepts in medical English.

Jennifer Lacchini (University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt) showed some of the strategies developed involving different media to facilitate student learning and increase student autonomy in the nursing programme. Her colleague, David Whittaker, gave a brief overview of the planning and execution of a third semester Biomedical Science Bachelor course entitled "Lab Language". His emphasis was the practical language and the oral examination – taking place in a real laboratory – allowing the students to utilise the language skills and vocabulary in a realistic setting. Désirée Verdonk dealt with English Language role play practice of third semester Radiology Technology students in the X-ray practice room. Bringing real workplace experience into the classroom and applying professional radiology technology skills and English skills in a simulated working environment were the core issues of this final workshop of the day.



The EALTHY Spring Symposium was a great success and it is a pleasure to hereby announce that the University of Pécs will be hosting an EALTHY Spring Symposium 2020.

Further information about EALTHY can be found on the EALTHY website: https://www.ealthy.com/

Or you can join us on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ealthy/

## Report 3

# Something Old, Something New: Mediation in the Context of ESAP

## English for Specific Academic Purposes Conference, 2019

## Ruhr-Universität Bochum Language Centre (ZFA), Germany: May 11, 2019

Peter Gee, Lazarski University, Poland

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) was first published in 2001. In 2018, the scope and understanding of mediation was significantly expanded from the previous narrow interpretation of mediation, as being primarily related to translation, to the wider concepts of the development of mutual understanding and the co-development of knowledge. This resulted in the descriptors for mediation being significantly rewritten and expanded. These readily adaptable descriptors are based on four fundamental types of mediation: linguistic, cultural, social and pedagogic, which in turn are all inform by sociocultural theories that emphasise the importance of the learner as a social agent. It is important to note that the CEFR framework is not a atomistic model, but one that seeks to tease out the multiple simultaneous functions of language. This was borne out by the frequent use of the parable of three blind men describing a elephant by conference presenters.

The three keynote presentations presented consecutively, with Tim Goodier, the Head of Academic Development for Eurocentres, who discussed how mediation can help ESAP students develop the 21st Century skills of critical thinking, communication, creativity and collaboration. Then, Carolyn Westbrook, a Test Development Research British Council, gave examples of how the CEFR's mediation descriptors could be adapted to become valuable tools in the development and assessment of integrated, authentic E(S)AP tasks. Finally Julio Gimenez, a Principle Lecturer at Westminster University, focused on the use of mediation to developed a set of attitudes, strategies and skills required for successful pluricultural communication.

The other nine presentations were delivered in three simultaneous sessions, and these also demonstrated the many very useful applications of mediation. Thus, Paola Brusaco, a English tutor working at an Italian University, employed Psychology informatics to increase the levels of engagement and motivation of Psychology students. Aaron Woodcock, Reading University, discussed how mediation tasks could help Chemistry students to gain a better understanding of the various genres, register and audiences they would have to engage during with

their studies and professional careers. Peter Gee and his co-presenter Ewelina Gee Milan, Lazarski University, focused on the process of selecting, and then the adapting of the CEFR'S mediation descriptors to the specific requirement of a language course for student lawyers preparing for an international client consultation competition.

In addition, Steve Marshall discussed his study of the mediation strategies employed by plurilingual student in a Canadian university, while Georgina Lloyd and Pamela McIldowie, showed how the mediation descriptors provide more nuanced assessment of the sociocultural and sociolinguistic skills needed by international pre-medical students studying in the UK. Katherine Taylor discussed how she helped academic staff enhance their mediation strategies for an increasingly diverse cohort of PhD students. Barrie Roberts, discussed the language and strategies of conflict resolution for both the ESL classroom and in order to better appreciate counterarguments in EAP. Tim Dittmann and Anne Jänsch, Technical University Braunschweig, focused on the development of learner social agency through the reformulating texts to explore genre, language and knowledge building i.e. Ted Talk to academic text, a written to spoken summary, and a group discussion to group writing. Maria Stathopoulou, University of Athens, examined the background to the development of the mediation descriptors and showed how they could be applied to developing authentic ESAP tasks.

The conference website that includes the conference schedule and the presenters' profiles and PowerPoints are available at: http://www.zfa.rub.de/sprachen/englisch/esap_conference.html.en

# Reviews

## Career Paths: Paramedics

Jenny Dooley, Alisha Clark

Express Publishing, 2017

ISBN 978 1 4715 5529 9

Reviewed by: Agnieszka Dudzik, Medical University of Bialystok, Poland

*Career Paths: Paramedics* is part of the Express Publishing series on professional English in specific environments. The book, published in 2017, is designed for emergency medical services professionals seeking to improve their English communication in professional environments.

The book is organised into three levels of difficulty (Books 1-3 corresponding to CEFR A1-B1), each aimed at developing career-specific language through all skill areas, i.e. speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Each book is divided into 15 thematic units followed by a glossary and includes supporting audio recordings.

Each unit of *Career Paths: Paramedics* focuses on a relevant area of professional knowledge and practice, thus helping both prospective and practising emergency healthcare staff to develop the skills and language required in work-related situations. The topics included in Book 1 primarily introduce learners to basic medical terms pertaining to human anatomy and physiology, while Book 2 focuses on profession-specific language related to common medical emergencies. In Book 3 language practice is built around topics including advanced life support and major incident response. Additionally, in the final modules of the book students are introduced to the target work environment and issues including the health and well-being of emergency medical services professionals, coping with life-and-death situations, and medical ethics are addressed.

Each of the 45 thematic units follows a linear sequence beginning with a lead-in activity followed by reading material. All texts or pre-reading activities are complemented by graphic elements, which encourage learners to share their knowledge of the content area. Reading comprehension tasks are followed by vocabulary work in which new items are presented in a meaningful context. Each unit concludes with a writing task and activities for communicative interaction and the development of communicative strategies.

*Career Paths: Paramedics* seems to fulfil its profession-specific communicative aim. The greatest strength of the book lies in careful selection of reading topics, as they seem highly relevant and useful to students in their professional settings and offer both trainee and trained paramedics the language tools to perform effectively in a variety of emergency healthcare scenarios. Moreover, it provides opportunities for learners to utilise profession-specific vocabulary through the four skills and to interact with authentic materials and activities. Thus, they listen to medical conversations, read medicine-based texts, role play dialogues, simulate medical scenarios, interpret work-related photographs and images, or write accident reports. Importantly, the materials included in the book appear up to date and reflect contemporary medical knowledge and practice.

# Skills for Success: Personal Development and Employability 3rd edition

Stella Cottrell
Macmillan, 2015
ISBN 978 1 1374 2652 9
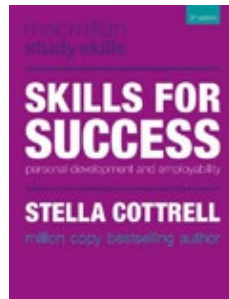
## Reviewed by: Ahmed Mahfoodh, Pearson Qualifications - Edexcel

The year 2019 marks the twentieth anniversary of the Macmillan Study Skills series by Macmillan Education, with around 30 titles published so far (not including titles from the closely related Pocket Study Skills, Research Skills, and the newly launched 50 Ways series). The reviewed book is part of this series, originally branded as Palgrave Study skills. The series was rebranded to its current name in 2018, hence copies of the same book with the previous Palgrave front cover can still be found on Amazon and elsewhere. Stella Cottrell is the author of the reviewed book, many other Study Skills guides, and all of the 50 Ways series' six titles. She is a former university Pro Vice-Chancellor for Learning and Teaching at the University of East London and a well-established author since 1999. In 2015, her titles' sales exceeded a million copies world-wide. See www.macmillanihe.com/page/study-skills/ and the brochure downloadable from the website for more information.

The first edition of the reviewed book was published in 2003. The second edition, published 2010, and the current third edition were received well by their readers: both achieved identical scores of 4.7 out of 5 on Amazon from a total of more than 80 reviewers, with 80% of them awarding 5 stars.

*Skills for Success* aims to help tertiary students develop abilities desired by the contemporary employer, which will increase their chances of being suitably employed after graduation. The reader is greeted with a brief Introduction which is centred around the definition and importance of a Personal Development Plan and paves the way to the rest of the guide. In Part 1 Self-management, the first three chapters invite the reader to reflect on what success means to them. It encourages them to get to know themselves in terms of learning, expertise, and when and how they perform best. These three chapters act as a foundation for the fourth chapter which outlines how to implement self-management successfully. It discusses important topics such as time management, and managing change and uncertainty, distress, and emotions. Part 2 expands to managing other people and tasks, and problem-solving skills. Part 3 encourages the reader to extend their thinking through creativity and reflection. Part 4 details what employers look for and how graduates can improve their chances of getting the job they want. It also draws the reader's attention to the importance of continuous improvement and keeping a regular updated record of it. The last part of the book is the Resource Bank, which contains templates of evaluation tools, personal records, and competence sheets that the reader can use to measure their performance and document their career and abilities.

The author clearly seeks to inform the reader as much as possible whilst remaining concise, covering various topics across multiple relevant disciplines. To that end, the text is organised into two columns throughout most of the book and represented as bullet-points and short titled paragraphs. To consolidate the book's ideas and engage the reader there are many text boxes that contain well thought out activities, points of reflection, and examples. The text boxes vary in frequency: some pages contain up to three while other pages have none. With this format the text becomes dense at places. Nonetheless, this density is suitably lightened with comic illustrations. The language is kept plain and relatively simple, which would increase readability and appeal to international students. Each chapter starts with a list of learning objectives and ends with closing comments and a list of references for further reading.

The aforementioned features make the book ideal as the basis of a coaching course, in addition to self-learning. They also explain the high popularity of the book. At its third edition, 12 years after its first, the book has undergone thorough revision and refinement, which does not leave room for major criticism. Nevertheless, I feel that it has been written under the assumption that the reader intends to look for a job after graduation. As a result, the book fails to explicitly prepare the student for self-employment or entrepreneurship after graduation. For such students, the book is still useful, but they would also need to refer to other guides.
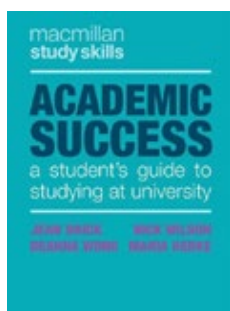
# Academic Success

Jean Brick, Nick Wilson, Deanna Wong, Maria Herke

Macmillan Education, 2019

ISBN 978 1 3520 0262 0

## Reviewed by: Ahmed Mahfoodh, Pearson Qualifications - Edexcel

Research shows that students face challenges at the start of their tertiary education. They need to adapt and adjust in order to succeed in their studies and take full advantage of their academic environment. Many guides have been written specifically for this purpose. Under this genre comes the Study Skills series by Macmillan Education, which the reviewed book belongs to. Possibly due to its relative recency, I was not able to find any online reviews by purchasers of the book. However, the positive reviews found on the back cover come from recognised academics such as the internationally renowned Professor Jack Richards from the University of Sydney.

The authors are all from the Department of Linguistics at Macquarie University, Australia, and hold substantial knowledge and expertise relevant to the topic of the book. Their research and teaching are centred mostly around academic communication. It is not surprising then that the contents of the 257 pages are succinctly rich and informative. The contents are divided into five parts: Part 1 Introduction to university study, Part 2 Taking part in university learning, Part 3 Becoming critical, Part 4 Expressing your voice and referring to the voices of others, and Part 5 Writing academic texts.

Part 1 was kept brief.  It introduces the student to the notion of academic communication and its nature, and certain aspects and expectations of studying at university, including learning autonomy. Part 2 offers guidance on academic reading, academic listening, and how to participate in tutorials and seminars. It also gives detailed advice on participating in group assignments but fails to include individual assignments. There are related topics fragmented across the book, however, there is a want for a piece concerned with individual assignments here. Part 3 covers critical thinking. Its chapters discuss matters such as bias, problem-solving, description, and how to critically find and use sources of academic knowledge. Interestingly, the author begins this chapter by defining and illustrating the differences between personal opinion and academic position. The concept is not new (see for example The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), Volume 60, 1913), however it is a point that is often left unmentioned in similar references and is indeed noteworthy. Part 4 focuses on academic voices. It explains and demonstrates how to express both the voice of the academic writer themselves and the voices of those they refer to or quote, as well as explaining how to do so correctly while avoiding plagiarism. The authors' approach to placing academic voice and referencing under one rubric is not short of novelty; it is a break from the tradition of introducing the two topics separately. Part 5 is dedicated to writing academic texts.  It offers an outstanding guidance on academic writing across several genres such as reports, blogs, and writing in exams.

The way the book is formatted makes it easy and enjoyable to read. Each chapter starts by stating its learning objectives, which is helpful when using the book as a teaching material and also facilitates self-learning. There are many 'Think about this' text boxes throughout that invite the reader to pause and reflect. The material is suitably supported by carefully selected excerpts and useful tables, however, diagrams, figures, and illustrations are arguably underused, and scarce; there are a few places where their inclusion would have served the text well. An 'Over to you' text box that contains an activity for the reader and a concise summary are placed at the end of each chapter. Once more, the reader could benefit from more exercises or activities placed within the chapter instead of supplying only one at the end. To further support the reader, the book provides a Glossary, a Further reading list, and an Index.

As the first edition, the book does leave some room for improvement. For example, the headers of the table which shows the differences between opinion and position were not accurately labelled. The structure could also be reviewed and refined. For instance, the topic of criticality was somewhat fragmented; it was addressed in Chapter 5 under What is critical reading? and then addressed again in Part 3 Becoming critical. Overall, the book is a comprehensive and concise reference which can be used by tertiary students prior to and during their studies. It is well-structured and has its novelty and uniqueness. Being priced at just under £14 on Amazon makes this book one the most affordable of its kind. I predict that it will soon make its way to the shelves of academic libraries and become one of the main references within its field.

# Successful Academic Writing: A Complete Guide for Social & Behavioural Scientists

Anneliese A. Singh, Lauren Lukkarila
Guilford Press, 2017
ISBN 978 1 4625 2939 1

Reviewed by: Andy Navedo,
EAP Lecturer, Brunel University, London.
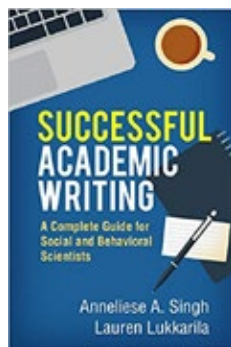
*Successful Academic Writing - A Complete Guide for Social & Behavioural Scientists* is a 2017 book from the Guilford Press. The book has been designed for students who are studying or intending to study a social science or behavioural science discipline at an English-speaking university. In the preface, the authors say that the aim of this book is to "dispel myths about academic writing as well as spell out the secrets and unspoken rules of writing academically," so that students can learn the necessary steps to becoming fully competent academic writers within their discipline.

The book has three sections: 1. *Becoming an Academic Writer, 2. Developing Academic Writing Skills, and 3. Specific Types of Academic Writing*. Each of these three sections are divided into three chapters. Each chapter starts with an *awareness focus* related to the content followed by an *action focus* to keep the reader thinking about why the highlighted areas in each chapter are important. At the end of each chapter is an awareness summary and action reminder so that the reader can have a snapshot reflection of the most important points of each chapter. The book also includes numerous text boxes, practice tasks, tables, and figures. The Appendix includes an answer key for some of the practice tasks.

In Section 1, *Becoming an Academic Writer*, the first chapter begins by raising the readers awareness of what academic writing is and what it is *not*. Chapter 2 gets the reader to prepare to write in their discipline by reading up-to-date published articles so that they can analyse research trends and identify research gaps within their field. Chapter 3 helps the reader to develop their own writer identity and express their own academic voice.

In section 2, *Developing Academic Writing Skills,* the book focuses on specific skills to help develop academic writing. Chapter 4 starts by getting the reader to understand academic reader and writer roles, as well as the structure of a research paper (introduction and purpose, literature review and theoretical framework, methodology, results and discussion, implications, limitations, and suggestions for research). Chapter 5 helps the reader to develop the tone and style of their writing by employing a neutral and impersonal attitude, while chapter 6 provides the reader with strategies and coaching tips to get their written work started, moving and completed.

In section 3, *Specific Types of Academic Writing*, the book raises awareness of the specific types of academic writing. Chapter 7 focuses on how to write stand-alone literature reviews. Chapter 8 focuses on how to write standard sections of empirical articles (qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods), and chapter 9 discusses how the reader can get their work published in a journal with the support of mentors and by developing collaborative relationships.

Overall, this book is an excellent resource or reference for graduate students, and can provide learners with a clear step by step approach to becoming more competent and successful academic writers. In addition, some of the awareness-raising tasks in chapters 1 to 5 could be very useful for EAP teachers to use as part of an introductory lesson on a graduate programme, while the literature review samples in chapter 7, and the empirical academic writing samples provided in chapter 8 could be very useful supplements for teaching social and behavioural science students how to write methodological recount assignments or dissertations.
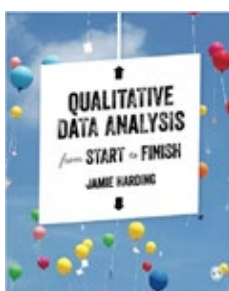
# Qualitative Data Analysis from Start to Finish

Jamie Harding
SAGE Publications, 2018
ISBN 978 15264 0280 6

Reviewed by: Christopher Kelly, China Agricultural University – International College, Beijing

*Qualitative Data Analysis: From Start to Finish* is a very well written and well organized comprehensive guide to conducting qualitative data analysis. It is, in essence, a full guide for researchers for what they should do after their data acquisition steps.

The book is organized into four stages. The first stage is three chapters that are devoted to qualitative research designs and preparation, an introduction to qualitative social research, and practical issues in qualitative research. This stage gives perspective to qualitative researchers regarding qualitative research in general. While it is not comprehensive on the topic, it gives a good summary of the distinctive aspects of qualitative research that need to be considered when conducting it. The second stage is two chapters devoted to collecting and managing qualitative data from interviews and focus groups. The third stage is six chapters including a three step process for analysing interview data, analyzing focus group data, and different alternative perspectives for qualitative data analysis that can also be considered. Finally, the fourth stage is one chapter devoted to disseminating qualitative research results and writing about it.

The entire book is structured around a visualization of a running track that leads the researcher from the beginning steps of their qualitative research all the way through to its publication. Each chapter begins with a text box that describes what the reader will learn in that chapter, as well as a chapter outline. It also includes closing sections reminding the reader what they have learned and exercises throughout for the reader to apply their learning. Also, at the end of each chapter further reading suggestions are provided for the reader to dive more deeply into the topics discussed in the book.

Overall, Qualitative Data Analysis: From Start to Finish is an excellent reference guide, self-study resource, and potential textbook for university classes on qualitative research. In order for it to be used, the reader should have foundational knowledge and experience in research generally, as well as the principles and purposes of qualitative research. However, for those who are actively engaging in qualitative research, are considering moving in that direction, or who want to critique qualitative research, the book is an invaluable resource.
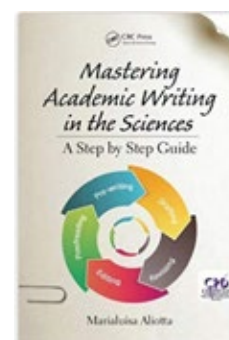
# Mastering Academic Writing in the Sciences: A Step-by-Step Guide

Marialuisa Aliotta
Taylor & Francis, 2018
ISBN 978 0 00 750710 8

Reviewed by: Csilla Hodges, Brunel Language Centre, Brunel University, London

*Mastering Academic Writing in the Sciences: A Step-by-Step Guide* aims to give a very systematic clarification of the process of what the writer calls the art and craft of highly academic assignment writing.

Starting in a very personal tone, this book is aimed to be used as a self-study resource, providing excellent examples for all steps of processes, from literature-matrix and mind-mapping, through templates for all sections of an assignment, to grammatical issues writers might encounter. It is ultimately intended for Masters and PhD students, nevertheless, anybody in the process of scientific writing can benefit from it.

In the first section it endeavors to help students understand the process of writing and equip them with strategies to cope with obstacles like procrastination or time-management. Readers can find checklists, self-assessment tools and links to help them get started.

The second section focuses solely on the five steps of writing; in the pre-writing stage one can learn about gathering and organizing information, how to read with purpose and literature review. The drafting section discusses the importance of audience and structuring methods. The revising unit explains the Triage Approach and common problems, and gives tips to deal with these. Editing includes further quality assessment, advice for better style and aids decluttering, while proofreading concentrates on the overall quality of the work including spelling, punctuation or referencing.

The third section provides templates and grammatical elements as supporting materials to the technical aspect of the work.

The book is quite lengthy with its nearly 200 pages, but easy the navigate through the sections skimming and picking the relevant content. Even if one was to study the entire book it would make for a very valuable reading, to which its anecdotal and lightly humorous, yet professional style help relate. Furthermore, it is written in a very intelligible manner providing readers with a complete set of tools to feel confident in starting their assignment. Overall, it can be considered the manual of academic writing.

# Academic Literacy, 3rd edition

Litha Beekman, Cecilia Dube, Herman Potgieter, Jenni Underhill

Juta, 2019

ISBN 978 14851 3005 5

## Reviewed by Dunlop Ochieng, University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria, South Africa

*Academic Literacy* by Litha Beekman, Cecilia Dube, Herman Potgieter and Jenni Underhill is aimed at helping prospective students and freshers in higher learning institutions to approach and master learning at this level. It orients them on how to adjust to a learning environment in higher education institutions, which is often characterized with higher freedom from guardians, on the one hand, and complex and demanding responsibilities, on the other hand.

The book composed of 9 chapters is an improved version of the first edition in 2011 and second edition in 2016. Chapter one by Litha Beekam introduces the purpose of the book and lays a foundation for the following chapters. It underscores the value of academic literacy which is far beyond the ability to read and write and mastery of normal English. Chapter two by Jenni Underhill accentuates that the acquisition of wide vocabularies and knowing the nature of meaning are key to effective reading and writing. It educates that cares need to be taken when using words in academic contexts. Chapter three by Cecilia Dube enlightens readers of the multitude of materials and how to choose appropriate materials to read. Further, it presents techniques for critical reading such as survey, question, read, recite and review (SQ3R). Chapter four by Jenni Underhill enlightens on academic argument and how to support it with evidence. It points out to the difference between fact and opinion and guides how to avoid generalizations and emotive language for the sake of agreeable academic texts. Chapter six by Jenni Underhill focuses on logical presentation and how to maintain a line of argument through coordinators and sequence markers in paragraphs. Chapter seven by Cecilia Dube orients readers on how to locate resources, use them to write assignments and document them properly. Chapter eight by Herman Potgieter presents strategies to effectively study and avoid procrastination. Chapter nine by Litha Beekman is about what learners need to know about examination preparation and overcoming its attendant challenges.

One of the strengths of the book is the setting of a learning purpose and outcomes at the beginning of each chapter. These help readers to be focused and serves as the basis to evaluate their achievement after every chapter. Secondly, it presents readers with tips on how to do things –sometimes clearly marked "tip" as on page 64, 66, and 94. Likewise, it present readers with a step-by step instruction of how to do certain acts. For example, pages 37 and 56 have instruction on "how to build own vocabulary", page 67 "how to weigh claims and counter-claims" and page 81, "how to paraphrase. Most importantly, the book uses figures and tables to illustrate skills such as "how to annotate a text" (Figure 3.1), "the argument structure" (Figure 4.1) and "approaching academic essay" (Figure 7.1). Likewise, samples are sometimes presented for readers to study and emulate as on page 72, "an argumentative essay" and page 83, "summarized information". Additionally, there are exercises in form of self-evaluation forms (p. 71), questions and activities (p. 71 question 2) at the end of every chapter. These help readers to reevaluate their achievement in meeting the set purpose and to determine whether they need to revise or proceed. With regard to style, the online version has big fonts which makes reading easy and a detailed navigation window which enables readers to quickly scan and locate information they are interested in. There is also an index at the end of the book for expediting scanning and locating information of interest. These are complemented by reference lists at the end of every chapter to help readers pursue topics of interest further.

The improvement of the book, in my view, would be to reduce the number of definitions for more tips and demonstrations of tasks. For example, I find that literacy has been severally defined and in different categories, which might confuse the reader. Likewise, I would recommend that in the next edition, the evaluation forms such as the one on page 22 and 23 be provided with a key to help readers know what certain amount of "No" or "Yes" mean. This would help the reader to change goals, strategies and habits that constrain their achievements. I would also expunge obvious information such as using print dictionary (p. 27) in the next edition – considering that learners in higher learning institutions must have encountered and used print dictionaries in lower levels of education. Alternatively, I would add soft skills such as formatting academic works, using offline and online grammar and spelling checkers, using citation and referencing software and using academic databases to search sources – I mean, the more of what has been presented on page 115, "using Google Scholar to locate sources." I would also, in the introductory part, add testimonies of people who have encountered challenges in their higher education studies and how they counteracted the challenges.

As a conclusion, this is an invaluable book for students who wish to succeed in higher education. It prepares them psychologically for the task and equips them with crucial skills needed for the task. By reading this book, they will acquire good learning strategies, realistic goals and good learning plans, just to mention a few. The book assuredly meets its objectives through simplicity and creativity.

# Data Collection Research Methods in Applied Linguistics

Heath Rose, Jim McKinley, Jessica Briggs Baffoe-Djan

Bloomsbury Academic: 2019

ISBN 978 1 35002 584 4

## Reviewed by: Van Giang Ngo, Hanoi University, Vietnam

Featuring theoretical input, practical strategies and concise guidelines for data collection, *Data Collection Research Methods in Applied Linguistics* is a highly recommended cross-referenced research book for post graduate students, teachers and researchers alike in obtaining a comprehensive understanding of behind-the-scene steps and tools during the data collection process to ensure a much needed degree of reliability and validity of a research project. What really impresses readers lies in the structure of each chapter. The Pre-reading activities structured as Think, Discuss and Imagine constitutes a plus point as it triggers logical curiosity and reading motivation for any social researcher.. The Post-reading encourages readers to 'reflect, expand and apply' what they have just read through non-technical terms presentation. The Implication for Teachers section paves the way for postgraduates and language teachers to gain a deeper understanding of a specific research tool so that they can put it into practice in their own contexts.

Each chapter deals with specific research query using storytelling like approach. For example, Chapter 9 (Focus Groups) aims to answer one of the tough questions in research, that is how to identify the 'minimum and maximum number' of participants 'in a single group'. Chapter 11 (Constructing and Using Corpora) offers a very clear-cut concept of how a corpus research can be exercised and help digital researchers shape their action plan, design their research project and assess the feasibility of research work to achieve expected outcomes.

Three striking points of the book are: (i) it is a well-thought and easy-to-follow guideline for both students and researchers, particularly for those who are seriously about to engage in conducting an academic study; (ii) researchers will find it very interactive when they read a chapter or just a related section of a chapter, associating the tools needed with their own research work; (iii) the messages implied in each chapter has a close connection with the last chapter which focuses on 'Realities in data collection process' and 'Transparency in research'. This indicates a bold view of the authors in encouraging any researchers to produce high-quality and well-recognised research work. The ultimate goal of this act is to remove the 'myth that research remains methodological pristine'

(p. 202).

In summary, this 1st edition research book indicates well-structured reference tool being purposive to researchers, teachers and students with a series of useful links can be found at page 40. This book also assists both experienced and novice researchers to strengthen their research work through the concepts of transparency of realities. Social researchers will find it very motivating and effective to make the right choice concerning data collection research tools.
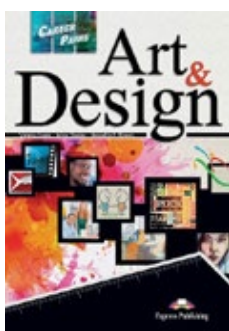
# Career Paths:  Art & Design

Virginia Evans, Jenny Dooley & Henrietta P. Rogers

Express Publishing, 2013

ISBN 978 1 4715 1886 7

## Reviewed by: Helen Hickey, University of the Arts London

*Career Paths:  Art and Design* is part of a series by Express Publishing. The book is aimed at art and design professionals who want to communicate effectively in the work environment.

The course book contains three books in one covering Common European Framework of Reference language levels from A1 to B1.  There are 15 units in each book and each unit is a double page spread.  All units follow the same format with the Get Ready stimulus questions to open the units followed by reading, vocabulary, listening, speaking, and writing tasks.  There is a useful glossary at the end of each book.  It would be helpful if it was easier to find the language level the books are aimed at.  I eventually had to go to the website to find out.

A wide-range of topics are covered in the books, starting with basics such as describing shape and colour and moving into the final book where the topics are related to specific design areas. The layout is eye-catching with written text and photos or drawings relating to the topic of the unit.  The tasks are quite snappy from point of view of changing activity frequently but at times it felt like there could be a bit more substance to the activities.  Perhaps some extension activities could have been included in the Teacher's Guide.

The vocabulary sections were particularly good but in Book 1, which is aimed at A1 students, perhaps some of the vocabulary activities would be a little too difficult for students of this level.  With the speaking tasks there wasn't any real variety in types of speaking activity with the majority of them being role plays.  Perhaps a better introduction to functional language was required to participate in the speaking tasks rather than just a few phrases, although the tutor could of course supplement this.

This book would not only be useful for art and design professionals but also for university students who have entered university with the required IELTS level but perhaps don't have the vocabulary for art and design.  I would recommend it as a supplementary text for ESP tutors.

# Assessment of Learners with Dyslexic –Type Difficulties (2nd Edition)

Kathleen Kelly, Silvia Philips, Liz Symes

Sage, 2018

ISBN 978 1 5264 2373 3
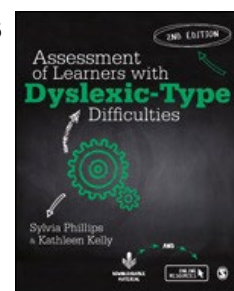
## Reviewed by: Marion Colledge, Independent dyslexia assessor and tutor; formerly Senior Lecturer in English, London Metropolitan University, UK

Kelly, Phillips and Symes set out to provide a complete manual of assessment for teachers of SpLD in the British context. The book is divided into five parts:

1. Setting the Context (This section, new for this edition, relies heavily on the British context, regarding the definition chosen of dyslexia and the current legal situation).

2. Starting the Process (focusing on screening, includes getting information from all parties, empowering the parent and child).

3. Informal Approaches to Assessment

4. Formal Assessment (including a sample report pro forma)

5. Managing the Assessment Process (including a section about referring to other professionals such as occupational therapist or behavioural optometrist)

Kelly and Phillips are hugely knowledgeable in their field and the book is extremely thorough. A great plus for the book is that there are photocopiable forms such as a thorough screening form, a miscue analysis record form and  'Attitudes to Literacy Lessons (primary)' and 'Attitude to English Lessons  (secondary) forms.

The book widely includes sub-sections on Linguistic and Cultural diversity in every relevant chapter. In Part 4, Formal Assessment, the authors cover all the main aspects such as 'working memory', speed of 'processing', which are generally assessed. They sketchily review major tests available for a formal diagnostic dyslexia assessment. They are careful to specify that some tests are not suitable for learners with English as a Second Language.  They cover the assessment of Mathematics, as some dyslexic learners experience difficulties here' and cognitive style.

The book will be most useful for inexperienced teachers, and students on PGCE courses.

# Insights into Marketing Vocabulary: Learn, Manage, Create

Malwina Dietrich, Alicja Fandrejewska
Poltext Publishers, 2019
ISBN 978 8 3756 1990 4

Reviewed by: Aleksandra Luczak

*Insights into Marketing Vocabulary* is a new publication from Poltext Publishing House. It is a self-study book for language learners, business students as well as professionals, with insightful stories and anecdotes of the past, current and future world of marketing.

According to the description, *Insights into Marketing Vocabulary*, with its specialized content, is recommended for B1-B2 learners, yet an advanced learner will also be able to find appropriately challenging tasks. Due to the popularity of American English and American influence in modern day marketing, the authors decided to embrace the American style and spelling in their book, as well as American pronunciation in the audio files. The book aims to develop all language skills: speaking, reading, listening and writing, as well as highly sought-after transferable skills like problem-solving and critical thinking.

*Insights in Marketing Vocabulary* consists of 14 chapters (233 pages) which address important current and future marketing theories and vocabulary. Chapters 1 to 5 remind us of the fundamentals of marketing with topics such as marketing research, marketing mix, brand loyalty and brand awareness. In chapters 6,7 and 8 the authors look at how marketing has changed due to the internet revolution and present us with information on the emergence of influencer marketing, the power of brand communities and the importance of building a personal brand. Chapters 9 and 10 focus on corporate marketing trends like CSR (corporate social responsibility) and ICT (information and communication technology). Chapter 11 takes us into the world of politics with examples of past and current political marketing campaigns. The last three chapters with topics like glocalization and consumerism look at the downside of marketing, especially chapter 14, which has a thought-provoking title "Have we crossed the line". The book concludes with a comprehensive answer key, audio scripts and glossary of key marketing terms.

A typical chapter is divided into three sections, *Learn, Manage* and *Create*. The *Learn* section is the reading comprehension that can be read as well as listened to. The *Manage* section includes a comprehension exercise, two vocabulary exercises and a summary, which is a mind map of key terms highlighted in the reading comprehension. What concludes the second section is a marketing quiz that checks the understanding of the marketing concepts. The final section, *Create*, has two interchanging components, a case study and a writing section, with tasks consisting in writing a marketing plan, advertorial and press release.

To conclude, the book provides its readers with the opportunity not only to develop linguistic skills and expand their range of marketing vocabulary but also engages them in finding solutions to current marketing issues. What is worth mentioning is that the texts include many examples and stories, which allow the reader to gain a better insight and understanding of the subject matter. Storytelling is a powerful teaching method that triggers the emotions and captivates the imagination.
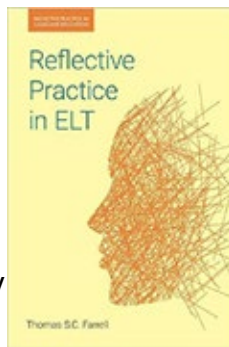
# Reflective Practice in Language Education

Thomas S.C. Farrell

Equinox Publishing, 2019

ISBN 978 1 7817 96542

Reviewed by: Rinelle Evans, Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria, South Africa and National Chair of the South African Association for Language Teaching

Being encouraged to reflect critically on one's own classroom practice with the purpose of making adaptations has become a central part of teacher education and professional development programmes. The principal aim of RP is to improve as an effective classroom practitioner and as a corollary provide excellent opportunities for students to learn (a new language) in a particular, unique context.

*Reflective practice in ELT* consists of seven chapters (179 pages) and discusses the concept of reflective practice in general, outlines the various known models and approaches currently in use and gives practical guidelines on cultivating reflective practice. The author's in-depth knowledge of the subject and many years' experience has led to the conceptualisation of an entire series dedicated to reflective practice in language education. The other books clarify different approaches that have been taken within RP and outline current themes e.g. using video to support reflection and the importance of RP in the induction years. Underpinned by cutting edge research and solid theory, the book is written in palatable English and structured as a self-study guide with prompt questions posed to the reader in shaded blocks. The chapters are self-contained, well-structured and assume no previous background in language teacher education or RP.

Chapter 1 deliberates over several definitions found in the literature on RP leading in with a famous quote by Socrates: "the unexamined life is not worth living" (p.7). Chapter 2 introduces various typologies starting off with John Dewey's original reflective inquiry model extended by Donald Schön. The typologies of David Kolb, Graham Gibbs, Christopher Johns, Stephen Brookfield and Terry Borton are also discussed. The author outlines his personal understanding of reflective practice using a typology from his earlier work and his updated framework for reflecting on practice. Chapter 3 presents six principles of RP which point to more than RP being just a means to fix or improve practice but extends beyond the classroom to encompass a teacher's career and life. Chapter 4 offers practical guidelines on reflective tools commonly used by teachers. These include dialogue writing, classroom observations, action research, narrative study, case analysis and concept mapping. Both the benefits and the challenges of each tool are discussed. In Chapter 5 an experienced TESOL teacher shares his reflective journey using a holistic framework that covers his teaching philosophy, principles, theory and practice in and beyond the classroom. The complex and dynamic nature of RP is evident as he shares with the reader how he gained a full understanding of the factors which influence what teachers do in the classroom. Chapter 6 outlines how an individual can cultivate a reflective disposition and how RP should shift from being a (mandatory) ritual to a more meaningful and collaborative process. The final chapter discusses ten key questions related to RP in an attempt to dismiss the views of sceptics and to address some ambiguities associated with RP.

This text comes highly recommended and although the primary readership is described as those preparing to become language teachers or TESOL professionals, the book is not culture bound and has great applicability beyond the general ELT arena. Therefore, it is equally valuable to tutors, lecturers and practitioners involved in EOP, EAP, ESAP and academic literacies, since all these professionals need to embrace RP at some point in their careers. This also justifies the review of this publication in this Journal. The book ought to be a prescribed source for pre-service, novice and experienced teachers. Programme administrators, supervisors, and mentors will also find the contents useful as a refresher for evaluating their own practice.

# IELTS Trainer 2 Academic

Amanda French, Miles Hordern, Anethea Bazin, Katy Salisbury

Cambridge University Press, 2019

ISBN 978 1 1085 6758 9

Reviewed by: Thais Caroline Ferreira, EAP Lecturer at Surrey International Institute, Dongbei University of Finance and Economics, China

*IELTS Trainer 2 Academic* is part of the Cambridge *IELTS Trainer* series aimed at anyone who plans to take the International English Language Testing System Academic exam. It is recognised as 'Official Cambridge Exam Preparation' material. The series also offers an alternative training book in General English.

According to the introduction section, *IELTS Trainer 2 Academic* is intended for anyone who would like to achieve a Band score of 6 or higher in the IELTS Academic exam. It states that it can be used in-class with a teacher, or by students preparing for the exam on their own. The book offers six practice tests at the same level as the real exam. It also provides training and tips on how to best approach each part of the IELTS Academic exam.

*IELTS Trainer 2 Academic* consists of four main sections. The first section is an in-depth introduction which explains the purpose of the book and how it can be used. It also includes a breakdown of the IELTS exam itself, with an explanation of the types of questions which may arise in the exam. The second section of the book provides two types of training on different possible questions which may arise in the exam. Each training chapter includes a clarification on what may be tested for each skill and what needs to be done in order to achieve the best results. In addition to practise exercises, this section also offers tips, advice and offers some useful strategies for each section of the test. This is followed by four IELTS Academic practice tests which are similar in content to the real exam. The practice tests also include useful tips throughout. The final section provides sample answer sheets of the IELTS exam. Although this publication does not provide a CD, the remainder of the resources missing from the book can be found online. This includes the audio, the audio script and answer keys.

Overall this book is very effective clarifying every section of the test in order to help students become more familiar with it. The speaking practice sections are particularly impressive as each one includes examiner scripts very similar in wording to the exam itself. It should, however, be emphasised that this book is not an English teaching book, nor does it claim to be. Consequently, this book would be more useful to students with upper-intermediate to advanced English language proficiency. Additionally, this book also requires students to be aware of metalanguage as it is used throughout. Students who are within this category are likely to benefit from this publication.

# English in Global Aviation

Eric Friginal, Elizabeth Mathews, Jennifer Roberts

Bloomsbury Academic, 2019

ISBN 978 1350 0593 06

Reviewed by: Henry Emery, Latitude Aviation English Services, Plymouth, UK

Aviation English (AE) is often seen as a complex and impenetrable area of ESP. As airline passengers, we can imagine the safety-critical nature of aeronautical communications, but few of us get anything more than a glimpse of the flight deck, and fewer still have stepped into the ATC ops room or walked around a maintenance hangar. Few would know where to begin with global language policy in aviation. And for those who wish to get involved in researching or teaching in this exciting and challenging area, it is not easy to get your hands on the literature, to understand what has been done, and to get a feel for how AE is taught.

Friginal, Mathews and Roberts's *English in Global Aviation* is a bold attempt to address these gaps, and given that the key language policy – the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Language Proficiency Requirements – were adopted nearly 20 years ago, it is published not before time. With guest contributions from reputable experts in the field, the book brings together a wide range of subject matter organised in three parts: Context, Research and Pedagogy. Part one presents useful analyses of well-known accidents followed by an explanation of the inner-workings of ICAO and an introduction to language as a human factor in aviation. Part two gives an overview of the literature, a presentation of the role of corpus linguistics, and a comparison of communications in aviation with those of other domains such as in maritime and call centres. And for those interested in teaching, part three provides an outline of pedagogical considerations, a summary of the various aviation personnel and their language needs, some excellent examples of lesson plans informed by corpus linguistics, and a chapter dedicated to the needs of students preparing for aviation training in the medium of English.

Throughout the book, two important themes emerge: 1) AE is still in its infancy; and 2) AE is largely about safety. In that sense, for both newcomers and experienced practitioners, *English in Global Aviation* is an essential text, and will no doubt become well-thumbed reference on the bookshelves of all those involved with AE.

# The Birth of the Academic Article: Le Journal des Sçavans and the Philosophical Transactions 1665 – 1700

David Banks

Equinox Publishing, 2019.

ISBN 978 1781 7983 00

## Reviewed by: Bernard Nchindila, North-West University, Mafikeng, South Africa

*The Birth of the Academic Article*: *Le Journal des Sçavans* and *the Philosophical Transactions 1665 – 1700* by David Banks makes a remarkable attempt at analysing the two first academic journals, which are *Le Journal des Sçavans*, the first one developed in Paris and the *Philosophical Transactions*, which was the second, developed in London. The analysis focuses on the period from the inception of the journals in 1665 to the end of the 17th century in 1700. As the author writes about the journals, "both still exist in some form and have thus been in existence, with only very minor interruptions, for three and a half centuries " (p.1). Banks argues that the contrast of both the historical and social situations of France and England have however produced different types of documents, itself "a demonstration of the importance of context in the creation of text and a brilliant case study of the interplay between context and text" (p. 1).

The book focuses on the type of text associated with the academic journal article, starting with the linguistic background, then explaining the general approach to the linguistic background. This is followed by the linguistic phenomena identified for analysis, then comes the historical background of France and England within the seventeenth century. Next is the description of the texts the author makes for the covered period. Illustrated by the linguistic phenomena discussed, giving examples from the corpus, this is borne out by the breakdown of the nine chapters in the book. Chapter one is dedicated to the introduction, chapter two to the linguistic back background, chapter three to the historical background while chapter four deals with the documents to be used or the corpus. Chapter five is the thematic structure while chapter six is dedicated to transitivity, and chapter seven deals with modality. Finally, chapter eight is about nominalisation and chapter nine serves as an overview or conclusion of the book, complemented by two appendices of the selected corpus of the two journals.

All the texts analysed were available in image form on the Internet, although they were not subjected to computer treatment. Similarly, though the book contains numbers in the analyses, Banks merely presents them as they are, and therefore "no statistical tests have been applied" (p.2). Distinguishing between formalist theories, the best known of which is generative grammar, cognitive theories, popularly known to be at play in communication and functionalist theories, Banks settles for functionalist theories, with a focus on Michael Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (e.g. Halliday 1978 among others).

Since much of the book is dedicated to the results of the analyses of the identified four major linguistic phenomena, namely thematic structure, the process types, modality and nominalisation of the process, each of which is explained, the thrust of the book is arguably a linguistic one. The strength of and attraction to the book lies in the extra mile that the book goes to in breaking down both the linguistic themes and theories into comprehensible chunks for easy grasp of the linguistic phenomena. Working with the corpus published in the two journals from a multidisciplinary perspective, the book showcases the specialised scientific language that is needed in order to get one's work published in scientific journals. However, compelling even beyond the corpus analysed from the two journals, therefore, is the point made by Banks that:

> the scientific research article has become one of the most widely studied types of text, not only because of its intrinsic interest, but also because of the more prosaic fact that, since English has become the lingua franca of the international scientific community, non-Anglophone scientists are faced with the problem of mastering a specialised variety of a second language, in order to get their work published (p.1)

If the thread of the book dedicated to the contrast of both the historical and social situations of France and England was minimised it would not deduct from the linguistic gist of the book. It appears to be more suited for enhancement elsewhere, much as justification for its inclusion to the current book is provided.

Nevertheless, in sum, the book is useful in the field of specialised scientific language that is needed in order to get one's work published in scientific journals in both Anglophone and non-Anglophone scientific writing communities.

The promise that the book makes by drawing on Michael Halliday's language as a social semiotic makes it an even empowering asset to both Master's and Doctoral students working in the broad research area of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), beyond both the historical and social contexts of the two journals it has analysed.

## References

Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language meaning.* Arnold.

# The Academic Skills Handbook

Diana Hopkins, Tom Reid
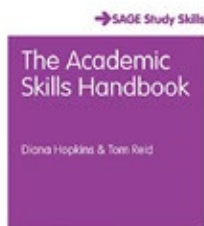Sage, 2018
ISBN 978 1 4739 9715 8

Reviewed by: Christopher Doxtator, Department of English and the Office of International Affairs, University of Colorado Denver – International College Beijing

*The Academic Skills Handbook* is a 2018 book from Sage. Diana Hopkins and Tom Reid present this comprehensive handbook on academic skills for new undergraduates, postgraduates, or any students seeking an updated understanding of the expectations and processes of succeeding in academic contexts. Both authors lead academic skills centers at their respective institutions, and their combined input provides everything students need to know about the rules, conventions, and practices of academic culture.

The book begins by introducing academic culture, and the authors outline how their focus on assignments, processes, and examples will equip students with the knowledge to join and thrive in this new culture. Hopkins and Reid divide their book into three sections: Writing Skills; Reading & Critical Analysis Skills; And Presentations, Speaking and Listening Skills. Each section takes readers from introductory stages to advanced stages of understanding by offering information, practice opportunities, and tools for self-assessment and feedback.

Each of the main sections is broken into several chapters. For example, the Writing Skills section includes chapters that teach academic essays, lab reports, writing exams, and even dissertations and posters. Additional chapters focus on clarity, accuracy, concision, style, and references. Furthermore, each subtopic is broken down into five steps to scaffold user learning. Step one introduces readers to the topic and the goals for the chapter. Step two provides a diagnostic for self-assessment. Step three offers a scoring chart for the assessment. Step four provides practice opportunities for skills related to the topic. Lastly, step five provides a checklist for readers to identify and reflect on what they have learned in the chapter.

Because each chapter is organized with an introduction and diagnostic, teaching and practicing, and assessment and reflection, the book equips readers with a step-by-step process for improving academic culture skills across the spectrum of writing, reading, and speaking. The text includes several online resources for learning and assessment, and the online sample library offers an extensive collection of exemplars to analyze and study.

There are also annotated samples of writing, so readers can also gain insight from the authors' critique of each genre presented.

*The Academic Skills Handbook* is a comprehensive guide for mastering academia's three most important skills: writing, reading, and presenting. The authors focus on information, process, and product, so readers can understand and practice every step along producing, evaluating, and sharing academic work in a variety of mediums. The book is interactive and hands-on, making it an engaging learning tool that will have lasting effects. Scaffolding each core skill and providing a robust online collection of practice and model resources, *The Academic Skills Handbook* is the complete information and process manual for college students.
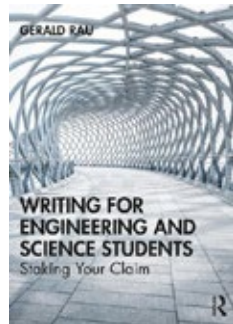
# Writing for Engineering and Science Students

Gerald Lau
Routledge, 2020
ISBN 978 1 138 38825 3

Reviewed by: Mark Krzanowski, *Brunel University London (BUL) and Chongqing University of Posts and Telecommunications (CQUPT), Chongqing, China*

*Writing for Engineering and Science Students* is a new publication from Routledge. It is part of the English Language and Applied Linguistics series, and it complements this series so well.

According to the back cover, *Writing* is designed to be a resource aimed at both international students and native speakers of English and covers all relevant aspects of academic and technical writing. Therefore, it seems that it can be of use to students studying STEM (i.e., Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects.

*Writing* consists of 5 parts and 27 chapters (294 pages in total). The book includes, *inter alia*, a distinctive focus on Engineering as an applied science, but often following the writing patters from the natural sciences. In the Preface, the author asserts that normally Engineering adheres to the same basic writing paradigm as the natural sciences, this framework being IMRD (= Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion). In Chapter 2 the author provides a useful cross-comparison of an overall format of research articles, with due attention paid to subtle variations in in the natural sciences, engineering and mathematics, and the social sciences. Chapters 10 to 17 in PART 3 are exceptionally useful, since the writer explores different genres and their *minutiae*. Having elaborated on the features of undergraduate and postgraduate writing, Lau proceeds to review and exemplify the essential elements of academic writing, scientific writing, writing about oneself and others, academic and technical presentations, and, last but not least, principles for successful email. Chapter 11 deals with undergraduate writing, and of particular use are the subsections dealing with lab reports, essays and senior projects. Chapter 12 focuses on graduate writing, and postgraduate students are likely to be attracted to the subsections covering research articles, research proposals, conference papers, industrial journal articles and theses or dissertations.

At the beginning of the book Lau offers a proviso that the book is aimed at students, not teachers, and adds that this resource can be exploited in flipped classrooms.

The remainder of the book (PART 4: Creating your masterpiece and Part 5: Adding the final touches) offer ample guidance to readers as to how a specific type of a manuscript needs to be approached. The writer discusses all the stages of a writing process, from start to finish (from pre-writing to revision and finalization). All this is also supplemented by relevant advice on adding the final finish, e.g., illustrations/graphics, citations and references as well as submission and review.

Sub-chapter 25.3 (Reference management) is particularly useful as it demonstrates how Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) has recently revolutionized the process of searching for sources, making in-text references and compiling bibliographies so efficient and user-friendly. The writer discusses the importance of the latest online reference managers such as Mendeley, Refworks and Zotero. It appears that in the next edition it would be desirable to mention other online reference managers, and especially www.citethisforme.com I have been teaching all my students how to use this website for referencing and the results have been exceptionally reassuring.

In conclusion, *Writing for Engineering and Science Students* is a timely new publication which addresses the writing needs of undergraduate and postgraduate students in STEM subjects (and specially in Engineering). Learners can use their book on their own (in no particular order) or under the guidance of a tutor. There is an electronic version of this book as well. Additional supplementary materials are provided online (this includes an impressive PowerPoint summary of each chapter). Overall, this is an excellent publication that deserves a prominent place in university courses, curricula and syllabi.

# Software: PUSTULKA – App for ESP Web-Based Testing

Aleksandra Łuczak, Jarosław Król

pustulka.edu.pl

## Reviewed by: Malwina Dietrich

PUSTULKA (pustulka.edu.pl ) is web-based testing software that caters for the needs of ESP teachers. PUSTULKA works on a website, so it does not require teachers to download or install. It does not confine teachers to use the content they create to a single school/ university only but lets them create and use the resources anywhere they have access to the internet.

With PUSTULKA teachers may create cloze texts, multiple choice, drop-down list, checkbox, true/false and listening exercises as well as short and long answers. Teachers prepare the content of the exercise in Word or other plain text documents, e.g. Notepad and with a few clicks transfer them to the app.

Grading is automatic except for short and long answer exercises which require manual grading but the manual points add up to the total result. Students can see their answers and partial result after submission and can analyse their mistakes. PUSTULKA saves the results automatically and eliminates the risk of losing a student's work if the connection or equipment fail. With PUSTULKA testers may award additional points manually for minor spelling mistakes or correct, alternative answers not included in the answer key.

The application has been designed so that it works on computers and mobile devices. Technical requirements to use it in the classroom are just the internet connection and standard internet browsers (e.g. Google Chrome, Chrome for Android, Mozilla, Edge, Internet Explorer). To sit a test, students do not need to register or create an account but only go to a website: pustulka.edu.pl and enter a test code provided by their teacher.

Teachers who contribute the content can make some of their exercises public, so that their students can learn outside the classroom. Now the collection of public exercises comprised over 250 exercises in English, Spanish and Polish languages. Exercises teacher create may be kept private or shared with other teachers. Teachers may export test results to Excel files for more detailed analysis. They may also print the completed test to show it to a student and discuss the mistakes.

PUSTULKA is a solution for teachers who enjoy writing tests but detest checking them. It saves teachers' time, inspires creativity, develops digital competence, facilitates collaboration and knowledge sharing. It fills in the niche of web-based language testing software as it allows for the creation of the standard exercises an ESP teacher may need, it is not case or space sensitive and is reasonably priced (around €30 per year). Paid subscription gives teachers access to other teachers' exercises which they decided to share.

You can check out how the app works by setting up a free trial account. Go to Help where you will find a sample test (sample test code is 5773) and links to tutorials and a manual showing the features of PUSTULKA and instructions how to use it.