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Approaches to teaching ESP and EAP in open and distance learning

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Approaches to teaching ESP and EAP in open and distance learning

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Cutting-edge developments in teacher education, materials design, and assessment and testing in ESP and EAP

46th Annual IATEFL conference, Glasgow, 19 – 23 March 2012



Overview

- Background
- Underpinning theories
- The course design process
- Teaching and learning
- Assessment
- Challenges and implications
- Questions and comments



Background



- The open and distance learning context
- Learning environment
- OpenELT's mission

“Flexible learning means you can study at home, at work or on the move”



Home

How does OU study work?

What can I study?

What are the benefits?

What support do I get?

OU for employers

Fees and funding

When can I start?

Is the OU for me?

FAQs

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Underpinning theories for the EAP/ ESP course design (I)

- Content and language integrated learning - CLIL (see Lyster & Ballinger 2011 for recent developments)
 - ‘an instructional approach in which non-linguistic curricular content such as geography or science is taught to students through the medium of a language that they are concurrently learning as an additional language.’ (Lyster & Ballinger 2011, p. 279)
- Context, content and language integrated learning (CCLIL)

Underpinning theories for the EAP/ ESP course design (II)



Systemic functional linguistics
(Halliday 1994)

Language is

- (1) used for functional purposes;
- (2) context-specific;
- (3) used for making meaning; and
- (4) a semiotic process which involves making choices (Eggins, 2004, p. 3)

SFL-based genre pedagogy (Martin 1999)

Genres defined as 'staged, goal-oriented social processes' (Martin 1997)

Designing an ESP course: LB160

Professional communication skills for business studies (I)



- Focus on reading and writing in business studies
- 24 weeks (300 hours); 30 points; Level 1
- OUBS course (B120 An introduction to business studies) as the basis for LB160 Learning Outcomes

B120

- recognise, compare and contrast different ways of analysing business case studies and other material about contemporary business practice

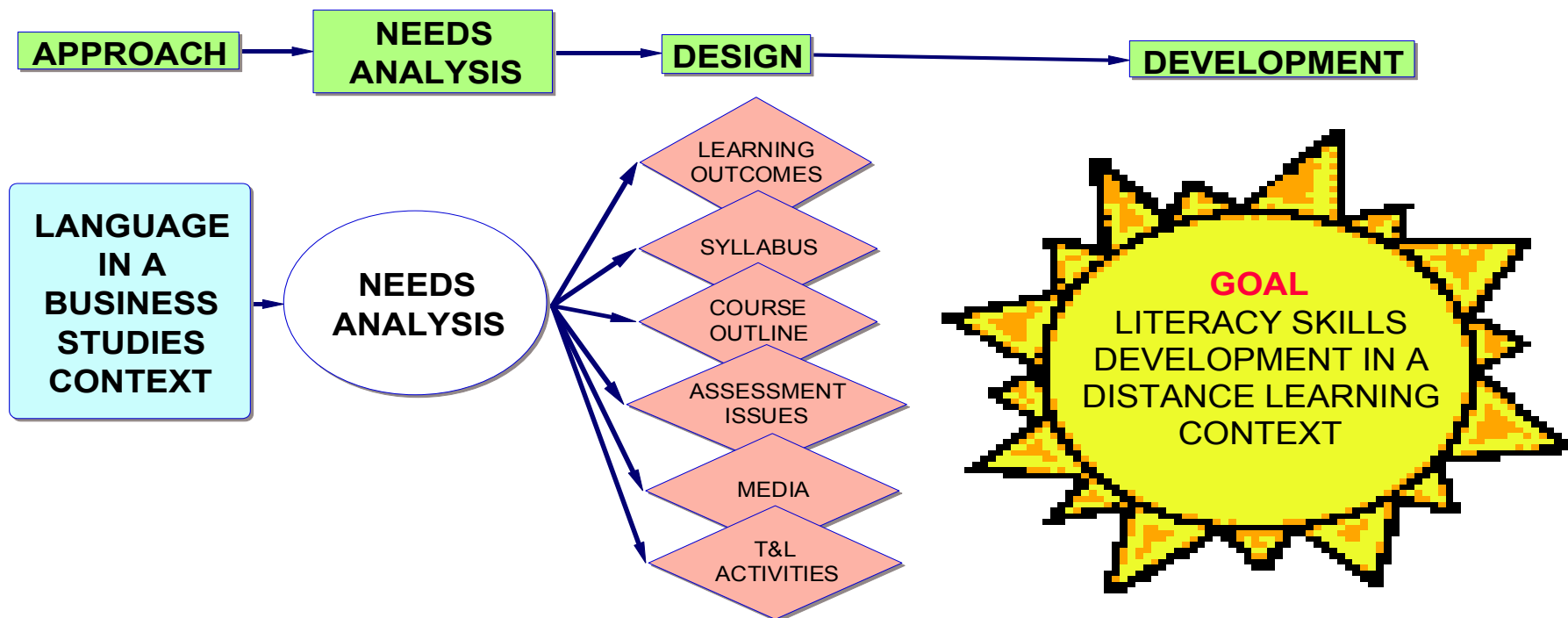
LB160

- *Develop the language used to...*

recognise, compare and contrast ...

Designing an ESP course: LB160

Professional communication skills for business studies (II)



Needs analysis



- Student writing
- Student interviews
- Interviews with tutors and regional academics
- Genre analysis of assignments in business school

Broad Syllabus framework



1. Context of Culture

2. Context of Situation

What subject matter? - Who/ what relationship? - What mode?

3. Participants

4. Business Skills/ Cognitive Skills

5. Literacy/Language Skills

6. Concept Map of Subject Matter

7. Text

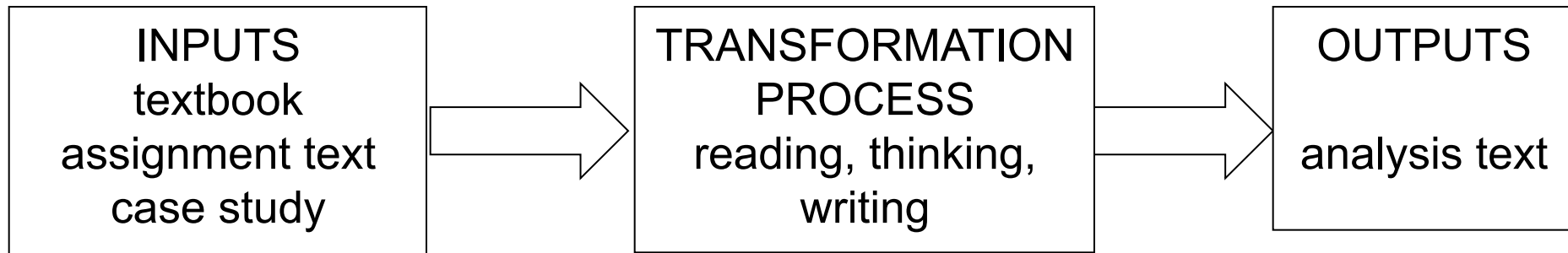
Text types – Text purpose – Text organization

Paragraphs – Sentences – Relationships between sentences

8. Language

Grammar - Vocabulary

Process of reading and writing in business studies



The case study analysis process



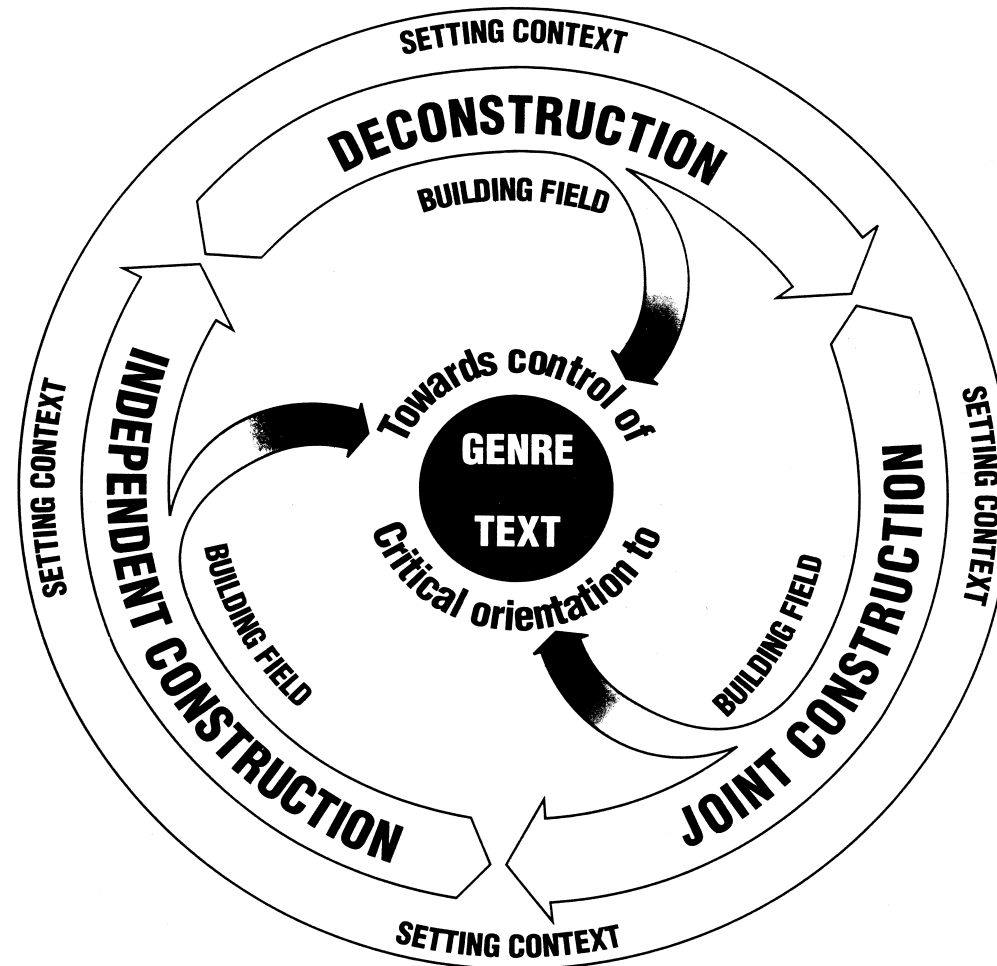
Analysing skills are:

- 1. Mapping the case**
 - (Reading strategies, text structure)
- **2. Framing the case**
 - (Business studies concepts)
- **3. Noticing influences and impacts**
 - (Cause-effect; information flow)
- **4. Identifying problems**
- **5. Proposing solutions**
 - (Modalisation)
- **6. Evaluating the analysis**
 - (Persuasion)

The pedagogy: the Teaching and Learning Cycle (Martin 2009)



Three
phases



Books



LB160
Professional communication skills for business studies



The Open University

Book 1 | Analysing Business Cases



LB160
Professional communication skills for business studies



The Open University

Book 2 | Writing Successful Essays



LB160
Professional communication skills for business studies



The Open University

Book 3 | Producing Influential Documents



Exploiting the open and distance learning environment



- The learning management system
- The central course team
- The tutor
- Other students
- Asynchronous and synchronous communication
- Use of social networking (FaceBook)



Example learning activity



Session 3 (week 3)

Activity 3.17 [Phase 3: independent construction]

Purpose: to use the skills learned in this session to write up a Stakeholder analysis of an organisation.

Task: read Text 3.4 in Resource Book 1, using active reading strategies to map the case. Then make notes to frame the case using a stakeholder analysis. Decide whether you will frame the stakeholders using the framework from either the AA analysis or the Nike and Gap analyses. Write up a stakeholder analysis of the copper mining companies in Escondida. Remember to use power and interest to frame your analysis. When you have finished, there is an example of a written-up analysis in Resource Book 1 to compare yours with (Text 3.5).

Check your answer with the one suggested in the Answer section.



Formative feedback

- Formative assessment
- Peer feedback via forum
- Elluminate tutorial

L185 English for Academic purposes online



- Similar course design approach to LB160
- Focus on all four skills
- Use of more multimedia materials (e.g., audio and video) than in LB160
- Delivered completely online

Assessment: continuous and end of course assessment



- LB160: 4 assignments (50%) and 1 end of course assessment (50%)
- L185: 5 assignments (50%) and 1 end of course assessment (50%)

Marking criteria: adapted from Bonanno & Jones (2007)



These marking criteria are explicitly presented to students.

A Use of source material

Is information from case study and other sources correct and appropriate for the task?

B Structure and development of the text

Is the structure of the text clear and appropriate to the task and the context?

C Control of academic writing style

Does the writing style conform to appropriate patterns of written academic English?

D Grammatical correctness

E Qualities of presentation

Assessment: LB160 example



- Assessment in LB160 reflects the assessment culture in business school

Example (Assignment 2):

Use the SWOT framework of analysis to critically examine the internal and external environment of Brompton Bicycle as described in the case study. Provide recommendations to Brompton Bicycle about future actions they should take for business success.

Complete the task by reading and analysing the case study that follows and the three expert opinions at the end. Take into account your tutor's feedback on TMA01 in writing this analysis.

You should submit your assignment by the given deadline. Your assignment should not exceed 800 words.

Assessment: L185 example



Assignment 3

Using sources from Block 3, respond to the following assignment task.

People's health is a result of internal and external factors. Describe two factors and explain their effects on people's health.

Current state of play



LB160 (2011)

- 454 students (2011)
– both native and non-native speakers of English
- 20 tutor groups (20 – 25 students)

L185 (2012)

- 414 students (2012) – both native and non-native speakers of English
- 20 tutors groups (20 – 25 students)

Evaluation: LB160



An internal evaluation study conducted in 2011, focusing on **recruitment, retention, progression and attainment:**

- Meeting recruitment target (approx. 500)
- Good levels of retention (over 70%) compared to other modules (e.g., B120 64%)
- Exceptional level of progression (74% compared to OU average 59% in 2009)
- High levels of attainment (66% compared to B120 59% in 2010)
- Most students pursuing further studies after LB160 opted for a Level 2 business studies module

Students' own voices



“I am utilising the skills I learnt, writing workplace documents and in the current [module] I am analysing more than before when reading articles and assignments. I am more conscious of the objectives and the assignments. LB160 changed the way I look at [modules] and way I look at assignments and activities...’

“It has helped me with essay writing which will help me with all of my future courses of study.”

“I had certain expectations that it would improve my Business Communication skills, but it gave me so much more. It gave me the skills to analyse written text in a way that I hadn't been doing up until then and the ability to summarise clearly and succinctly and I think my ability to write clearly is recognised at work now.”

Challenges and implications



- Making study materials motivating
- Working with subject experts crucial
- At least some basic knowledge of the subject area essential for ESP/ EAP specialists
- Responding to varying student needs including native vs non-native
- Accessibility issues
- Valuing students' experience
- How to balance subject areas (esp. for EAP)
- Balance between student workload and study materials
- Choice of media
- Student non-participation in online activities



Any questions or comments?

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