

Original scientific paper

ENGLISH FOR MARKET RESEARCH REPORT WRITING: COURSE DESIGN

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Abstract. *At undergraduate and postgraduate levels in business schools, lecturers often provide students with a suggested structure for a market research report assignment. Thereafter, the students are left to independently master the appropriate register and the technique of writing for this genre. While many students may learn to be good at business studies, they might fall short in writing despite having to produce several reports at university level. One of the reasons for this shortfall may be that some of the students may lack the confidence to produce reports which meet academic or professional standards in the English language. A short English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course that addresses the technical writing needs of business students as an option or add-on course to undergraduate and postgraduate business curricula could provide the simple solution. It could even be formalised as a credit bearing course to motivate students to undertake it. With a view to the above, as a pilot ESP module, a 15-hour English for Market Research Report Writing Skills course was designed to try and meet the specific needs of undergraduate market research students at the Warwick Business School (WBS). It was intended to be taught under the auspices of the Warwick Skills Certificate Programme at the University of Warwick in the United Kingdom (UK).*

Key words: *business, report, writing, ESP*

1. INTRODUCTION: TARGET NEEDS, STUDENTS, SYLLABUS

Among undergraduate students across the UK, Marketing Analysis is the most popular marketing course followed by Marketing Communications. These courses require students to write several academic assignments in the form of reports. Personal interviews of final year students for whom English is a second language revealed that they would benefit more from a professional report writing course as it would likely address both their academic and professional needs.

Although the Warwick Preessional is an intensive course, which includes some training in a range of writing genres, it does not detail or focus on aspects that are specific to Market Research (MR) report writing. Thus, it was reported that some WBS students who had initially enrolled to learn about aspects of MR report writing, subsequently chose to drop out of the course altogether by the second session when they realised that the course was not going to meet their needs. Interviews of these students and their

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subsequent responses to the needs analysis questionnaire (see Appendix 1), revealed that although they had achieved respectable IELTS scores of 7.0 and above, they still faced problems in technical and professional writing.

In order to encourage autonomous and reflective learning, the University of Warwick introduced an optional course entitled the Warwick Skills Portfolio Award (WSPA). This invites students to set personal goals and review their targets with a coach in response to their personal needs. Where students are aware of what they need to focus on, this can be a very effective way to focus their attention on specific skills and areas. However, many students need an academic “diagnosis” by an expert. What follows are the results of research involving a small number of students who recognised the need to work on their professional business writing skills, and details of a course that was designed to meet their needs – and by extension, many other business students in a similar situation.

The four WBS students who showed an interest in MR report writing skills had opted for market research as part of their final year project and wanted professional guidance regarding the ‘tight’ (as one of them put it) and genre-specific language of market reports. Their other objective was to confidently mention in their future job applications that MR report writing was one of their strengths. Tables 1 and 2 below provide their demographic data and other needs, respectively, as per their responses to the needs analysis questionnaire:

Table 1 Demographic Data

Qs 1-7

Student	Nationality	First language	Age	Gender	English study level	IELTS
Abbas	Pakistani	Urdu	21-25	Male	Undergraduate	8.0
Sajid	Pakistani	Punjabi	“	“	“	7.0
Basheera	Indian	English	“	Female	“	7.5
Anahita	Indian	Gujarati	“	“	“	7.0

Table 2 Writing Competence – Self-Evaluation

Qs 9-11 and Qs 13-14

Student	Written reports before	Self rating	Overall problems	When offer course	Class length
Abbas	Yes	Good	Data interpretation; ok in business writing	Fourth year	1½
Sajid	“	Very Good	“	“	“
Basheera	“	Competent	Ok in data interpretation; not in business writing	“	2
Anahita	“	Competent	“	“	1½

Table 3 Specific Concerns in Writing

Q 12

Concerns	Abbas	Sajid	Basheera	Anahita
Assessing information relevance, fact and opinion	8	12		
Interpreting graphs and statistics	12	15	1	1
Describing graphs and statistics	12	9	4	4
Making comparisons and contrasts	10	12		
Impersonal reporting	12	8	3	3
Personal reporting	15	11	6	6
Active and Passive voice	13	10	2	1
Paraphrasing/Summarising	5	4	4	5
Complex multi-noun phrases	4	4	5	4
Verbs and tenses	12	8		
Paragraphing	5	5		6
Punctuation	8	11		
Selecting and organizing the material	15	10		
Linking findings, conclusions and recommendations	1	15		
Writing introductions	1	12		1
Writing conclusions and recommendations	1	12		1

Legend: 1 is most important, and 15 is least important

These responses were interesting. While the Pakistani students claimed that, overall, they found it difficult to interpret data, they also stated that they could write in business-appropriate language. Yet, in question 12, which asked for specific concerns, they stated almost the opposite. This contrasted with the two Indian students who stated that overall, they could interpret data but were unable to write in business-appropriate language. However, in response to question 12, they claimed that interpreting data was a problem.

The common needs of the students are highlighted in yellow in Table 3 (where 1 = least important, and 15 = most important): paraphrasing, summarising and using complex multi-noun phrases. Paragraphing is concerned with [comprehension of source text and] sentence structure. The unshaded scores suggest that these students did not consider them to be pertinent. The grey-highlighted concerns suggest a contrast in ratings. The Indians wanted to learn personal reporting, and how to differentiate between the active and passive voice; while the Pakistanis claimed to be well-versed in these areas, except Sajid in impersonal reporting. Two of the students stated that they needed to work on writing introductions, conclusions and recommendations, whereas one rated them to be quite unimportant. Yet another seemed not to even consider it an issue.

Owing to the fact that these learners hailed from neighbouring countries where English is both the official and second language, and that they had achieved a band 7.0 or above in IELTS, they were considered a homogeneous group herein, albeit with some heterogeneous wants in the specified genre.

In light of the contradictions in some of their responses, it was regarded as fair to construe that these students were not exactly sure of what their real needs or concerns were. Therefore, in designing a course to meet their needs and the needs of other students like them, it was necessary to:

- address the key language needs of each student
- set an exercise in which students wrote a mini report at the outset which would then be carefully analysed by the instructor
- to administer a reflective exercise immediately after the mini report writing task in which students identified the language problems they faced while writing
- design comprehensive exercises on paraphrasing, summarising, impersonal reporting, active and passive voice, and multi-noun phrases as these are most appropriate to learn for business writing, as also desired by companies
- give the fourth-year students tasks requiring them to calculate data
- provide regular feedback and set ongoing reflections on their learning progress (see last tasks in each Task Set in Materials Appendix 3)

The syllabus for this course is multi-dimensional, that is, it is product-based in that it covers grammatical, notional, functional, situational and genre-based areas; skill focused in that it covers professional and technical writing skills; and process-focused in that it is task-based, learning-centred and also self-directed. Thus, details of how the course was designed are as follows:

The English for Market Research Report Writing Skills is a 15-hour intensive course based on the needs analysis performed on fourth-year WBS undergraduate students who were writing their research project.

The course covers knowledge and skills development in assessing relevance, deciphering fact from opinion, interpreting and describing graphs and statistics, producing complex multi-noun phrases, employing personal and impersonal reporting styles, using the active and passive voice, paraphrasing and summarising, paragraphing, and writing introductions and conclusions. It also requires of students to conduct online research to gather data in the form of consumer opinion on various products and brands. Their Market Research reports are to be based on their findings.

Students will be informed at the outset that upon successful completion of the programme, they should be able to confidently write a compelling, professional-level Market Research report:

- according to the context and purpose of the research
- in a short, simple, structured format suited to the genre
- in a concise and coherent style
- with genre-appropriate diction
- with accurate use of grammatical and functional resources at sentence level

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Boyd (1991) ESP learners' value courses focused on the language of target situations and their specific needs and wants. He says that Business English focuses on the development of communicative competence for business settings, that is, target situations or situated contexts in business. According to Richards (1989), it is concerned with the specific ability to sensitively address the context, which likely leads to success. Since this course was designed to address the professional needs of pre-job experience students, and in order to research language use and the 'what' and 'how' of it (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998), a needs analysis was conducted through interviews with WBS undergraduate teachers and students, plus responses taken from a needs analysis questionnaire

completed by the learners. The Vice President of Wavematrix, a UK multinational Market Research company, was also interviewed about what his company, which is an example of the target context, seeks in report writers.

A study of the Company's guidance notes and project documents for analysts was conducted (See Materials Appendix 3, Task Sets B and C) in order to establish what would be the business-appropriate language acceptable to the 'discourse community or genre' (Swales (1990); in the context of this course, these would be the consumer products and research companies. Determining the terminology and discourse features of the market research report writing genre is important because, according to Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993), it helps the course designer to understand differences in specific communicative purposes. For instance, the discourse features of market research reports are quite different to those of accounting and finance.

The needs analysis was performed according to the 'Three Stage Needs Analysis' pattern which records data in tabulated form to identify target language needs. Following this, interviews were conducted, and questionnaires were administered to establish learner perceptions of their communication needs and preferred learning styles.

The information gathered was used to design the framework and materials for the course. However, the needs analysis revealed conflicting and varying student needs and wants. One person's wants may be another's needs; therefore, according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) further distinctions need to be made between what they categorise as necessities, lacks and wants: necessities are the objective or perceived needs determined by the target situation; lacks are the weaknesses of learners within what they already know; and wants are the learners' subjective or 'felt' needs. Although an accurate needs analysis may not be determined through such a formula as $NA = (Necessities - Lacks) + Wants$ but it is likely to return a fair result. Perhaps student needs would be best arrived at through what Robinson (1991) suggests: conduct an ongoing needs analysis that can be built into the course as it progresses. Boyd (1991) also stresses that continued needs assessment is vital to design considerations.

Therefore, the needs analysis (lacks) of the students for this course can be performed by giving them a mini report to write at the beginning; through their oral feedback and suggestions as the course progresses; and by studying their Grids for Reflection that are included at the end of every Tasks Set. In this way, the on-going needs analysis will help to further fine-tune the course because, as Lawson (1979: 37) highlights, "[w]hat is finally established as a 'need' is a matter for agreement and judgment, not discovery."

Holliday (1995) states that stakeholders in an ESP program are not only those people, who will be trained, nor just the companies they are being trained for, but also those who have a stake in the way in which the training is to be implemented. This particular course was, therefore, designed in line with the portfolio assessment and evaluation criteria of the certificate-issuing department, that is, the WSC.

When research was being conducted for this project, the WBS professors also hinted at the need for an academic report-writing course. This profession-oriented pilot course designed for pre-job experience learners can be a possible add-on to the WBS (or any other similar institution for that matter) undergraduate fourth-year curriculum as a sequel to an academic report writing course designed and incorporated in the first-year curriculum.

In this way, it aligns with Dudley-Evans and St John's (1998) argument that in an academic setting, an EAP course needs both its general component and its specific one. One could improvise on this approach by stating that an academic report-writing course

in the first year would be the general component serving the students' initial needs, whilst equally easing the professors' dilemma for the next four years. Furthermore, the market research report-writing course incorporated in the fourth year would serve as the specific component that meets students' (pre-) professional needs. Other specific report writing courses could also be designed as offshoots of this project to fulfil the needs of accounting, finance, management and IT students.

According to the learning-centred course design approach presented by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), course design is a negotiated and dynamic process in that it does not move linearly from initial analysis to completed course. For this reason, the syllabus referred to herein was structured to be able to meet the changing needs of the students as they progress. Hull (1996) in Graves (1996: 188) says that structural flexibility is essential to curriculum design because once the program's benchmarks have been established, it is important to implement those criteria in a way that allows for creativity and initiative while providing for quality control. The constant feedback channel in the form of student reflections will enable readjustments of the course in response to student progress. For instance, if the students feel that they are continuing to have problems with paraphrasing, simpler exercises with more practice and elaboration can be incorporated. Furthermore, the timetable may be adjusted by removing unnecessary language content.

This method-based syllabus emphasises process learning. To achieve this end, the task-oriented activities are designed to make students read and think about the content, structure and organisation, the language used to express the content and then apply that knowledge acquired to the skill of writing a full report.

For learners at pre-professional level courses such as this one, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) suggest that a task-based problem-solving, deep-end approach is often more appropriate as it mirrors the required style and register, and students often learn experientially through involvement. According to Charles in Hewings and Dudley-Evans (1996) in a performance learning context, what is to be learnt should be exercised in a situation that has a direct public outcome. In other words, what is to be learnt should be performed, and not merely practised, at the actual time of learning. In light of this principle, a more deep-end approach starting from cognitive and fluency activities, progressing to specific language and skill work-based outcome, which then lead to further fluency practice has been adopted for the course. Settings and carrier content are incorporated from the learners' target business context; that is, reports of the company, Wavemetrix, were studied to determine the lexical items and syntactic features (language analysis) that students would need for the productive function (Munby, 1978) – in this case the market research report – because familiarity or lack thereof with these will certainly affect the way English is used (Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1993).

When students rearrange the jumbled introductions of the published market reports, they will gradually develop an increasing awareness of language and the structure of the writing genre, as predicted by Charles cited in Hewings and Dudley-Evans (1996). The activities have been designed to make students work on authentic data to paraphrase the information. This experience will necessitate not only paraphrasing skills, but also summarising, thereby equipping them with transferable skills for the professional target situation. The collection of paraphrased and scored information will then constitute a databank from which the students will draw up graphs and charts, followed by conclusions. Throughout the process, students will be provided with detailed feedback on their responses to the tasks to ensure a satisfactory outcome of the course in the form of suitable market research reports.

The PPP approach has been included in the course for some of the activities in which, according to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), the communicative event might be new to the learners. Hence, a prior decision was made by the course designer as to what language and skills would need to be focused upon.

In the needs analysis, students pointed to certain aspects of the language that they wanted to learn and left out some others altogether. In light of this, an attempt has been made to address the needs/wants of all the participants at the start, as being a facilitator is a key role of the ESP teacher and course designer. As the course progresses, through feedback from the students and by assessing their lacks through their work, it will be established which aspects should be covered in greater depth in the future sessions. This is because according to Charles in Hewings and Dudley-Evans:

A [...] consequence of the existence of a public outcome is that, in performance learning, all features necessary for the public carrying out of the task must be given the attention which will ensure at minimum an adequate performance. The performance learner in EAP cannot afford to focus on grammar, rather than organisation, or to concentrate on communicative quality, rather than punctuation. A course design appropriate for performance learners will build on the opportunity for complete coverage of all concerns, whether global or local, which contribute to the adequate public performance of each student. (1996: 58)

3. METHODOLOGY

The course employs a mix of deep-end and presentation-production-practice (PPP) strategies. It requires both teacher monitoring and teacher instruction (see Teacher's Notes in Appendix 4). Much of the learning is to be achieved through task-based activities including case studies, researching and report writing (project work). These are based on the communicative language learning principles, whereby students are required to ask the teacher and their peers questions, interact extensively with the text, give one another feedback and work individually as well as in pairs and groups. Dudley-Evans and St. John state:

In considering which approach to take, it is most important to remember that there is no best way; all techniques and methods are a response to a particular situation. (1998: 187)

Therefore, to address the slightly heterogeneous needs of the homogeneous group, the course makes use of a mix of deep-end strategy and the PPP. The deep-end strategy will help learners to use their existing English competence and discover where it is (in)adequate. The PPP will work effectively in instances on the course where the communicative event may be new to the learners (Tasks Sets B and C, for example). Cognitive language and subject learning processes will be harnessed as Widdowson (1983) says that ESP courses ought to logically link with areas of activity that meet the learners' aspirations (Tasks Set A, for example).

There are eight sessions in total. The first seven involve training and practice sessions of two-hour durations each. The eighth is an hour-long collective feedback session on the students' assignments. The course materials will be provided in class. The sources used to create the course materials include:

- Online posts and threads in fora of consumer opinion on products such as LG VX9800, Samsung D600 and Motorola ROKR E1 mobile phones; Chrysler 300C automobile; Pro-Evolution Soccer and FIFA 06 video games *for paraphrasing and data collection tasks*

- Report Writer vacancy advertisement on Unitemps Recruitment Agency website *for awareness raising of what employers require from report writers*
- Wavemetrix, a market research company's:
 - Vice President's brief chat-based interview containing *information on market report writing*
 - Analyst Guidance Notes and Project Initiation Documents *for analysis and guidance on data collection*
 - Market research report *for reading, lexis, sentences, paragraphing, introductions and conclusions, and overall structure*
 - End-user opinion monthly reports *for reading, lexis, sentences, paragraphing, introductions and conclusions and overall structure*
 - Authentic feedback given to market research analysts *for the reinforcement of understanding of findings, scoring the same, and paraphrasing*
- Zloopy – an online discussion search engine (subsidiary of Wavemetrix, active at the time of creating this project) *for direct and quick access to online discussion forums*
- Oxford Talking Dictionary *for definitions, meanings and diction*
- *Report writing instructional texts*
- *Grids for reflection from WSC and Woodford's Teacher Training Documents*

The following language issues are covered:

	Reading and understanding	Tasks	Language practice	Writing
Tasks Set A Getting quick insights	Portfolio. Report organisation and style.	Reading advertisement, interview and report. Writing. Reflecting.	Familiarisation with informal style. 'Test-running' writing skills.	Writing an informal mini report. Reflections on needs and wants.
Tasks Set B Collecting information	Extracting main points. Assessing relevance, fact and opinion	Distinguishing fact from opinion.	Conciseness. Precision.	Paraphrasing and summarising.
Tasks Set C Collecting and processing information	Extracting main points. Assessing relevance, fact and opinion. Classifying the above.	Distinguishing fact from opinion. Analysing.	Conciseness. Precision.	Paraphrasing and summarising.

	Reading and understanding	Tasks	Language practice	Writing
Tasks Set D Presenting findings	Organisation. Style.	Ordering. Highlighting appealing words and phrases. Practice personal and impersonal styles.	Coherence. Sequencing. Active and passive.	Writing and sequencing sentences. Paragraphing. Using M R genre-specific words and phrases, and personal and impersonal style in sentences.
Tasks Set E Presenting findings	Conciseness. Style.	Practice personal and impersonal styles.	Multi-noun phrases. Personal and impersonal reporting.	Writing sentences using multi-noun phrases, personal and impersonal reporting.
Tasks Set F Using graphs and statistics	Assessing relevance, suitability. Interpreting graphs.	Transferring information from text to diagram.	Amount and difference. Quantity. Graph description.	Referencing illustrations. Representing numbers.
Tasks Set G Summarising. Concluding.	Extracting main points. Linking findings and conclusions.	Classifying information. Simplifying.	Degree. Probability.	Summaries. Conclusions.

Grid format adapted from Comfort, J. Revell, R. Stott, C. (1984) Business Reports in English

Timetable

Day	Tasks	Time
(Week 1)		
Monday	Tasks Set A - Getting quick insights	18.00-20.00
Tuesday	Tasks Set B - Collecting information	18.00-20.00
Wednesday	Tasks Set C - Collecting and processing information	18.00-20.00
Thursday	Tasks Set D - Presenting findings	18.00-20.00
Friday	Tasks Set E - Presenting findings	18.00-20.00
(Week 2)		
Monday	Tasks Set F - Using graphs and statistics	18.00-20.00
Tuesday	Tasks Set G - Summarising and concluding	18.00-20.00
(Week 3)		
Tuesday	Feedback session	18.00-20.00

Note: Provision of a 10-minute break is included after every hour of class time (that is, 50-minutes = 1 UK university-level teaching hour).

4. STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND TEACHING MATERIALS

According to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998: 148) “[s]hort intensive EOP[ESP] courses are not usually concerned with testing learners’ proficiency” because the class time is needed for input and practice and the real effect of that input is likely to show results at some point in the future. Furthermore, owing to the fact that business school students normally have a heavy workload of assignments and tests, this additional course designed for them only requires them to write an assignment in the form of a 1200-word market research report.

Formative assessment

Student progress will be monitored subjectively through their performance in the tasks set in class, through their written reflections and oral interaction. Examinations and tests are not deemed suitable for an intensive course of this nature.

Final project/assignment

Students will be assessed through the WSC standard portfolio-building criteria. The WSC’s non-credit bearing courses are designed to develop students’ competence, and confidence in a range of essential graduate-level skills. A wide range of modules are available so that students can enroll in a course(s) of their choice. Experienced tutors with an expertise in skills development, careers development and experiential learning are employed to deliver the classes.

The aim of the WSC portfolio is to provide students with an opportunity to present their work in such a way as to show how they have modified their approach in view of what has been learnt throughout the module. Later, the portfolio is also to be checked by an external examiner.

For their course portfolio, students will compile a Market Research report after searching data for findings on the internet forums of specific categories of products and services such as cars, mobile phones, video games, mobile phones service providers, and MBA schools. They will be required to list at least 250 findings on various brands of a particular product/service of their choice.

The assessment criteria for their writing are clearly delineated through the performance descriptors given in Appendix 5. Keeping in line with the WSC policy, only a “Pass” or “More Evidence Required” grade will be given.

4.1. Teaching materials

Authentic texts

Owing to access constraints, only one company market research report has been used in the intensive course. While this could be considered a disadvantage, it is not perceived to be one on this occasion because the students will fully familiarise themselves with the style and content of the report through thorough analysis, which is likely to help them to understand the requirements of this genre. In turn, they could exploit the experience to apply to other company-specific reports that they might study and/or produce in the future. This approach is in line with Dudley-Evans and St. Johns’ (1998) opinion that to enhance learning, the materials used must invoke learner thinking about the language used and subsequently produced.

The activities need to simulate cognitive rather than mechanical processes. Dudley-Evans and St. Johns (ibid) state that authentic texts are referred to as ‘genuine’ texts because they are originally written for purposes other than language teaching. They state

that the genuineness of a text does not guarantee relevance and that it is only truly authentic if it is exploited in ways that reflect real world use. In other words, the authenticity of purpose is as important as the genuineness of the text. Thus, an attempt at drawing a careful balance between the multiple interpretations of 'authentic' has been made. The Tasks Sets devised took the form of a writing-centred case study for which an authentic advertisement, interview of a research company executive and published research reports were especially incorporated as course materials to maximize opportunities for learners to practice from.

McDonough and Shaw (1993) suggest that one of the common reasons for using authentic materials is to personalise them, which refers to the need to make materials more relevant to learners' interests and their professional needs. Earlier, Widdowson (1983) stated that authenticity lies in the nature of the interaction between the reader and the text. Students will be required to identify and examine stylistic variations such as informality, bias-free language and directness. Then they will practice on the stylistics of report writing by doing the exercises and producing their own report. Doing actual research wherein they would provide opinions on products and services on the internet would give them the opportunity to perform hands-on practice in 'field work'.

Any integrated tasks created from authentic materials will contribute to language learning because, as Orr (2002) highlights, these task types present language in a motivating manner. He further states that by exploring professional organizations and publications in the field, language instructors can get a sense of how the world of education intersects with the world of business and how business educates the members of its own community. To achieve these ends, the Analysts' Guidance Notes of Wavemetrix (Tasks Sets B and C) have been employed for the course created.

Appendix 3 details the teaching materials that have been created and/or may be utilised for this course.

4.1. Layout and pacing

According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) for self-study or reference purposes materials need to be complete, well-laid out and self-explanatory. They further state that materials should allow "the explorer, who will follow through a train of thoughts; the browser, who will pick and choose at random; and the systematist, who will work through methodically" (1998: 172). This means that an important feature is the overall organization of the material. Hence the materials for this course have been designed with this in mind by placing scrolls before each Tasks Set that state what the learners will do in the set and each task clearly states what its aims and objectives are. The materials are presented in two columns in landscape format so that students would not have to keep flipping over the page in order to refer to the notes and then to the examples. For instance, in Tasks Set B, Task 1, the notes on the findings were placed parallel to the examples. In Tasks Set D, Task 1 and 2, the worksheet was placed on the next page because of page size constraints. The spaces for paragraphs were designed to make students write as short a sentence or phrase as possible.

In order to provide stimulation and motivation, the materials are challenging yet achievable, and it is planned that they would offer new ideas and information.

Sequencing of activities and revision

Right from the outset, tasks were designed in an integrated and sequentially progressive manner. The advertisement for report writers and the [needs analysis] chat-

interview of the VP of Wavemterix are included in the materials to give the entire course a feel of progression as in reality – from the urge to work as report writer (Tasks Set A, Task 2) to the production of a professional market report (assignment) modelled on the published version. Furthermore, the VP's exact words have been used later on as well (Tasks Set A, Task 6; and Tasks Set B, instructions page) to remind students of professional requirements and expectations.

Analysts' Guidance Notes and posts from opinion threads have been arranged in order to make the paraphrasing tasks well-graded: the paraphrasing tasks in Tasks Sets B and C and the sentence and paragraph sequencing tasks in Tasks Set D are provided in ascending level of difficulty and are well-supported by exemplars, thereby catering to different student levels.

The materials offer a variety of micro skills that effectively feed into the macro skills. Tasks Set D, Tasks 1 and 2, for instance, give practice on the micro skills of sequencing sentences and paragraphs in order to learn the macro skill of writing introductions according to the model market research reports. The key notion is that the market report is reader-centred as the organization, format and style are governed by the target audience (Davidson in Orr, 2002).

Each Tasks Set ends with extension activities, which include studying Wavematrix's Findings feedback.

According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) the only way to check whether the carrier content is appropriate and the real content matches the course objectives is by 'being a student' and doing the activities while thinking carefully about what is actually being done to complete them successfully.

7. CONCLUSION

While further work would be necessary in order to develop and refine the course referred to herein, a means of acquiring on-going feedback have been incorporated into its design to allow significant student input into its development. This provides a way of addressing students' needs through what Charles in Hewings and Dudley-Evans (1996) calls performance tasks for a future public outcome. As such, its multidimensional syllabus successfully offers the possibility of satisfying all stakeholders. Most importantly, ESP provides an opportunity to meet the requirements of prospective employers, which according to Hall in Graves (1996) is the most effective course and materials design.

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