English for Instrumentalists: Designing and Evaluating an ESP Course

Elżbieta Danuta Lesiak-Bielawska

Chair of Humanities

Fryderyk Chopin University of Music, Warsaw

1

Abstract:

The article discusses the findings of research work related to designing and evaluating a blended learning course for prospective instrumentalists. Its objective was to describe significant phases that the course designer went through, as well as present the impact of the applied learning formula on teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and more specifically on English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP). Thus referring to the literature of the subject and various procedures undertaken when creating the course 'English for Instrumentalists', the article first focuses on the phase of needs analysis and the resultant decision to employ a blended learning approach when running the course. Following that, it discusses the design phase proper and the outcomes of course evaluation. Both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were employed to assess the efficacy of the course . The results obtained point to the effectiveness of the course, both in terms of its objective evaluation and learners' perceptions of it.

1. Introduction

The present article describes the results of research work conducted when designing and evaluating an English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) course targeted at the students of the Instrumental Faculty at the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music (FCUM), in Warsaw. Its objective was to present significant phases that the course designer went through to make the course meet the expectations of the target group. The phases are discussed by referring to both the literature of the subject and various procedures adopted when creating the course. Accordingly, the article consists of five main parts, *Introduction*, a brief *Discussion* section and *Conclusions*. Subsections 1.1. and 1.2. parts of *Introduction*, which define the key concepts and present research background, are followed by the section focusing on the pre-design phase of the course, also referred to as needs analysis. The subsequent part discusses the design phase proper, whereas sections that follow present course evaluation and the results obtained. The final parts of the article sum up the research work conducted and discuss the issues that the course designer is faced with when creating an ESAP course that employs a blended learning formula.

1.1. Defining the key concepts

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) can be defined as the teaching and learning of English as a second/foreign language with a view to enabling

target learners to use it in a particular domain. According to Robinson (1991), it is an enterprise which involves education, training and practice and is responsive to developments in three realms of knowledge: language, language teaching and content studies The changes taking place in ESP over the years reflect the changing relationships and fashions in these realms of knowledge (Robinson, 1991).

As contended by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), the three important factors that brought about the growth of ESP seem to point towards the need for increased specialization in language learning. Accordingly, ESP as it gradually developed became a multilayered, or pluralistic language approach based on the learner specific, i.e. profession, occupation or study related needs. The very fact implies that a needs analysis is a prerequisite to an ESP course and that – as Robinson (1991) rightly states – what is specific and appropriate in one context might well not be so in another. This is one of the reasons why it is not easy to produce a simple and watertight definition of ESP (Strevens, 1980). ESP teaching takes place in diverse contexts, which reflect the major distinction between:

- English for Academic Purposes (EAP) involving academic study needs (e.g. English for medicine);

- English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) dealing with work related needs and training (e.g. English for office managers);

- English for Professional Purposes (EPP) which involves teaching English to doctors, company executives, lawyers (Basturkman, 2010).

English for Instrumentalists: Designing and Evaluating an ESP Course

Elżbieta Danuta Lesiak-Bielawska

In each area of ESP teaching, it is possible to distinguish general and specific purposes. Thus English for Academic Purposes, for example, can further be subdivided into English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) (e.g. English for academic writing) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) (e.g. English for music studies), etc. When it comes to the course timing in relation to the learners' work or study experience, it is possible to draw a further important distinction between students that are newcomers to the field of study (pre-study courses) or work (pre-experience courses), learners who are on the way of becoming experts in their field of study (in-study courses) or work (in-service courses) or students who are already experts in a given discipline (post-study and post-experience courses). Each situation described has implications for content knowledge that needs to be deployed in the ESP course as well as for its degree of specificity (Robinson, 1991) .

ESP courses are often fit certain criteria. First, they are normally goal directed, i.e. designed to meet specific needs of the learner (Robinson, 1991; Duddley-Evans and St. John, 2009). Also, ESP may make use of a methodology that is different from that of General Purpose English teaching. The ESP methodology employed determines activities of the disciplines it serves and makes the course focused on specialist language (grammar, lexis, register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities (Duddley-Evans and St. John, 2009). In addition to that, ESP courses are generally constrained by a limited time period (Robinson, 1991), during which the course objectives are to be realized. More frequently, a typical ESP course is designed for adult learners, either for students at a tertiary level institution or company employees (Robinson, 1991;

Duddley-Evans and St. John, 2009). It can, however, be also used for secondary school learners, e.g. in vocational schools. Though most ESP courses assume basic knowledge of the language system, some of them can also be taught with students who are beginners in their study of the language (Robinson, 1991; Duddley-Evans and St. John, 2009).

5

1.2. Research background

Since 1960s, ESP has become an important and distinctive part of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). The reason for that was the worldwide interest in English and the growing importance of the language as the contemporary *lingua franca*. At the initial stages of its development, ESP remained under the influence of the teaching of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and research work conducted in the area (Dudley-Evans and St John, 2009). The rapid expansion in EAP courses designed for different specialisms seemed to result from the introduction of governmental mass educational programs, with English being the first and sometimes the only language. This was coupled with the growing demand for English as a common medium of communication that, among others, facilitates access to scientific and technical literature (Kennedy and Bolitho, 1984).

English for Science and Technology (EST) has been the main area in EAP. Other important specialisms include English for Medical Studies (EMS) and English for Legal Purposes (ELP). Recently, it is also possible to observe a

growing interest in the academic study of business, finance, banking, economics and accounting (Dudley-Evans and St John, 2009), to name but a few areas.

It is argued that the distinction between EGAP and ESAP is crucial to a full understanding of EAP (Blue, 1988 in Dudley-Evans and St John, 2009). Since EGAP involves the teaching of the skills and language that are common to all disciplines, it isolates the skills related to study activities such as listening to lectures, reading articles, writing essays, reports, dissertations, etc. (Blu, 1993). ESAP – on the other hand – refers to the teaching of the features that distinguish one study area from another (Dudley-Evans and St John, 2009). By integrating the skills work of EGAP, it shows students how to transfer the skills they have learned in the EGAP classes and perform their actual subject tasks like understanding lectures, reading texts or writing essays related to their fields of study.

The ESP teaching has long been significantly influenced by technology offering the possibility of alternative materials and classroom interactions. Following audio and video cassettes, the major technological change in the 1980s came with the application of computers in language teaching and learning (Computer-Assisted Language Learning, CALL), and then with the development of CD-ROM which offered more interactive activities and practice than paper-based materials. The turn of the 20th century witnessed more changes in the shape of a foreign language classroom. The Internet has had an enormous impact on the process of foreign language learning and teaching, not only as a source of language courses and a range of materials available, but also as a pool of

various online activities, problem-solving tasks, and diverse reference and communication tools.

Technology has been applied in all types of contexts with a view to aiding traditional types of language learning as well as generating a space for new forms of discourse (Ahmed, 2014). Convinced that technology-mediated learning helps to cope with learners' specific requirements and promote lifelong learning, teaching practitioners make use of various technologies in the design of their courses in the attempt at providing a well-thought-out balance of synchronous and asynchronous communication and integration of tools that enhance learning (Garrison and Kanuka, 2004).

The incorporation of Internet-based instruction in an EAP course seems necessary for several reasons (cf. Krajka, 2007). The most important of them relates to the fact that there are a number of study areas for which there are no coursebooks or any other language learning materials available on the market, e.g. philosophy, music, musicology, and teachers must look for some other ways of finding teaching resources and running lessons. It is this very reason that provides the rationale for designing a blend of Internet-based and face-to-face instruction to teach elementary music terminology to prospective instrumentalists. To the best of my knowledge, no attempt was made to design a course 'English for Instrumentalists' and explore the impact of blended learning on teaching English tailored to the specific needs of such a learner group. The course which is presented in the article exemplifies an ESAP course. It was conducted in the academic setting and involved academic study needs. Prior to launching the course, a detailed needs analysis was carried out.

English for Instrumentalists: Designing and Evaluating an ESP Course

Elżbieta Danuta Lesiak-Bielawska

2.   Needs analysis

2.1.   The notion of needs analysis and its components

Needs analysis which is the cornerstone of ESP (Dudley-Evans and St John, 2009) has been the basis of training and aid-development programmes for years. However, its current concept within ESP considerably differs from the concept adhered to in the 1960s. At the initial stages of ESP teaching, i.e. the 1960s and early 1970s, needs analysis was understood as a relatively simple pre-course procedure that mainly focused on assessing the target situation in order to define on its basis communicative needs of the learner group and techniques of achieving specific teaching objectives. The task of contemporary needs analysis is much more complex. On the one hand, it aims at collecting information about the learners as people, target language users and learners of a foreign language. On the other hand, its objective is to define the target situation and environment in which an ESP course is to be run. The purpose of the introductory analysis consists in optimizing the conditions of ESP learning and consequently making the acquisition of a concrete skill or skills or/and language aspect(s) more efficacious for a   particular   learner   group.   Dudley-Evans   and St. John (2009) enumerate eight components in today's concept of needs analysis that require to be taken into consideration. They have been grouped into five broad areas presented below and are referred to when discussing the design of the course for prospective instrumentalists. The areas include:

English for Instrumentalists: Designing and Evaluating an ESP Course

Elżbieta Danuta Lesiak-Bielawska

o target situation analysis and objective needs analysis (e.g. tasks and activities learners will use English for);

o linguistic analysis, discourse analysis, genre analysis, i.e. knowledge of how language and skills are used in the target situation(s);

o subjective needs analysis, i.e. learners' wants, means, subjective needs – factors that affect the way they learn (e.g. previous learning experiences, reasons for attending the course, expectation from it);

o present situation analysis, the purpose of which is to identify learners' current skills and language use;

o means analysis, i.e. information about the environment where the course will be run.

Owing to the fact that ESP courses are not mounted in a vacuum, the approach to learners' needs and conducted introductory analysis of requirements and expectations largely depend on available human and material resources. Thus when planning an English language course for academic purposes (EAP) that is to be repeated, with a large number of students, it is fully justifiable to carry out needs analysis well in advance to better tune into the new learners' needs or/and revise the existing course (Hewings and Duddley, 1996 in Dudley-Evans and St John, 2009). Many English language courses, especially those for occupational purposes, in contrast, are one-off courses that cater for a small number of people (e.g. accountants, auditors). They are often held at a short notice and mainly base on the pre-course information received from course participants (Dudley-Evans and St John, 2009). Sometimes however, it is not possible to obtain information from the participants themselves until the course has been launched. In such

situations, it seems indispensable to ask questions about the target situation or situations at the beginning of the course. In such cases, it is also necessary to conduct ongoing evaluation and adapt throughout the course. The change of the initial outline of an ESP course resulting from such an approach means that the course details are negotiated jointly while the course is running.

Since the course 'English for Instrumentalists' was meant to be repeated with other learner groups in subsequent semesters, the introductory analysis of needs and expectations was conducted well in advance before the course was launched. In addition to that, ongoing needs analysis was carried out when the course was running to better adapt to the learners' needs and discuss various emergent issues relevant to the course.

2.2.   Sources of information and instruments of needs analysis employed when designing the course 'English for Instrumentalists'

Research conducted in the ESP field shows that the quality of the data collected when conducting needs analysis is to a large extent dependent on the employed sources of information (e.g. learners, ex-students, people working or studying in the field, clients, employers, other ESP studies) and instruments of data collection (e.g. questionnaires, checklists, analysis of authentic spoken or/and written discourse, discussions, structured interviews, observations, assessments) (Dudley-Evans and St John, 2009). The most frequently employed techniques of data collection include questionnaires and interviews, which are sometimes used simultaneously. The data thus collected may be supplemented with observations of language use.

Questionnaires are used for quantitative information and the data thus collected require statistical analysis. Checklists which are employed to determine facts or attitudes are

much narrower in scope than questionnaires. Structured interviews consist of a series of questions that are thoroughly thought out and selected in advance. Observations, on the other hand, cover a wide range of activities from watching how a particular task is being performed to shadowing individuals in professional settings. EAP examples of observation for the purpose of needs analysis include attending lectures or practical sessions, for example. Most observation or shadowing is conducted for the purpose of the target situation analysis, but can as well serve the present situation analysis of a particular individual or a learner group. Observation and shadowing are also very useful in situations where English is not a medium of communication. Though they cannot be considered a source of language data for materials production, they help understand work patterns typical of a given professional setting (Dudley-Evans and St John, 2009).

When designing the course 'English for Instrumentalists', a series of interviews were conducted with the learners themselves and teachers of professional subjects (i.e. conductors, instrumentalists, composers). Also at the phase of needs analysis, the following instruments of data collection were employed:

o observation;

o analysis of authentic spoken language;

o structured questionnaire;

o competency test, which from now on – depending on the phase of the study at which it was employed – is referred to as either the pre- or post-test.

Since no descriptions of specialist discourse were available, the above sources of information and methods of data collection were used to obtain data for the purposes of

target situation analysis. The data thus collected helped determine communicative events, or genres, i.e. the way people in a specific community typically get things done through written or spoken discourse, and the most important linguistic features of the genres. Interviews conducted helped identify three distinct – though also related – sets of needs. They pertained to the language that instrumentalists require in the conductor-orchestra interactions during rehearsals, interactions between the members of small ensembles (e.g. quartets, quintets) during rehearsals and instrument teacher-learner interactions in class (cf. Figure 1).

Needs relevant to the ESAP Course for Instrumentalists		
1. conductor-orchestra interactions during rehearsals	2. interactions between the members of small ensembles (e.g. quartets, quintets) during rehearsals	3. instrument teacher-learner interactions in class

Figure 1. Types of needs relevant to the course 'English for Instrumentalists'

On that basis, an empirical investigation, employing ethnographic approach and genre analysis, was conducted. It involved the course designer's participation in the rehearsals of the school symphony orchestra and rehearsals of small ensembles on the school premises in order to identify by means of observation how the conductor interacts with the orchestra members as well as how ensemble members communicate with each other. It also included sitting in a few instrument playing lessons (a piano class, violin class and

English for Instrumentalists: Designing and Evaluating an ESP Course

Elżbieta Danuta Lesiak-Bielawska

a saxophone class). The situated investigation helped gather information about the context, the participants, their understating of events, and speaking situations in their everyday world.

The conducted genre analysis helped identify features common to the collected language samples. The resultant description proved to be revealing in terms of such areas as the language skills required, grammar, vocabulary, language functions that were to be included in the syllabus.

The observations, open-ended interviews and genre analysis were a starting point for creating a structured questionnaire, which was administered to the learner group. Its purpose was to identify their subjective needs. The questionnaire had seven questions. In the first question, the respondents were requested to assess the extent to which they needed specific terms related to:

o basic elements of musical notation (e.g. such terms as staff, clef, brace, etc.);

o rhythmic note and rest values (e.g. semibreve, hemidemisemiquaver rest, etc.);

o terminology related to time signature and key-signature;

o accidentals and ornaments;

o articulation and dynamic indications, etc.

Answering the other questions, the respondents assessed the extent to which specific language functions (e.g. request, order, suggestion, statement, reported questions, expressing an opinion, etc.) were needed in the conductor–orchestra interactions, in the interactions between small ensemble members during rehearsals as well as in the teacher-

English for Instrumentalists: Designing and Evaluating an ESP Course

Elżbieta Danuta Lesiak-Bielawska

learner interactions. Also, the subjects were asked about the extent to which the knowledge of specific terms and language functions was helpful for them in understanding spoken language and generating – if necessary – independent utterances in all the three target situations. The five-point Likert scale was employed in all the questions (0 =0% useful, 1 = 25% useful, 2 = 50% useful, 3 = 75% useful, 4 = 100% useful).

The analysis of the students' responses led to a conclusion that what they needed most was vocational terminology. Its results appeared by no means surprising, all the more so that on the basis of written placement test, the vast majority of the respondents qualified for the B1+ level of proficiency in English for General Purposes (EGP). The group consisted of 46 intermediate adult learners. Since they all studied music at the tertiary level, they were not newcomers to the field of study and needed no instruction in the concepts and practices of the field. They came from three first-year and one second-year student groups. Their ESAP level of proficiency defined as 'English for Instrumentalists' was measured on a competency test with a maximum score of 50 points.

The test employed at this stage of the study and thus referred to as the pre-test, which helped to conduct the present situation analysis, consisted of four tasks. In them, the learners were requested to:

o complete the English text choosing the right words given in the box;

o supply English terms of the selected symbols of musical notation;

o provide alternative British English equivalents of the selected musical terms;

English for Instrumentalists: Designing and Evaluating an ESP Course

Elżbieta Danuta Lesiak-Bielawska

o   to match definitions of concepts that were provided with English terms.

SPSS Statistics 17.0 was employed to conduct preliminary processing of the collected data and their statistical analyses. At the pre-treatment phase, descriptive statistics was used to summarize the set of numerical data. The results obtained show that the group tended to be quite heterogeneous and implied that the average pre-test scores could be ranked below 50% (cf. Lesiak-Bielawska, 2012). Figure 2 summarizes the instruments of data collection employed at the phase of needs analysis and their corresponding objectives.

Instrument of data collection	Objective of the instrument
interviews	identifying communicative events, or genres
observations	gathering information about the context, the participants, their understanding of events, and speaking situations occurring in their study and/or professional setting
analysis of authentic spoken language	identifying important linguistic features of the genres
structured questionnaire	identifying the learners' subjective needs
competency test	assessing the learners' level of proficiency in the selected aspects of ESAP

Figure 2. Instruments of data collection employed at the phase of needs analysis

English for Instrumentalists: Designing and Evaluating an ESP Course

Elżbieta Danuta Lesiak-Bielawska

3. Designing the ESAP course 'English for Instrumentalists'

Investigations of specialist discourse and present situation analysis which involved multiple methods and sources of information suggested several ideas for the design of the course 'English for Instrumentalists'. The syllabus created on their basis specified:

o both receptive and productive skills; however, owing to the communicative events specified and their linguistic features, a special focus was given to listening and speaking;

o discourse/language items, i.e. notions and language functions;

o content items related to the language that musicians require in the three target situations mentioned above.

There were two main reasons why a decision to launch a blended learning course for instrumentalists was taken. One of them related to the fact that music is a study area for which there are neither coursebooks nor language study materials available on the market. Also, the vast majority of the students from the learner group were not able to attend face-to-face classes regularly. They sometimes missed scheduled lessons owing to various school and out-of-school events in which they were obliged to participate.

The course was held in the summer semester of 2010/2011 academic year in the learners' social context – the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music (FCUM), in Warsaw, during synchronous sessions and at their homes. All the students had mobiles and Internet access at home. Thus it was possible to blend locations through the use of various online and mobile tools. The fact that the course content was meaningful and

almost immediately applicable in the case of all the learners ensured their high motivation and numerous contributions to the course.

The focus of the blended learning course 'English for Instrumentalists' was determined by the findings from needs analysis that was conducted both prior to and during the course. An attempt was made to tailor the course to the specific requirements of the learners in the hope that its content would precisely fit their needs and expectations as well as efficaciously make them meet the demands of the specified target situations in the future. In the course development, genres were seen as the means which enabled the target community to enact their everyday study or work in the three target situations defined above. The aim of the course was to make the knowledge of the genres explicit and help the learners reproduce the communicative events, or genres, in English.

The ESAP course syllabus combined the elements of the notional-functional syllabus. Thus it was organized in 4 units construed as notions and language functions, as well as content items. Consequently, it was content based since it specified discourse/language items for each unit, i.e. notions (those related to [1] rhythmic note and rest values, [2] accidentals, time and key-signatures, [3] note relationships and ornaments, [4] articulation and dynamic indications), functions (such as [1] describing, defining, [2] ordering, requesting, [3,4] suggesting, stating, expressing an opinion, etc.), and content items (which included [1] correcting the performance of a piece of music, [2] telling the learner how to perform a piece of music and overcome difficulties when playing it, [3] suggesting a different interpretation/performance of a piece of music or its passage). In addition to that, the ESAP syllabus incorporated the elements of the task-based syllabus. Accordingly, it comprised a list of tasks that the students were expected to perform, both

English for Instrumentalists: Designing and Evaluating an ESP Course

Elżbieta Danuta Lesiak-Bielawska

off and on line. The tasks ranged from quite simple ones merely related to the consolidation of technical vocabulary to the more complex ones that specified 'real world tasks', such as following an instruction on how to play a given piece of music, explaining how to overcome problems when playing a selected composition, for example. Thus, the syllabus of the course 'English for Instrumentalists' was also skill-based since the tasks incorporated in it focused on both receptive and productive skills, with special emphasis being given to listening and speaking. Figure 3 presents the core elements specified in the course syllabus.
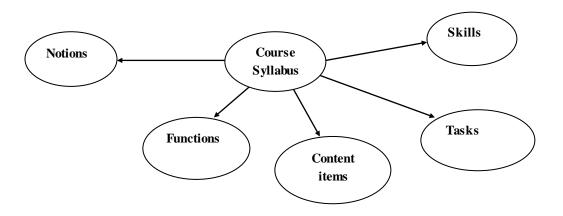
18

Figure 3. Core elements specified in the course syllabus

The course materials presented to the learner group were a blend of authentic and non-authentic written and spoken texts. Since authentic texts play an important role in demonstrating 'real' language use, it is generally acknowledged in ESP that they are superior to non-authentic texts. They can, however, be sometimes too complex, either linguistically or in terms of content. In such cases, teachers or course developers make

decisions to edit or adapt authentic texts or create ones of their own (Swales, 2009). Some authentic written texts selected as the materials for the course 'English for Instrumentalists' were edited and adapted to the students' needs and time requirements of the course. They came from *The Harvard Brief Dictionary of Music* by Apel and Daniel (1962), *Harvard Concise Dictionary of Music* by Randel (1978), *Oxford Dictionary of Musical Terms* by Latham (2004), and *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Music* by Kennedy and Kennedy (2007). In addition to appropriately abbreviated and adapted texts, students were referred to the BBC website[1], with authentic reading and listening texts, as well as various testing assignments. The course materials also included a series of consolidation tasks created in the form of pen and paper exercises. They involved naming the selected symbols of musical notation, doing cloze exercises and crosswords, writing the verbs in brackets into the correct forms, matching technical terms with their definitions, translating parts of the sentences into English, doing true/false reading/listening comprehension tasks, etc. Similar exercises were also created on line. Figure 4 presents a printscreen of the selected online materials and exercises.

19

---

[1] http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/music/elements_of_music/notationrev1.shtml

English for Instrumentalists: Designing and Evaluating an ESP Course

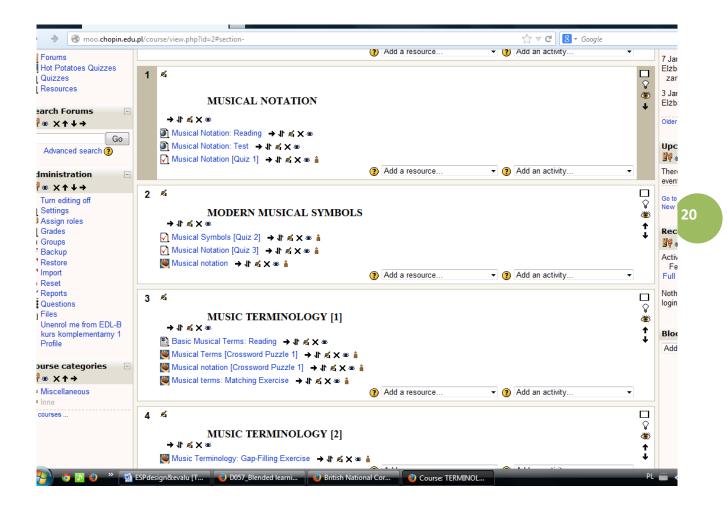*Elżbieta Danuta Lesiak-Bielawska*

Figure 4. The printscreen of the selected online materials and exercises

4.   Running the course 'English for Instrumentalists'

Having designed the course syllabus, attention was paid to means analysis, i.e. the environment in which the course thus created was to be run. The blended learning approach, i.e. the blend of the face-to-face and virtual activities, which was employed for the purpose of teaching the group of instrumentalists, was a three-phase procedure which lasted 2.5 months (10 weeks). Traditional activities (phase I) were followed by activities and tasks

presented on line (phase II). Detailed description of the procedure employed and information on the teaching materials embedded online are presented in Lesiak-Bielawska (2012).

The final phase of the procedure (phase III) consisted of face-to-face activities and assignments. It made use of the selected consolidation exercises that consisted of listening and speaking oriented practice. The tasks designed for the purpose involved listening to an audio file that was created with the help of the free recording software *Audacity* downloaded from the Internet. In it, the speaker/music teacher talked about a score fragment of a study by Carl Czerny and the difficulties that a learner might experience when practising the piece. The students listened to the file, had a look at the fragment of the score, and were requested to complete the true/false listening comprehension assignment. Then working in pairs, they were provided with fragments of various scores (for piano, viola, violin, etc.) and requested to prepare short speeches based on what they listened to before. Accordingly, the task consisted in talking about the score fragments in terms of the time and key-signature, metronome mark, prevailing note values, the resultant difficulties encountered when playing the passages, as well as giving some useful tips on how to go about practising them to avoid these problems.

Following that, the learners were provided with more listening and speaking practice. The assignment involved watching short UTube videos (e.g. Audition tips for string players, Violin Master Class, Audition tips for clarinet players, etc.)[2] and performing listening comprehension tasks. Subsequently, they were to talk in a similar manner about a piece they

---

[2] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syrkU7PiIBU

thought might be difficult to perform in audition, for example. Figure 5 summarizes the objectives of three phases of the blended learning formula applied.

Phase I
Traditional Component
- defining the objectives of the course   - administering the competency test (the pre-test)   - presenting vocational terminology   - consolidation pen-and-paper exercises done in class and in the self-study mode outside the classroom   time: 3 one-and-a-half-hour lesson units
Phase II
Virtual Component
- presentation/consolidation of technical terminology on line   - consolidation exercises embedded on the platform done in the self-study mode   - testing on line   time: one month, or 4 one-and-a-half-hour lesson units
Phase III
Traditional Component
- consolidation exercises done in class and in the self-study mode outside the classroom   - administering the final competency test (the post-test)   - evaluating the blended learning teaching procedure (administering the post-treatment questionnaire)   time: 3 one-and-a-half-hour lesson units

Figure 5. Objectives of Phase I-III of the Blended Learning Formula

5. Evaluating the course

Dudley-Evans and St John (2009) contend that evaluation of an ESP course is related to the process of assessing its efficacy and as such it must involve more than merely collecting and analyzing data. To be of any value, evaluation must include action orientated at appropriate modifications.

23

Evaluation is usually described as formative and summative (Dudley-Evans and St John, 2009). The former refers to ongoing evaluation. It consists of a series of mini-evaluations undertaken at intervals while an ESP course is running. Accordingly, it is meant to shape the course during its lifetime and better tune it into the needs of the learner group. This kind of evaluation is of particular value in the case of one-off courses. Summative evaluation, on the other hand, has no impact on the ongoing version of the course. It becomes initiated when the course has come to an end and its purpose is to assess the course impact on the learner group as well as provide information that can be fed into repeat versions of the course. It is thus, in contrast to formative evaluation, particularly valuable for subsequent editions of a given course. In addition to these two kinds of evaluation discussed in the literature of the subject, it is necessary to mention evaluation that can be initiated some time after the course has come to an end. Its purpose is to assess the long-term impact of an ESP course. However, in practice, this evaluation has rarely been possible.

In evaluation, similarly to needs analysis, the quality of collected data largely depends on the employed sources of information (e.g. learners, people working in the field, ex-students, documents and records used, teachers and colleagues) and research techniques (questionnaires, checklists, competency tests, observations, structured interviews). The

analysis of the collected data enables us to assess learners' reaction to an ESP course, their impressions pertaining to it as well as objectively measure its efficacy. Positive perceptions of the course effectiveness, the materials used and/or learning procedures employed are only part of the evaluation process. The objective evaluation of ESP courses is much more complex than assessing EGP courses. It not only requires assessing learners' knowledge and skills at the end of the course by means of some kind of post-treatment competency test, but also evaluation of the acquired skills in the light of the post-course vocational and academic experiences of the learners.

According to Gillet and Wray (2006), and Cheng (2006), the subject of evaluation seems to be relatively lacking in the ESP literature since the issue of success in English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and more specifically the extent to which EAP courses help their participants succeed in the selected fields of study has been little discussed. The volume *Assessing the Effectiveness of EAP Programmes* edited by Gillet and Wray (2006) contains research reports with a series of interesting ideas for evaluating ESP courses. Evaluating the effectiveness of EAP course prior to entering university, Atherton (2006) compared the pre- and post-tests results and analyzed the post-course questionnaire, in which learners were requested to rate how they felt about achieving the main course objectives. In addition to these evaluation instruments, a few months after the course, the participants of the course were sent the 'acid test' that took the form of a questionnaire and included such items as:"I think that the program enabled me to start my course with confidence", I feel I can cope with my studies", etc. Its purpose was to find out if students that enrolled for the EAP course experienced language problems doing university courses and how they coped with them.

English for Instrumentalists: Designing and Evaluating an ESP Course

Elżbieta Danuta Lesiak-Bielawska

The same pertains to the issue of success in English for Professional Purposes (EPP) and the impact of such courses on their participants' development of language and communication skills required in a given area. Evaluating the effectiveness of the course "English for the Police", the course developers tracked the progress of the participants employing both internal and external measures (Basturkman, 2010). The former involved the use of proficiency and competency language tests and comparison of the scores obtained with the initial assessments. The latter consisted in working with the police in order to identify improvements in the participants' ability to cope with the language demands of Police College and to make sure that they have developed acceptable levels of language for policing. In addition to that, feedback from the participants' colleagues and supervisors was analyzed. Its objective was to see whether according to the workplace assessors, the course participants had sufficiently mastered the language and developed communication skills required 'on the job'.

In the case of the course 'English for Instrumentalists', both formative and summative evaluation was conducted. The former referred to a series of mini-evaluations performed by individual learners as the course was running. They took the form of suggestions, requests, proposals, etc. In the case of the latter, two instruments of data collection were employed. One of them involved the analysis of both the pre- and post-test scores, whereas the other – the post-treatment questionnaire, in which students were requested to voice their opinions on the teaching procedure and assignments presented both in the classroom and on the e-learning platform. In the latter, they were also expected to assess the usefulness of the blending learning teaching formula for the acquisition of technical terminology in English. No evaluation to assess the long-term impact of the ESAP course was launched. Neither

25

were external measures employed to see whether the course participants had sufficiently developed language and communication skills required for the target situations specified.

26

6. Results

The results obtained for the learner group indicated considerable progress made by the students in the area of overall acquisition of technical terminology. To compare the results of the pre-test and post-test, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was employed. Its results implied a statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-treatment scores obtained by the students. Thus it was concluded that following the application of the blending learning teaching formula, the group tended to be more homogeneous in comparison with the pre-treatment phase, receiving post-test scores that were higher than pre-treatment results by 30 per cent.

The same test was run to compare the pre- and post-treatments results of the learner group both in the area of productive and receptive vocabulary knowledge. The results obtained allow drawing a conclusion that the progress made by the students was much more conspicuous in the area of productive knowledge of technical terminology. In the area of receptive vocabulary knowledge, the obtained results did not prove to be statistically significant (cf. Lesiak-Bielawska, 2012).

English for Instrumentalists: Designing and Evaluating an ESP Course

Elżbieta Danuta Lesiak-Bielawska

7. Discussion

The article reported the developments of the course 'English for Instrumentalists'. To the best of my knowledge, it was the first attempt at designing and evaluating a blended learning course for such a learner group. The initiative was triggered by the request of the FCUM learners and teachers to create an ESAP course that would meet the needs of prospective instrumentalists. Since it was not possible to draw on the descriptions of musical discourse from any 'English for Musicians' type of course, authentic materials were adapted to suit the goal set. Though the course developer had some musical background and training, she continually checked her understanding of communication in the events specified with domain experts and students. The consultations were indispensable and meant to ensure that the course did not include any language use that would be wrong or unacceptable in the context specified.

The study discussed in the article exemplifies a contribution into the development of ESAP research. A blended learning approach was adopted to teach vocational terminology owing to the specificity of the learner group and the fact that no field specific coursebooks were available on the market. The inclusion of web technologies in the design of the course also meant to provide a well-balanced proportion of online and offline tools that enhance learning.

The 'English for Instrumentalists'' course thus designed turned out to be a success both in terms of its objective assessment and learners' perceptions of it. The subjects showed considerable gains in the overall acquisition of technical vocabulary and in the area of

productive vocabulary knowledge. The impact of blended learning approach on receptive vocabulary knowledge is less clear owing to the lack of statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-test scores. As declared by all but one learner, the procedure applied proved to be conducive to ESAP vocabulary learning.

8. Conclusions

The phases of developing the course 'English for Instrumentalists' presented in the article relate to the process of establishing its content, methodological aspect as well as evaluating its effectiveness. As shown above, ongoing needs analysis and formative course evaluation have much in common as they both affect the initial shape of the course. In either case, learners are invited to make individual contributions to the course content, which leads to the course details being discussed and negotiated jointly as it is running. Such an evolutionary approach to needs analysis allows fully responding to the requirements of the target group. It also enables the course designer to take into consideration all the new ESAP aspects that emerge during the course, let alone individual differences between its participants.

Such an approach to needs analysis helps understand why a summative evaluation of an ESAP course is a task much more complex than the assessment of language courses for general purposes. In contrast to the latter, it consists in evaluating learning not only at the

end of the course, but also in the light of learners' subsequent experiences in the target area through the use of post-course questionnaires, interviews, 'on the job' observations or tests administered to the participants some time after the course has come to an end. These measures allow assessing the long-term efficacy of the course, the materials employed, didactic procedures as well as the adaptation of the course to learners' specific needs and expectations.

When designing an ESAP course that employs a blended learning formula, it is important to answer a series of questions concerning the indispensable changes that need to be initiated with it. In the very first place, they relate to the goal set, i.e. types of needs relevant to the course, and secondly to the learners' feedback on the original blend. The configuration of the final blend is also reflected in the extent to which the course is replicable with other groups of learners, how cost effective it is to run the course once it has been established, and how relatively easy and straightforward it is for not domain experts to teach. Last but not least is the course designer's conviction on how to design an optimal blended learning course given the concrete learning and teaching environment, its contextual limitations and the course creator's restricted knowledge and experience of such courses (Whittaker, 2013).

Having produced good results with the learner groups for which it was initially designed, the blended learning course 'English for Instrumentalists' can be deemed a success. All the more so that it is still operational and has so far produced equally good results. With the benefit of hindsight, however, two areas of the blend have been enhanced in the latest editions of the course. Firstly, two one-and-a-half-hour lesson units are held in the computer laboratory. Thus students working in the groups of two are given a chance to engage in more collaborative and constructivist learning and capitalize on each other's resources and

skills. In addition to that, they are allowed more options in the self-study mode, which is meant to develop their autonomy. Their feedback on those two improvements in the blend has still not been investigated.

REFERENCES

Ahmed, M. K. (2014). 'The ESP Teacher: Issues, Tasks and Challenges'. *English for Specific Purposes World* 42 vol. 15. Available at http://www.esp-world.info (accessed on 1 September 2014).

Apel, W., and R.T. Daniel (1962). *The Harvard Brief Dictionary of Music.* New York: Washington Square Press, Inc.,

Atherton, B. (2006). "Balancing needs: How successful can a pre-sessional course be?". In Gillet A. and L. Wray (Eds.) *Assessing the Effectiveness of EAP Programmes* (12-23). London: British Association of Lectures in English for Academic Purposes.

Blue, G. (1993). *Language, Learning and Success: Studying through English. Developments in ELT*. London: Macmillan, Modern English Teacher and the British Council.

Basturkman, H. (2010). *Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes*, New York: Palgrave Macmillam.

Cheng, A. (2006). "Understanding learners and learning ESP genre-based instruction". *English for Specific Purposes Journal* 21, 76-89.

Duddley-Evans, T., and M.J. St John. (2009). *Developments in English for Specific Purposes: A Multi-disciplinary Approach*, Cambridge: CUP.

English for Instrumentalists: Designing and Evaluating an ESP Course

Elżbieta Danuta Lesiak-Bielawska

Garrison, D., and H. Kanuka. (2004). "Blended learning: Uncovering its transformative potential in higher education". *Internet and Higher Education* 7, 95-105.

Gillet A., and L. Wray (Eds.) (2006). *Assessing the Effectiveness of EAP Programmes*. London: British Association of Lectures in English for Academic Purposes.

Gillet A., and L. Wray. (2006). "EAP and success". In A. Gillet and L. Wray (Eds.) *Assessingthe Effectiveness of EAP Programmes* (1-11). London: British Association of Lecturesin English for Academic Purposes.

Hutchinson, T., and A. Waters. (1987). *English for Specific Purposes: A Learning-Centred Approach.* Cambridge: CUP.

Kennedy, C., and R. Bolitho (1984). *English for Specific Purposes.* London: Macmillan.

Kennedy, M., and J. Kennedy (2007). *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Music*. Oxford: OUP.

Krajka, J. (2007). *English Language Teaching in the Internet-Assisted Environment. Issues in the Use of the Web as a Teaching Medium.* Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press.

Latham, A. (2004). *Oxford Dictionary of Musical Terms*. Oxford: OUP.

Lesiak-Bielawska, E.D. (2012). "The Impact of Blended Learning on Teaching English for Vocational Purposes". *Glottodidactica* XXXIX.1, 47-56.

Randel, D.M. (1978). *Harvard Concise Dictionary of Music*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press,

Robinson, P.C. (1991). *ESP Today: A Practitioner's Guide.* Hemel Hempsted: Prentice Hall International.

Strevens, P. (1980). ' "Functional Englishes" (ESP)'. In *Teaching English as an International Language: From practice to Principle* (105-21). Oxford: Pergamon Press,

English for Instrumentalists: Designing and Evaluating an ESP Course

Elżbieta Danuta Lesiak-Bielawska

Swales, J. (2009). "When there is no perfect text: Approaches to EAP practitioner's dilemma". *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 8, 5-13.

Tomlinson B., and C. Whittaker (eds.) (2013). *Blended Learning in English Language Teaching: Course Design and Implementation*. London: British Council.

Whittaker, C. (2013). "A military blend". In B. Tomlinson and C. Whittaker (eds.) *Blended Learning in English Language Teaching: Course Design and Implementation* (175-184). London: British Council.

.

.

English for Instrumentalists: Designing and Evaluating an ESP Course

Elżbieta Danuta Lesiak-Bielawska