

EAP Learners' Perception of Language Needs and its Matches/Mismatches with Textbook Materials

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Abstract

Academic literacy is a transformative approach to EAP studies that highlight the backgrounds and needs of the EAP learners in order to empower them by participating in the social practices of the international research community. From this perspective, EAP textbook development research aims to find how textbooks could empower EAP learners though considering their real needs. Accordingly, this study aims to find how EAP textbooks match/mismatch with the EAP learners' needs. The sample of the study included 40 participants who were selected through purposeful homogeneous sampling. All participants who had passed 'English for the Students of Science (ESS)' as the main textbook of the EAP course completed a structured interview questionnaire that its findings were gone under content analysis and a nonparametric test of rankings themes, i.e. Friedman test. Then textbook was evaluated in terms of the established frameworks. Finally, identified themes of the interviews were compared with the content of the textbook evaluation. Findings of the study showed that EAP learners prioritized reading, writing, listening, and speaking English language skills respectively as the main language needs in the EAP community of practice. The study also found that although the design of the EAP textbook matched learners' needs at the macro-level of needs analysis, there was little enough evidence in the content of the book that could support and match these EAP learners' needs. The findings might have many implications for EAP textbook developers, learners, and teachers.

Keywords: English for academic purposes (EAP), needs analysis, textbook evaluation

1. Introduction

Oftentimes, there is a mismatch between various levels of actions in language learning classroom and what happens in the real-life situations of the learners i.e. language use (see, for example, Kennedy, 2001; Kaivanpanah et al., 2017; Khoshsima et al., 2016). This issue, however, appears to be a big challenge in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) where course objectives heavily depend on the learners' academic and real-life needs. As with Richards (2001), needs analysis was introduced to the language teaching and learning through the ESP movement (including EAP) to collect any information about the learners' needs. Accordingly, material selection and textbook developments in EAP require being in strong harmony with the learners' needs.

Academic literacies (Lea & Street, 2006, cited in Charles, 2013) is a transformative approach to EAP studies (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013) which highlight the backgrounds and needs of the EAP learners from a sociocultural perspective to empower these learners to participate in the social practices of the international research community. As with this critically-viewed EAP, material developments, textbooks, and learning manuals for EAP have to pay attention to the social practices of the EAP community and needs analysis (Iranmehr et al., 2018).

Therefore, this study is an effort to evaluate textbooks and materials designed for Iranian EAP learners through the lens of needs analysis. In the EAP community of practice in Iran, textbooks are considered the main tools of teaching specialized language to language learners. The study aims to find how these textbooks match or mismatch with the needs of learners.

2. Literature Review

There have been two positions on the role of textbooks and materials required for English language teaching and learning: deficiency view and difference view (Allwright, 1981). The former view emphasizes textbooks as a substitution for teachers' deficiencies and the latter stresses the role of textbooks as 'carriers of decisions best made by someone other than the teacher because of differences in expertise' (Crawford, 2002, p. 81). Although the latter view has been taken more from teachers' point of view, both of them show that there has been an interest in textbook evaluation from the perspective of language teachers rather than language learners. In addition, these positions imply that language teaching materials should play a permanent role in contributing language teachers and learners although there are few explanations about the way of specification of textbooks and materials in terms of when, what, where, how, why, and who items. These shortcomings, therefore, made researchers follow a method of evaluation from learners and learning processes perspectives which might be best exemplified by Crawford (2002) who proposed 8 principles that teaching materials should include being considered as 'effective teaching materials' (p. 84).

Many textbook evaluation studies were conducted to check out more or less whether these eight principles have been paid attention to while there might have been no explicit attention to them as the framework of studies. Richards (2001), for example, provides readers with different comprehensive checklists for textbook evaluations from a skill-based perspective. Some researchers in different parts of the world have followed this methodology in their evaluations. Mukundan and Ahour (2010) reviewed comprehensively these checklists from 1970 to 2008 which collectively evaluate such concepts as students, teachers, contents, skills, and practices while each checklist had its

own specific concepts such as clarity, interest, layouts, tests, vocabulary, authenticity, communicative activities, organization, context, grammar, availability of the materials, and sequencing of the activities.

Textbook evaluation in the EFL context shows a similar method. As some examples, Moghtadi (2012) focused on visual elements of the EFL high school textbooks. Koosha and Akbari (2010) evaluated textbooks in terms of the vocabulary used in Iranian EFL secondary and high school textbooks based on the BNC first three 1000 high-frequency word lists. Vocabulary development had also been evaluated from the perspectives of vocabulary size and vocabulary depth (Amiryousefi, 2015). Abdollahi-Guilani et al. (2011) examined the authenticity of Iranian English textbooks for high-school students. Ghorbani (2011) showed how language learners at high schools evaluated their textbooks in terms of practical considerations, skills, exercises and activities, pedagogic values, and appropriateness through the adoption of a popular checklist in the context of the EFL. Jahangard (2008) evaluated the EFL materials taught at Iranian public high schools. Riazi and Mosalanejad (2010) evaluated the learning objectives of the Iranian High-School and Pre-University English textbooks. They found that these textbooks mostly include lower-order learning objectives. Talebinezhad and Mahmoodzadeh (2011) compared international materials with local ELT textbooks in Iran.

However, an almost new trend of study of textbook evaluations has appeared in recent decades that seems to be a result of the critical turn, i.e. critical pedagogy, in second language education (Pennycook, 1990). This critical turn has brought about such issues as textbook evaluations from pragmatics (Vellenga, 2004), intercultural perspectives and world Englishes (Lee, 2012), globalization (Gray, 2002), representation of culture as a hidden agenda in textbooks (e.g., Soodmand Afshar & Ahmadi, 2020; Tajeddin &

Teimournezhad, 2014), and, to sum up, English as an International Language (EIL).

Within these perspectives, researchers have suggested that textbook evaluations had to be in harmony both with local and global needs of language learners. As one example, Tajeddin & Teimournezhad (2014) stressed that 'to provide learners with the appropriate intercultural repertoire, local materials developers and educators need to pay more attention to the representations of cultures in L2 materials' (p.11). As another example, Vellenga (2004) claimed that textbook developers could include metapragmatic explanations to the materials since it would be unlikely that language learners acquire appropriate information about authentic use of speech acts.

It seems that all of the above-mentioned studies try to persuade textbook developers that the core in material development is paying attention to learners' needs. Although this concentration had not been stated explicitly in some textbook evaluation studies, it is clearly possible to notice this 'needs-based philosophy' (Richards, 2001). In other words, over a history of curriculum development and needs analysis which started from the 1960s (Flowerdew, 2013) learners' needs have kept changing as a result of potential functions implied in language learning education. Therefore, textbook content and design should represent a range of varieties of needs from language skills in the past to culture, pragmatics, world Englishes, and EIL at present.

Studies on EAP learners' needs have shown that needs analysis in the academy context tends to be a kind of skills-based approach conducted at the macro-level (Flowerdew, 2013). This skilled-based approach has to be 'dynamic and ongoing' (Hyland, 2006, p.74) in terms of questioning the learning needs in a continuous manner. This implies that textbook evaluation is also a continuous activity in the EAP context which, at least in the particular context of the present study, has been paid attention to not seriously. Swales

(1978; cited in Flowerdew, 2013), for example, explored the needs of the EAP learners at the University of Libya and ranked the EAP learners' skills like reading, listening, writing, and speaking. Similar studies have been conducted on EAP learners writing needs (Swales & Feak, 1994), reading needs (Evans et al., 2010), listening needs (Miller & Flowerdew, 1997), and speaking (Zare Behtash et al., 2017) which also show that there has been a little attention to the relationship between learners' needs and textbook evaluations. Vahdatnia and Salehi (2020) found that although 'EAP students had positive attitudes towards the compatibility of book objectives with course objectives, subject matter, skills and strategies, exercises and activities, appropriateness of the content, they negatively evaluated the book's practical concerns, linguistic issues, and layout' (p. 27).

Although the focus on the relationship between varieties of learners' needs and textbook contents is evident as a rule of thumb, it is likely that the extent of matches and mismatches is controversial through the lens of language learners using them. This might be more evident about the materials and textbooks prepared for ESP and EAP users. As with Kennedy (2001), many of the problems which arose in the EAP context might be a result of these mismatches since today EAP practitioners are more engaged with international activities through the medium of English and, therefore, they have encountered a more range of needs. Accordingly, it seems that exploring the extent of matches and mismatches between EAP textbook contents and the learners' needs is important from the perspectives of EIL.

Textbook evaluations in the Iranian EAP context have been investigated from various perspectives (see, for example, Baleghizadeh & Rahimi, 2011; Barzegar & Hemmati, 2014; Dayane Tous & Haghghi, 2014; Ghalandari & Talebinejad, 2012; Malmir & Bagheri, 2019; Salehi et al., 2015). Reviewing this literature showed that most of this study has had a quantitative approach to

EAP textbook evaluations and, therefore, used checklists and close-ended questionnaires to extract EAP learners' needs from prescribed items. Such an approach paid little attention to the multi-faceted real needs of the EAP learners, on the one hand, and lacked the area of matching these real needs with textbook materials (see, for example, Gharbavi & Mousavi, 2012; Hosseini Fatemi et al., 2011; Hutchinson & Torres, 1994; Sheldon, 1988).

This study is an effort to integrate the learners' real needs in the textbook evaluation and, therefore, cover this gap observed in the area of EAP textbook evaluation. Accordingly, this study includes notions of 'right analysis' (Hyland, 2006) as it encourages students to prioritize what they need for themselves as well as how EAP textbook developers approach and meet these needs. Accordingly, the following questions were developed to achieve the aims of the study:

- 1) What are the language learning needs of EAP learners?
- 2) How do textbook materials match/mismatch EAP learners' needs?

3. Methodology

3.1. Design of the Study

In terms of research objectives, the current study was applied research followed by a qualitative method. Methodologically, research questions were answered through content analysis.

3.2. Participants

The population of the study was all EAP learners who had studied basic science. The sample of the study included 40 participants who were selected through purposeful homogeneous sampling. All the participants (26 females

and 14 males) hold B.Sc. in Olume-Payeh (Basic Science) including physics, chemistry, mathematics, and biology. All participants had passed 'English for the Students of Science (ESS)' written by Akhavan et al. (2005), which was published by SAMT (The Organization for Researching and Composing University Textbooks in the Humanities in Iran) as the main textbook of the EAP course. This textbook targets a widespread community of students including those studying physics, chemistry, mathematics, and biology in the context of Iran. These materials are currently used as the main source of instruction by EAP teachers. To match the effectiveness of the materials with the learners' needs, 40 students from this target population were asked to narrate how they would need English in the EAP community of practice.

3.3. Instrumentation

In terms of using a textbook evaluation instrument, this study used a skill-based approach at the macro-level framework introduced by Flowerdew (2013). The second instrument was a structured interview questionnaire which was forwarded to the participants through emails and Facebook chartrooms. The questionnaire included 2 open-ended interview questions with specific attention to the students' learning experiences and goals in the context of EAP. The validity of the textbook evaluation instrument was observed by using standard instruments for the analysis, i.e. macro-level framework introduced by Flowerdew (2013). The validity of the structured interview questionnaire was observed by the face validity of the framework, i.e. Hyland's target situation analysis framework, as well as the validity of the content analysis through expert judgments.

3.4. Procedure

The participants were asked to answer the open-ended interview questions. Through the first questions, the participants wrote how they ranked listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills as the real needs of English language learning in the target situation. The second question asked the participants to write about at least 5 real target situations in which they need the English language. Then identified textbook materials were analyzed page-by-page to find how these materials approached the language learning skills. Finally, identified needs and EAP learners' ranked skills were compared with the pedagogical textbook to find how they matched and to underline any potential mismatches.

3.5. Data Analysis

In terms of the first research question, at the level of language skills (macro-level of analysis), participants' answers to the first interview question were analyzed according to the decreasing order of importance by using the Friedman test. Their answers to the second interview question were analyzed according to a content-based analysis in terms of what patterns on language needs emerged from the EAP community of practice. This content analysis was a criterion-based method in which Hyland's target situation analysis framework (Hyland, 2006) was used as the criteria of analysis. For the second research question, textbooks were evaluated in terms of a skill-based approach at the macro-level of needs analysis (Flowerdew, 2013). In terms of the second research question, the evaluated language skills and content of the textbook were compared with those English language needs extracted from the results of the first research question.

4. Results

What are the language learning needs of EAP learners?

According to the results, most of the EAP learners saw their academic development in how they were able to read from English texts (Table 1). Results showed that most of the members of the EAP community of practice ranked the four skills in English language teaching as reading/writing ($F=34$, $p=85\%$). It was clear that the students of English for science were more interested in reading/writing skills than other skills. They reported listening and speaking at the end of their list of importance.

Table 1

Frequency of Skill-Based Needs

Skill categories	<i>f</i>	P %
Reading/Writing	34	85
Reading/Speaking	1	10
Reading/Listening	4	10
Listening/Speaking	1	2.5
Reading	39	97.5
Total	79	-

Note. N=40; f= frequency; P=Percent

The results of the Friedman Test indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in language skills across four English language skills, $X^2(2, n=40)=41.57$, $P<.005$). Inspection of the median values showed a decrease in language skills from reading ($Md=40$), writing ($Md=39$), and listening ($Md=38$) to a further decrease at speaking ($Md=35.5$).

Table 2

Test Statistics for Friedman Test

N	40
Chi-square	41.57
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.00

Accordingly, results indicated that Iranian EAP learners' perceived reading skill as the foremost among other skills and writing were the second required skill. Listening and speaking were ranked at the end of their needs.

Content analysis of the respondents' statements (second interview question) also showed that the EAP group of learners in the context of this study mostly need English learning skill for reading comprehension purpose including reading handbooks, search on the internet, and, in particular, review of the related literature (table 3). They mostly turned to writing ability when they wanted to submit an abstract or article to international journals. They also needed letter writing ability when sending emails to journals for receiving letter acceptance, replying to the editors of the journals, and communicating with academic authors all over the worlds. Listening and speaking were also referred to as important skills although in specific situations which were mostly personal.

Table 3

Functions of Skills for EAP Learners

Skills (themes)	Functions (categories)
Reading	Review of the related literature, reading related materials on the internet, reading abstracts from journals, searching on the internet
Writing	Communicating with editors and journals through emails,
Listening	Listening to the lecturers, virtual offline classes, attending at specialized workshops, seminars, and conferences
Speaking	Giving lectures at conferences

Participants' responses were also gone under further analysis according to the Hyland (2006) framework. The target situation analysis of the EAP context (table 4) showed that EAP learners needed English language skills for postgraduate assessment. Identified themes of the content analysis showed that they need the English language to be members of the specialized community of

practice. In terms of the genres, they needed styles and moves of the academic genres that could be used in specialized contexts. EAP learners also preferred basic science texts and subjects to be included in their English textbooks as contents of the course. Finally, they needed APA format structure as the genre structure of the EAP materials.

Table 4

Target Situation Analysis of EAP

<i>Why do learners need the language?</i> Categories: Entrance exams, term exams, postgraduate or undergraduate course. Theme: Postgraduate assessment	<i>Who will the learner use the language with?</i> Categories: Native or non-native speakers; Reader's knowledge, i.e. journal reviewers; Establishing rapport with peers, teachers, journal editors, authors of the similar studies. Theme: members of the specialized community of practice
<i>What genres will be used?</i> Categories: Lab reports, essays, seminars, lectures. Theme: academic genre	<i>Where will the learner use the language?</i> Categories: Physical context including school, university, conference; Linguistic context including overseas, home country; Human context including known/unknown readers. Theme: specialized context
<i>What will the content areas be?</i> Categories: Academic subjects; specialized contents; interdisciplinary science; specialized research vocabularies. Theme: Basic Science	<i>What is the typical structure of these genres?</i> Categories: Genres of the academic articles; letter writing and filling application forms; genre moves on writing abstract, introduction, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion. Theme: APA format

Note. The italic words cited from Hyland (2006)

How do textbook materials match or mismatch EAP learners' needs?

The overall structure of the textbook written for the students of science showed that the design of the lessons included three parts: pre-reading, reading, and homework (post-reading activities). The design of the lessons was repeated in the same manner all over the textbook (table 4).

Table 5*An Example of the Design and Contents of the EAP Textbook*

Lesson 10	
Part I: Pre-Reading	
A. pronunciation practice	
B. vocabulary study: definitions	
C. vocabulary study: definitions and examples	
D. grammatical points to be explained	
Part II: Reading	
+ (main reading text)	
A. true or false activity	
B. multiple choice activity	
C. oral questions	
Part III: Homework	
Section One: Vocabulary	
A. synonym activities	
B. matching word list	
C. fill in the blanks activities	
Section Two: Grammar	
+ (explanation of the grammar points)	
A. synonym activities	
B. fill in the blanks activities	
Section Three: Free Reading	
+ (further reading text)	
A. true or false activity	
C. multiple choice activities	
Section Four: Translation	
A. text translation from L1 to L2	
B. word translation from L1 to L2	

Note. + There is a text or explanation

The overall structure of the textbook implied that it was a reading-based textbook. Accordingly, it is perhaps possible to say that the design of the textbook is compatible with the EAP learners reading comprehension needs.

A page-by-page analysis of the materials underlined the textbook developers' orientation towards the structured-based instruction of the reading skill. The variety of activities also illustrated the structure- and grammar-based design of the book. The content of the activities included three general practices designed for learning new words (e.g., multiple-choice items, synonyms, matching word lists, fill in the blank items, and vocabulary studies), practices for drilling grammar structures (e.g., fill in the blanks and synonyms) and translation practices (text translation and word translation).

The contents of the activities for each part of the lesson leaned towards the structure-based activities and seemed to introduce reading activities, in general, through vocabulary practices. In other words, a major proportion of the contents included practices for new words that might be in harmony with learners' needs in terms of their understanding keywords, google these keywords on the internet or search them in databases of the journals.

Practices for drilling grammar included some explanations about grammatical points such as conditional sentences, connective devices, and -ing form. These structures matched with the target EAP community through integrating grammatical points with the subject matter contents.

The third group of practices included translation activities. These activities could be in harmony with the EAP learners' needs in terms of postgraduate assessment.

According to the structure of the textbook, speaking and listening needs were accomplished through one activity repeated in all units throughout the book. That was a question-answer practice by which language learners asked some questions about the contents of the main reading text.

In terms of the evident that might show mismatches between EAP learners' needs and EAP textbook, there are some deviations from what EAP learners narrate as the target situation needs. Themes of the target situation

needs analysis showed that only the postgraduate assessment theme has been observed by the textbook materials although this observation lacks the idea of assessment through 'learner-centered approach' (Asgari & Ganji, 2020). In other words, it seems that the textbook could be considered as a testing book rather than a reading comprehension book. There was also no evidence in terms of the activities or any structure of the textbook that could contribute to the EAP learners being the members of the specialized community of practice.

EAP learners showed a tendency towards the academic genre, but such a genre couldn't be found among the activities or structure of the textbook. The textbook is full of content in the areas of basic science; however, this content showed little contribution to the specialized context in terms of what students narrate as 'physical context, linguistic context, or human context'. In other words, the content had little harmony with the 'English language use' in the real context. It means that the content facilitates the transmission of knowledge rather than using the English language in the context. Finally, according to the target situation analysis, EAP learners require the APA format as the typical structure of the genre, but the structure of the textbook showed little evidence in terms of academic movies and APA format moves.

5. Discussion

Although some studies have found academic writing as the main and real learning need of EAP learners (Flowerdew, 2013), the current study found that EAP learners prioritized reading materials, i.e. reading comprehension, as the main need in the academic context. They need the English language to read materials because reading helps them to write. This means that these learners require receptive skills in this community of practice (Swale, 1978). Under this, the textbook developers in the context of this study perceived accurately these

real needs although they paid attention to the reading ability solely from the macro-skills perspectives, i.e. pre-reading, reading, and post-reading (Flowerdew, 2013). In other words, the design (not content) of the textbook materials was fairly matched with the EAP learners' needs rather than the design of the content for each activity.

Although the design of the book approached teaching reading skill, the learning consequences of the structure and content of the book enhance vocabulary learning instead of reading comprehension strategies. The participants of the study, however, needed to enhance reading skills not solely for vocabulary learning but for acquiring knowledge from various sources. Therefore, there is a sharp contrast between what learners considered reading comprehension with the contents of the textbook. Analysis of the results implied that EAP language learners need reading and comprehending subject-matter contents such as articles and abstracts rather than reading a list of words by heart. From this perspective, the current textbooks included few, if any, rhetorical genres and, therefore, mismatched with learners' needs (Richards, 2001). When learners collectively express they need to read, the contents of the textbook could be organized according to the strategies which could create this competence or ability in language learners (see for example Richards, 2001, p. 272). Textbooks could also include online reading materials and reading strategies that might help students to be 'effective readers of electronic materials' (Evans et al., 2010, p.137) because most of the learners underlined the needs for reading online articles and materials. Accordingly, EAP textbooks mismatch with reading strategies as needs of EAP learners.

While most of the language learners reported reading comprehension at the top of the list of their needs, they also referred to the importance of the writing skill mostly because of accessing to participation in the EAP community of publication (Sarani & Najjarbaghseyyah, 2015). They need to write

professionally in the subject matter domain to publish their knowledge and findings. In the current study, textbook contents and materials included no goals and plans for writing skills and there was no reference to the writing strategies. Learners also emphasized the need to communicate with editors, journals, publishers, and colleagues. To perform these functions, textbooks should, at least, include findings from genre analysis studies (Johns, 2013). Accordingly, the textbook should introduce the framework of how writing a letter to other EAP practitioners and how sending emails appropriately. In other words, textbook should include enough metapragmatic explanations (Vellenga, 2004) about use of English as an International Language in the EAP context. Therefore, the materials in the context of this study mismatched with EAP learners' needs in terms of their writing abilities.

Listening and speaking skills were also referred as necessary needs although these needs were ordered at the end of Iranian EAP learners' ranking list i.e. after reading and writing. In the context of this study, there were no pre-planned listening and speaking activities or practices included in the textbooks except for some oral questions inserted to the textbook without any instructions for the rhetorical genres of lectures (Flowerdew, 2013). This might be a result of the text developers' intuitions of the EAP community of practice. It means that they see EAP course solely as a preparation for reading which shows that they lag behind EAP learners' needs and EAP needs analysis (Flowerdew, 2013). Flowerdew and Miller (1997) also found this lack of attention to listening and speaking among EAP textbook developers.

6. Conclusion

The evidence in this study suggests that EAP textbooks rarely match the favored needs of the language learners. This implies that EAP language

teachers should rely on various sources of learning not solely on textbooks. These mismatches between learners' needs and textbooks may be the results of not only lack of knowledge on EAP learners' needs but also lack enough time and energy to collect information about EAP learning context (Hyland, 2006) although it is variably in flux.

What seems important, therefore, is that EAP language teachers follow a continuous process of evaluating learners' needs and the effectiveness of the EAP course. Accordingly, EAP needs analysis has to be an ongoing and dynamic process (Hyland, 2006). It is suggested that textbook developers answer the 6 questions proposed by Hyland (2006) in terms of present target situation in general and target situation analysis in particular. (Appendix 1)

The needs of the EAP learners may include a range of language skills as well as language use. Since language textbooks may include a limited text, activities, and practices, the rationale is to select various textbooks and materials according to the specific needs of the EAP learners. Nowadays, within the spread of the English language as an international lingua franca (Mckay, 2011) EAP group of language learners need to communicate with and take part in the target situation. This widespread function of the English language has brought about extensive sources of online materials as well as global textbooks (Gray, 2002) that language teachers and learners can adopt and adapt to their target situation.

To put it in a nutshell, matching EAP textbooks with learners' needs does not mean to compile specialized texts and compact them in a textbook. EAP learners in the context of this study showed they need to communicate like general language learners and, therefore, they need to know genres of communication in the EAP community of practice. They need more macro-strategies of reading comprehension than macro-skills.

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Appendix 1: Framework for needs analysis in the context of EAP:

Hyland (2006) suggests that textbook developers answer the following 6 questions in terms of the present target situation in general and target situation analysis in particular.

Present situation analysis	Target situation analysis
<i>Why are learners taking the course?</i>	<i>Why do learners need the language?</i>
Compulsory or optional	Examination, postgraduate or undergraduate course, etc.
Whether obvious need exists	
Personal/academic goals	
Motivation and attitude	
What they want to learn from the course	
<i>How do learners learn?</i>	<i>What genres will be used?</i>
Learning background and experiences	Lab reports, essays, seminars, lectures, etc.
Concept of teaching and learning	<i>What is the typical structure of these genres?</i>
Methodological and materials preferences	Move analyses, salient features, genre sets, etc.
Preferred learning styles and strategies	
<i>Who are the learners?</i>	<i>What will the content areas be?</i>
Age / sex / nationality / L1	Academic subject, specialism within discipline, secondary school subjects
Subject knowledge	
Interests	
Sociocultural background	
Attitudes to subject or discipline	
<i>What do learners know?</i>	<i>Who will the learner use the language with?</i>
L1 and L2 literacy abilities	Native or non-native speakers
Proficiency in English	Reader's knowledge – expert, beginner, etc.
Writing experiences and genre familiarity	Relationship: peer, teacher, examiner, supervisor
	<i>Where will the learner use the language?</i>
	Physical setting: school, university, conference
	Linguistic context: overseas, home country
	Human context: known/unknown readers