



Book Review: Woodrow, Lindy. (2018). Introducing Course Design in English for Specific Purposes: A Resource for Teachers and Course Designers. Routledge.

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English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is an approach to language teaching that is based on learners' specific needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). They emphasize that ESP focuses on the language, skills, and discourse necessary for particular fields or professions. The core principle of ESP is grounded in the needs analysis (NA) of learners, as they typically have limited time to master English for their specific requirements (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 53). Therefore, a well-structured syllabus is essential in ESP. Due to the variety of disciplines within ESP, designing an effective and time-efficient syllabus that meets the specific needs of each group of learners can be complex (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

The second edition of the book “Introducing Course Design in English for Specific Purposes: A Resource for Teachers and Course Designers” was published by Routledge in 2018. It provides comprehensive theoretical and practical guidelines for those engaged with ESP courses, including practicing ESP teachers, teachers who would like to move into ESP teaching, pre-service English teachers, and those studying ESP as part of an academic or practical Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (TESOL) course. This book aims to give readers a solid understanding of ESP and the ability to design an ESP course for both novice and experienced practitioners through a blend of theory, research, reflection, tasks, and resources (Woodrow, 2018). The book was improved after its first edition in 2017 in terms of content and new references. The key advantage of the 2018 edition over the 2017 edition is the inclusion of additional content, such as updated references and expanded sections that incorporate more recent research and practical examples of technology use in ESP.

The book is organized into three parts and eight chapters. The first part delves into essential aspects of ESP, making the reader familiar with its underlying principles and theories. For example, the first part talks about teaching and learning in ESP and “deals with pedagogical issues of teaching ESP. It addresses the expected qualities of ESP teachers, often referred to as ESP practitioners” (p. 51). The second part of the book skillfully and coherently bridges the theoretical definitions of ESP presented in the first part with the theoretical concepts of course design. For example, in chapter 14 the author states “While the terms ‘textbook’ and ‘coursebook’ are used interchangeably in ESP, I have found it useful to distinguish between them. I refer to textbooks as being about a specific subject, whereas I use



‘coursebook’ to refer to a publication designed to teach language” (p. 152). The third part offers examples of authentic ESP courses, thereby increasing the book's scholarly relevance, practical utility, and accessibility for its readers. “This part presents a range of ESP courses, generously shared by their authors, reflecting different settings, approaches and fields. Each of the courses outlines needs analysis, an approach to course design, course outlines and sample classroom tasks. After each course, a reader task is presented which highlights an aspect of the course in question. The courses are linked to topics in Part 1 and Part 2 of this book” (p. 185).

Part one, entitled “Essential Aspects of English for Specific Purposes,” includes eight sections. This chapter provides an overview of the history and classification of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). It offers a concise description of various ESP categories based on student objectives, including English for academic purposes, business English, English for occupational purposes, and English for vocational purposes. Each type of ESP mentioned here will be explored in greater detail in Part 2, with course examples presented in Part 3. By outlining the history and classification of ESP, the chapter provides a necessary context that helps readers understand the evolution and scope of the field. Besides, it allows the readers to see how ESP is tailored to various specific needs such as academic, business, occupational, and vocational purpose. Furthermore, the chapter prepares readers for a detailed examination, making the structure of the material clear and logical. In addition to introducing the main theoretical concepts of ESP, such as needs analysis (NA), it covers other important aspects of ESP teaching, including the use of technology and assessment in ESP. However, part one could include more important theoretical aspects of ESP as well. For example, incorporating a section on how ESP adapts to different sociocultural contexts, along with examples, would enrich the content as Bhatia (2017) emphasizes the importance of sociocultural and contextual considerations in ESP, especially in the analysis and design of professional discourse. Another theoretical aspect neglected is that While technology is mentioned (Chapter 7), recent trends like artificial intelligence in ESP, digital literacy, and online-specific ESP needs (e.g., remote work) could be more prominently discussed. For example, in Paltridge, B., & Starfield, S. (Eds.). (2019). *The handbook of English for specific purposes*. Wiley-Blackwell. Several chapters address the role of emerging technologies in ESP, including the integration of digital tools, the impact of artificial intelligence on language learning, and the increasing demand for ESP tailored to online communication and remote work contexts. The book discusses how digital literacy and technological advancements are reshaping ESP practices, particularly in professional and academic environments. The book's theoretical discussions in part one address a wide range of audiences including ESP practitioners, curriculum designers, and researchers, as well as ESP program administrators, applied linguists, and education policymakers as understanding foundational and scientific topics is essential for these groups.

Part two, titled “Approaches to ESP Course Design,” comprises seven chapters. This section serves to bridge the theoretical concepts presented in part one with the practical applications discussed in part three, summarizing key topics such as discourse analysis and the role of materials and resources. For example, chapter 15 presents a range of resources that ESP practitioners can use, including sample questions and interviews for needs analysis, sources of academic word lists in different majors, links to ESP corpora (e.g., the International Corpus of English), checklists for evaluating ESP materials, podcasts, blogs, sources for language tests (e.g., Cambridge tests), and links to academic journals on ESP (e.g., Asian ESP Journal), among many other useful sources. This part provides the reader with a comprehensive understanding and access to a wide range of resources, offering a direct and convenient

way to find appropriate materials to meet the needs of their target group of ESP students, which is the ultimate aim of ESP.

In Chapter 12 of part two, the author states “ESP often adopts teaching methodologies that are commonly used to teach subject areas. In medical training courses, for example, problem-based learning is very common, while case studies are widely used in business. These two approaches to teaching are similar and share epistemology with ‘project-based’ language teaching” (p. 131). However, the chapter does not address newer or less traditional methodologies that are becoming relevant in ESP. For example, some other methodologies could be added in this section. The flipped classroom model, where learners study new content outside class and use class time for application and discussion, promotes active learning and leverages technology effectively in ESP contexts. Blended learning, which combines face-to-face instruction with online activities, offers flexibility and caters to diverse needs in modern ESP education. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) teaches subject content through a foreign language, benefiting ESP learners by integrating language and content knowledge (Mullr, 2022). Collaborative learning methodologies, focusing on group work and peer interaction, enhance both language acquisition and content understanding in ESP settings (Mullr, 2022).

As the title suggests, part three provides "Examples of Authentic ESP Courses." This section comprises eight chapters, each detailing various ESP courses contributed by their authors. These chapters cover diverse settings, approaches, and fields. Each course description includes needs analysis, course design methodology, course outlines, and sample classroom activities. Additionally, a reader task follows each course, emphasizing a specific aspect of the course discussed. These courses are also connected to the topics covered in parts one and two of the book.

In other words, part three covers eight sections for different settings and majors, including workplace, nursing, law, airport English, academic settings, publication, and business. Part three is the most substantial and practical section of the book, offering detailed syllabus designs and plans specifically tailored for each major. This includes a syllabus list for each major, assessment methods, practical detailed projects, tests (mid-term and final), course length, example tasks, course aims, details about different skills and sub-skills, quizzes, and papers.

While the examples are practical, they may not fully reflect the latest trends and challenges in ESP education, such as different educational settings, cultures, learner levels, and course methodologies. In chapter four of part three, the author provides a practical course example for airport English. “The approach used in this course was a traditional, grammar-translation, form-focused one” (p. 213). “The following were the course’s aims: 1. Familiarize learners with basic vocabulary of the trade. 2. Enable learners to use very simple grammatical structures related to their daily routines. 3. Help the learners to remember typical linguistic exchanges and moves in typical scenarios of their trades” (p. 214). The course's emphasis on basic vocabulary and simple grammar may not meet the complex linguistic needs of aviation professionals. To improve, the course should integrate advanced linguistic skills and communicative functions through task-based learning and simulations. Additionally, it lacks coverage of cultural nuances crucial in aviation communication; incorporating intercultural training and diverse scenarios would address this gap. Finally, the traditional approach may not prepare learners for real-world challenges (Jenkins & Leung, 2023). Including exercises that simulate high-pressure situations and using authentic aviation materials could better prepare learners. Addressing these areas would enhance the course's effectiveness in meeting the needs of aviation professionals (Jenkins & Leung, 2023).

Concerning the coherence of the book, part One establishes the theoretical foundation for understanding ESP by introducing key concepts. Part Two then refines these concepts into detailed terminologies and methodologies. Part Three illustrates the practical application of these theories with concrete examples and resources for educators. This structured progression—from theory to methodology to practical application—provides a coherent learning experience. Although the book includes a 5-page glossary at the end, expanding this section could further enhance comprehension and consistency.

Among the eight majors, it is delicate to discuss language in the workplace, airport English, and English in academic settings, as these are particularly significant in ESP contexts. For instance, when designing a syllabus for workplace English, key elements considered include language, international technology, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, global awareness, and leadership. Woodrow (2018) notes that students in the workplace need to gain an understanding of culturally determined differences in communication and learn how to operate within multicultural work settings to ensure harmonious and efficient communication among different cultural groups. Regarding English in Academic Settings (EAS), it is considered a credit-bearing EAP elective course for graduate students in education and language-related subjects. Woodrow introduces four main goals for EAS learners that should be considered when designing a syllabus for this group. These goals include understanding the theoretical underpinnings of academic communication, understanding the expectations of academic work, understanding the conventions and practices of academic writing, and improving personal academic writing skills. Airport English is a good example of English for workplace and academic settings. This ESP course is designed for airport workers, such as security guards and catering staff. By providing language training, the project has created work opportunities for young and unemployed local people. Airport English involves specific vocabulary and communication skills required for various roles, such as airline staff, security personnel, and travelers. Effective course design ensures that the curriculum meets these unique needs, contributing to safety and efficiency in airport operations. Clear communication can prevent misunderstandings that could lead to security issues or operational delays. The book includes practical strategies for developing materials and assessments relevant to the aviation context, allowing teachers to create effective learning experiences. However, it does not address the unique needs and contexts of aviation English, which may require additional resources or customization by the instructor. Furthermore, while the case studies presented are illustrative, they may not fully capture the unique challenges faced by practitioners in vastly different contexts. Additionally, given the increasing importance of technology in both aviation training and language learning, the book's limited coverage of integrating digital tools could be a drawback.

Another advantage of the book is its provision of practical examples of tasks aimed at developing soft skills in learners, including critical thinking, note-taking, effective listening, communication skills, research skills, and interviewing. These skills enhance problem-solving, information retention, comprehension, and interaction, and support informed decision-making and professional presentation. They equip ESP learners to meet professional and academic demands effectively, promoting success and adaptability.

It also includes examples of high-level cognitive tasks, journal assignments, and oral presentations. High-level tasks improve strategic thinking, journal assignments promote reflective learning and writing proficiency, while oral presentations build public speaking confidence and interactive learning. Teaching these skills in ESP courses can enhance both cognitive and metacognitive

awareness, thereby improving learners' decision-making abilities in their future professional roles. This development is crucial for advancing their professional growth and ensuring effective job performance.

A further advantage of the book is that it thoroughly considers and explains the genre and setting in the design of syllabi for different fields. For instance, Table C4.1 presents a syllabus list for Airport English, addressing various situations, vocabulary functions, attitudes typical of each context, trade and verb forms, examples from online materials, detailed dialogues, and grammar exercises. By examining this example, one can develop a framework for designing a practical syllabus tailored to each topic or area of interest. It serves as an excellent guideline for ESP teachers, especially those preparing need-based syllabi, and is also a valuable resource for material designers and ESP practitioners.

Another positive aspect of the book is its reflective approach. It encourages readers to reflect on their practice, which can lead to improved course design and teaching strategies. After exploring the issues and topics in the book, the writer poses critical reflective questions. For example, the author questions “Whose needs are important? How do you think needs can be assessed? When do you think needs analysis should be carried out? (p. 22). Essentially, critical thinking requires engaging in reflective and analytical thought. Critical reflection aids ESP material designers and teachers by helping them identify gaps, enhance relevance, and improve instructional strategies. It promotes personal growth and allows for the integration of student feedback and needs into curriculum design, ensuring that materials and methods effectively support student success and professional development.

Although this book touches on the use of technology in ESP course design generally, it does not provide a comprehensive guide to effectively integrating digital tools and resources. Moreover, the book is rich in content, particularly in task design and assessment. However, the explanation of practical guidelines in the needs analysis section could be improved.

The current book is comparable to Brown, J. D. (2017). **Introducing Needs Analysis and English for Specific Purposes** due to their similarities and differences. While both books are integral to the field of ESP, Brown (2017) is more focused on needs analysis methodologies, whereas Woodrow (2018) offers a broader perspective on course design and practical application.

Brown (2017) provides expert insight into needs analysis with detailed methodologies for assessing and addressing learners' needs in ESP contexts. It offers comprehensive coverage of data collection and analysis techniques, supported by real-world examples and case studies. Additionally, it promotes critical thinking through discussion questions, enhancing the reader's ability to reflect on and apply the concepts. However, its narrow focus may be less useful for those seeking comprehensive guidance on overall course design and provides limited practical advice on aspects like task creation and syllabus development. It is primarily geared toward readers specifically interested in needs analysis, potentially excluding those looking for broader course design strategies.

On the other hand, Woodrow (2018) covers a broad range of topics, including syllabus development, task design, and material integration, making it a comprehensive guide for ESP course development. It offers practical advice and actionable strategies suitable for both new and experienced educators. Its balanced approach combines theoretical foundations with practical application, ensuring effective use of concepts in real-world settings. However, it provides less depth on needs analysis compared to specialized texts like Brown's, and its broad coverage may overwhelm readers seeking focused guidance on specific aspects of course design. Additionally, its general approach might be less useful for those looking for detailed methodologies and case studies specific to needs analysis.

In summary, Brown (2017) excels in its detailed examination of needs analysis, while Woodrow (2018) provides a broader, practical perspective on overall course design. Consequently, it is suggested that future editions of the current book incorporate more detailed and comprehensive guidelines on conducting needs analysis to better assist readers with practical implementation.

All in all, the language used in this book is intended to be accessible to both novice and experienced ESP practitioners, ensuring that complex concepts are explained clearly and understandably. It is useful for ESP teachers, curriculum developers, language program administrators, training institutions, students and learners, and researchers. The strength of the book lies in its theoretical and practical aspects, including task design, practical tasks, and diverse assessment methods. However, it is suggested that the book include a section on how AI-assisted methods can help teachers and practitioners design tailored ESP courses. For example, ESP teachers can use AI to conduct needs analysis, write syllabi, and design related tasks and activities for ESP learners. AI tools can analyze data from surveys and assessments to identify learners' specific needs and goals, such as language gaps and professional requirements. Additionally, AI can use historical data to predict future language needs based on industry trends, helping to forecast emerging skills required in various fields. AI systems can recommend relevant topics and materials tailored to learners' needs, such as technical writing resources, and create adaptive syllabi that adjust task difficulty based on learners' progress and feedback, ensuring a more personalized learning experience. AI can also generate customized tasks and activities, such as role-playing scenarios for negotiation practice, design interactive activities like VR simulations to enhance engagement and practical application, and provide instant, personalized feedback on assignments to improve learners' skills more effectively. It is recommended that AI-based research outcomes be incorporated into future editions of the book.

The primary audiences of the book are ESP educators, researchers, and practitioners who seek a comprehensive understanding of ESP. This includes those involved in course design, teaching, and assessment, as well as those interested in the theoretical and practical aspects of ESP. The book also targets educational administrators and curriculum developers looking for detailed methodologies and real-world applications. Considering the significant diversity in the field, it is suggested that the book could benefit from contributions by experts in other disciplines or language-content teachers. They could write papers or book chapters aligned with the useful framework of the current book, guiding teachers in other areas of ESP, such as engineering (across various disciplines), medicine, information technology, agriculture, and tourism management.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors have conducted the study, collected data, analyzed and interpreted the data, and written up the manuscript.

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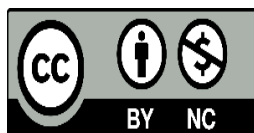
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Competing Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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