Introduction

Needs analysis, carried out to establish the “what” and the “how” of a course, is the first stage in ESP course development, followed by curriculum design, materials selection, methodology, assessment, and evaluation. However, these stages should not be seen as separate, proceeding in a linear fashion. Rather, as noted by Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), they are interdependent overlapping activities in a cyclical process. This conceptual distinction is neatly encapsulated by the diagrams in Figure 17.1 from Dudley-Evans and St John (1998: 121) showing how needs analysis is often ongoing, feeding back into various stages.

A broad, multi-faceted definition of needs analysis is provided by Hyland (2006: 73):

*Needs analysis* refers to the techniques for collecting and assessing information relevant to course design: it is the means of establishing the *how* and *what* of a course. It is a continuous process, since we modify our teaching as we come to learn more about our students, and in this way it actually shades into *evaluation* – the means of establishing the effectiveness of a course. Needs is actually an umbrella term that embraces many aspects, incorporating learners’ goals and backgrounds, their language proficiencies, their reasons for taking the course, their teaching and learning preferences, and the situations they will need to communicate in. Needs can involve what learners know, don’t know or want to know, and can be collected and analyzed in a variety of ways.
Having established the nature and the role of needs analysis in the overall course development process, I now review the different approaches needs analyses have embraced since the coming-of-age of English for specific purposes (ESP).

Needs analysis in ESP has a long history and is constantly evolving and redefining itself. Before the 1970s, needs analyses were based on teacher intuitions and sometimes informal analyses of students’ needs, as noted by West (1994) in his landmark state-of-the-art article. It was in the 1970s that needs analysis first entered the literature on ESP as a formal concept and during this decade was largely defined in terms of the target situation analysis (TSA), what learners are required to do with the foreign or second language in the target situation. Moreover, as West (1994) points out, needs analyses have a basis, either explicitly or implicitly, in theory (McDonough 1984), and also in principle, “The type of information sought during a needs analysis is usually closely related to the approach to teaching and learning and to syllabus design followed by the analysts” (Robinson 1991: 11–12). The concept of needs analysis, hand-in-hand with an underlying theory, was first established by the Council of Europe with their model for describing the language proficiency of adults whose jobs entailed working in different countries in, what was then, the European Economic Community. With a view to ensuring some degree of standardization across languages and countries, a semantically based model drawing on Wilkins’ (1976) “notional-functional” syllabus design was proposed (Richterich and Chancerel 1977). This focus on functions culminated in Munby’s (1978) communicative syllabus design, an ambitious undertaking to draw up a profile of communicative needs underpinned by Hymes’ (1971) notion of communicative competence. This type of needs analysis is related to the skills-based approach; while an ESP syllabus might be defined at the macro-level in terms of the four traditional skills, for example, oral skills for business, the actual content of the course would be expressed by functions such as persuading, negotiating, and so on.

Richterich, and Chancerel (1997) put a particular emphasis on present situation analysis (PSA). A present situation analysis draws attention to the gap between
what students are able to do with language at the beginning of the course and what they need to do at the end of the course. This is sometimes referred to as their “lacks.” The present situation analysis also encompasses other aspects pertaining to the prevailing situation, including:

- personal information about the learners: factors which may affect the way they learn such as previous learning experiences, cultural information, reasons for attending the course and expectations of it and attitude to English;
- information about the language teaching environment (e.g. resources, administration matters).

Thus, broadly speaking, whereas the target situation analysis is concerned with “needs,” the present situation analysis addresses learners’ “lacks” and “wants,” three aspects addressed at length in Hutchinson and Waters (1987) and also in Bruce’s (2011) chapter on needs analysis. As Widdowson (1981) points out, while target needs are seen as goal-oriented, learner needs are more process-oriented when they refer to what the learner has to do to acquire the language. Another consideration concerns whether courses should be “wide-angled” or “narrow-angled,” although as Basturkmen (2010) notes these two aspects should be seen on a continuum. For example, to take the case of Business English, a course focussing on broad academic skills encompassing many sub-fields such as marketing and accounting would fall at the “wide-angled” end of the continuum whereas a course on English for accountants would be relatively “narrow-angled.” While both Hutchinson and Waters (1987) and Widdowson (1983) espoused a “wide-angle” approach to the curriculum, arguing that language and skills should be taught through a variety of topics, one reason being that students may find a “narrow-angle” approach demotivating, arguments in favor of a “narrow-angle” approach are put forward by Johns and Dudley-Evans (1991). A greater focus on the learner in needs analyses gave rise to the “negotiated” syllabus, which, as Brindley (1989) points out, can involve accommodation and compromise regarding not only what is to be learnt but also taking into account students’ preferred ways of learning and cognitive style.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) also formulate the present situation analysis in terms of the potential and constraints of the learning situation, that is, external factors that may include the resources and materials available and the prevailing attitude or culture. This more contextual, social, aspect of the language-teaching environment is referred to as a “means analysis” by Holliday (1994). What seems to be a key issue in discussion of the target situation analysis and present situation analysis concerns at what point they are considered in the whole needs analysis process vis-à-vis one another. Although Munby (1978) views the present situation analysis as a set of constraints (rather than in terms of its potential to be exploited) impinging on syllabus design including cultural, sociopolitical, logistical, administrative, psycho-pedagogic, and methodological factors, he considers them as something of an afterthought after the target situation analysis has been conducted. McDonough (1984), on the other hand, sees the present situation analysis, which
involves "fundamental variables" specific to each individual teaching situation, as a prerequisite consideration to the target situation analysis, and in fact, Swales (1988) takes to task syllabus designers who procrastinate and postpone as late as possible dealing with the constraints associated with the present situation analysis. More recently, though, consideration of constraints has assumed more importance (see the four case studies in ESP course development in Basturkmen 2010). On a practical note, Robinson (1991: 9) observes, "one is likely to seek and find information relating to both the TSA and PSA simultaneously. Thus needs analysis may be seen as a combination of TSA and PSA."

This functional orientation to needs was a radical departure from the prevailing thinking at the time, which was to base student needs on a register analysis of ESP texts associated with a structural syllabus. Barber’s (1985) "lexicostatistical" analysis of scientific prose is a prime example of this approach with its attention paid to grammatical structures such as the forms and use of the passive.

However, both the functional and register analysis approaches to needs have been criticized on various grounds. Long (2005), in his seminal publication on second language needs analysis, makes the point that syllabi grounded in notional-functional needs still relied, as before, on the intuitions of applied linguists and language teachers rather than domain specialists and tended to result in synthetic syllabi in which the target language items were presented as itemized lists. A failing of Munby’s model was that its detailed specification of communicative events for a given participant contained no specification of the actual language forms realizing specific needs (Schutz and Derwing 1981). Neither did functional syllabi take account of empirical data. While the register analysis approach did provide somewhat sparse linguistic data on the target situation, little attempt was made to correlate grammatical findings with different sections of text and their respective rhetorical purposes or to seek advice from "specialist informants," as in later genre-analytic approaches (Swales 2004).

On account of the above failings, Long (2005) proposed task-based needs analyses as the unit of analysis for the following reasons. Job descriptions, which are formulated by domain experts on the background knowledge, performance standards, and tasks required, provide a more reliable source of data than those produced by language teachers and applied linguists. Task-based needs analyses reflect the dynamic qualities of the target discourse, thus revealing more than static, product-oriented text-based analyses. Whereas synthetic syllabi tend to be the outcome of needs analyses organized around functions, task-based needs analyses promote a more holistic analytical syllabus (see Johnson 2009 for detailed discussion on types of syllabi).

In the mid-1980s needs analyses based on samples of texts to inform writing syllabi progressed from a focus on register to a focus on rhetoric, in particular looking at the discourse of EST, English for science and technology, (see Trimble 1985). In the 1990s the focus shifted to a more genre-analytic perspective of the target discourses, embodying the concept of situated tasks (see Jordan 1997: 228–31 for an overview of register, discourse, and genre analysis). With needs articulated in terms of genres situated within the wider discourse communities in which
they are produced and enacted, the ethnographic dimension of needs analysis received greater attention. As summarized in Hyland (2006: 66), an ethnographically oriented needs analysis seeks to achieve the following:

- Offer a comprehensive, detailed and “thick” description (Geertz 1973).
- Portray an insider’s perspective, which gives precedence to the meaning of the event or situation to participants.
- Provide an account grounded in data collected from multiple sources that develops a conceptual framework.

The socio-rhetorical genre-analytic and more ethnographic approaches to needs analysis (see Jasso-Aguilar 2005) then began to embrace a more critical perspective, especially with regard to writing in the academy, influenced by the academic literacies (Lea and Street 1998) and critical EAP (Benesch 2001) movements. Both pose challenges to traditional needs analyses, as summarized by Starfield (2007: 883):

The development of students’ writing needs to be seen within its broader institutional setting, in terms of the dominant social and discursive practices that maintain and reproduce authority and power rather than as solely located within students themselves. Whereas traditional needs analysis tends to transform academic genres into “abstract, anonymous structures occurring anytime anywhere” (Prior 1995: 55), academic literacies approaches allow us to understand the complex situatedness and particularity of each classroom (Casanave 1995). Critical EAP (Benesch 2001) further challenges needs analysis approaches by arguing that within specific social contexts, students can exercise their right to challenge dominant discourses and unilateral socialization into preexisting sets of expectations.

Johns and Makalela (2011) give a brief history of needs assessment in ESP, tracing its development from a focus on “objective” needs to its more recent critical ethnographic stance serving to illuminate how the social contexts, expectations and intentions of all stakeholders have a bearing on the needs analysis process.

Sources and Methods

The next question to address is what sources and methods are used to collect data in needs analyses for ESP (see Long (ed.) 2005 for a thorough discussion and bibliography of needs analysis studies). While not aimed specifically at ESP, Long’s account can be taken as representative of defining needs in ESP following his contention that “Instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, it is more defensible to view every course as involving specific purposes, the difference in each case being simply the precision with which it is possible to identify current or future uses of the L2” (2005: 10). Long cites the following as sources of information: published and unpublished literature, learners, teachers and applied linguists, domain experts, and triangulated sources (comparison of a range of data sources).
As for methods, Long (2005) notes that both inductive and deductive procedures (Berwick 1989) are used. The former includes expert intuitions, participant and non-participant observation, and unstructured interviews, while the latter involves surveys and questionnaires, structured interviews and, less commonly, criterion-referenced performance tests. Of interest is Long’s comment that “Use of interviews is widely reported in needs analyses in ESP” (2005: 37). While not referring specifically to ESP, Long, citing Lincoln and Guba (1985), states that unstructured interviews are appropriate when the interviewer “does not know what he or she doesn’t know and must therefore rely on the respondent to tell him or her.” As the ESP teacher is more often than not the “non- knower,” unstructured interviews with domain specialists would seem a good method to use initially for deriving categories for follow-up survey questionnaires or structured interviews.

Other methods for needs analyses in ESP could largely be seen as designed to collect ethnographically oriented information to gain an insider’s view of the ESP situation. These would include detailed, longitudinal observations of the setting, focus group discussions, and analyses of participants’ diaries and journals, in addition to the more quantitative data collection methods (see Brown 2009, for a discussion of qualitative vs. quantitative methods). The main criticism leveled against ethnographic methods, though, is that, while a rich understanding may be gleaned of what is specific to a particular context, the results may not be generalizable to other ESP settings. Ethnographic analyses can also usefully be supplemented by text-based analyses of the target genres. Corpus-based methodologies can help in this respect as they allow for analysis of large quantities of text (cf Biber 2006; Gavioli 2005), thereby providing a valid means of distinguishing between different EAP/ESP registers (see Bruce 2011 for a detailed discussion on these methods).

Moreover, as Hyland (2006: 68) notes, validity (an accurate reflection of the features being studied) and reliability (a consistent interpretation of the features) in needs analysis procedures can be achieved in three main ways:

*Triangulation.* Conclusions are developed using a range of data sources, research methods or investigators.

*Prolonged engagement.* The use of repeated observation and collection of sufficient data over a period of time.

*Participant verification.* The analysis is discussed with participants and its “reality” verified by them.

A helpful representation of aspects feeding into ESP curriculum development is given in Basturkmen (2010: 143), see Figure 17.2. While the “visible element” is the curriculum, this rests on a “below the surface” bedrock of needs analysis and investigations of specialist discourse, the latter often considered as being part of the needs analysis (see also Bruce 2011 who proposes a similar framework based on three interrelated stages).
Level 1: Analyzing needs

Considerations

Situation analysis: What tasks are involved in the work or study area and what are the standards for their performance? Can the tasks be divided into sub-tasks?

What type of needs to investigate (for example, objective and/or subjective, immediate/long-term, skills and/or tasks)?

Which language-based skills or tasks do the students find difficult?

What is the nature of the students’ difficulties in these language-based skills or tasks (for example, linguistic, conceptual, cultural)?

Level 2: Investigating specialist discourse

Considerations

Which linguistic forms and features to investigate (for example, those the students are weak in or unaware of, those members of the community of practice stress as important)?

What data to collect (for example, do relevant literature, descriptions, and corpora already exist or does primary data need to be collected)?

What approach to use in the investigation (for example, ethnography and/or text analysis)?

What primary data to collect (texts, marked scripts of students’ writing, observations, self-reports, such as interviews)?

How to analyze the texts/discourse from the target community of practice or discipline (for example, whole or part of the texts, for specific features)?

How to devise pedagogical descriptions of discourse in the specialist area?

Level 3: Determining the curriculum

Considerations

How to focus on the course (for example, wide- or narrow-angled)

How to deliver the course (for example, web-based, classes, workshops, on-site or off-site)?

What units to include in the syllabus and how to sequence them (for example, genres, features of spoken discourse, conceptual content, easy to difficult, immediate to less immediate needs)?

How to evaluate learning (for example, with reference to the final or way-stage criteria or performance objectives used in the community of practice)?

What materials to develop and what types of tasks to include (for example, pedagogical descriptions of discourse and tasks that make use of activities of the work or study area)?

Figure 17.2 Needs analysis and curriculum development. Basturkmen, H. (2010: 143) Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes. Basingstoke, UK: reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan.
Needs Analysis in English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

Reports of various EAP-oriented needs analyses can be found in Jordan (1997) and, more recently, Hyland (2006). Needs analyses conducted in the academy usually take a skills-based approach at the macro-level and will be discussed from this perspective; for example, Paltridge et al. (2009) discuss needs specifically in relation to academic writing, which has been the focus of the majority of needs analyses conducted in the academy. Reading, listening to lectures, and participating in seminars and discussions figure far less in the literature. Below, needs analyses are discussed from the standpoint of major developments in the field with reference to specific programs and published textbooks.

Early EAP syllabi for writing were often derived from the material writer’s own intuitive conception of needs supported by research studies on analyses of the target domain. Another observation is that the syllabus was not automatically determined by findings from the needs analysis (Hutchinson and Waters 1987). A similar point was made by Swales (1978) who stated that teaching syllabi need not necessarily reflect the priorities accorded to different skills in the academy. While Swales notes that the needs of science and engineering students at the University of Libya could be ranked in decreasing order of importance as reading, listening, writing, and speaking, given that students were exposed to receptive skills through their textbook material and lectures, he decided to focus on writing instead. In preparing the book, Writing Scientific English, Swales consulted the work of Herbert (1965) and Barber (1985) referred to earlier, for the grammatical structures to include in the syllabus based on register analysis. The treatment of some structures within a rhetorical perspective, such as definitions, presages the work of Trimble (1985) on rhetorical functions in EST. The general approach of Swales and Feak’s (1994) Academic Writing for Graduate Students is also rhetorical, evolving, as stated by the writers, out of teaching experience and research.

Academic writing can also be based on needs derived from corpus linguistic studies, as evidenced by some of the tasks in Swales and Feak’s (2000) later genre-based volume on research writing. For example, in their chapter on writing a literature review, explicit mention is made to the corpus research of Hyland (1999) and Marco (2000), which serves as needs analysis findings for addressing academic attribution and complex prepositional noun phrases respectively. Another ESP practitioner who draws on corpus data to formulate product-oriented needs is Bloch (2010) through research on a corpus of journal articles to determine the types and patterning of reporting verbs as rhetorical devices for inclusion in an EAP writing program.

A key ethnographic study is that by Prior (1995) who carried out a longitudinal, triangulated study on students’ writing and professors’ responses in graduate seminars. Prior’s increasingly detailed research methodology explored how discourse and knowledge are dialogically constructed through an examination of the intellectual and social history of classroom interaction. Swales and Feak’s volume
(2000) can also be considered as partly ethnographically motivated as they asked their students to act as ethnographers of their own situation by having them conduct mini-analyses of the language and discourse, very much in the spirit of Johns’ (1997) socio-rhetorical approach to writing in the academy. Another ethnographic study is that by Chin (1994: 464) of a post-graduate journalism course. In addition to analyzing field notes, samples of student writing and transcribed audiotaped interviews with informants, Chin also examined the allocation of space and material resources in the department, deriving a “critical rereading of the department as a context for writing.”

Chin’s “critical rereading” of the situation heralds the work of Benesch (2001: 107–8) who problematizes the concept of needs, arguing as follows:

The use of needs analysis to describe a tool for gathering data about institutional expectations is problematic for several reasons. . . . First, it conflates external requirements and students’ desires as if they were congruent, not a possible area of study. Second, it hides the ideological battles that go on in academic life around curricular decision-making by highlighting only the final outcome of those charged decisions. . . . Third, it supports a notion of education as needs fulfillment, based on a theory of cultural deprivation . . .

For the above reasons, Benesch proposes, in addition to consideration of learners’ needs, wants, and lacks as proposed in Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 108), a “rights analysis” for EAP writing: “Rights analysis is a theoretical tool for EAP teachers and students to consider possible responses to unfavorable social, institutional, and classroom conditions.” However, Casanave (2004) questions whether employing a rights analysis would be appropriate in all EAP situations. While the students in Benesch’s EAP classes were drawn from a US-based inner city and exposed to societal inequities, those of Swales are international students. For this reason, Swales takes a more accommodationist, pragmatic approach with the primary aim of acculturating students into the disciplinary discourses of their field, while at the same time, conceding that the field of EAP is no longer politically and culturally neutral (Swales 1997). “Rights” might also be conceived in terms of allowing students the right to choose their own tasks, as in the case of the negotiated syllabus. Frodesen (1995), for example, gives an account of a writing course in which major writing assignments were negotiated individually; however, one unexpected reaction by some students was their anxiety about having to define their own assignments.

Specific genres of writing in the academy have also been the focus of attention in needs analyses particularly thesis and dissertation writing, but with different emphases on the needs, lacks, and wants aspects. Paltridge’s survey (2002) has revealed differences in perceived needs in terms of the advice on organization and structure given in guides and handbooks on thesis writing and what happens in practice. There was found to be a far wider range of thesis options in actual practice (traditional: simple; traditional: complex; topic-based; compilations of
research articles), leading Paltridge to recommend that the rationale for the various choices and structural variation within theses need to be considered in syllabus design. A needs analysis focussing on students’ lacks in thesis writing is that by Cooley and Lewkowicz (1997), who carried out a large, triangulated needs analysis through examination of student writing samples and questionnaires administered to students and supervisors. A somewhat different orientation to addressing students’ lacks is proposed by Richards (1988) within an interactive needs analysis framework. After each individual assignment Richards referred students back to their advisors for feedback. This ongoing assessment was used to determine the course development in a summative manner, a point noted earlier by Hyland (2006). Evaluation of materials and methodologies provides another mechanism to feed into needs analyses. Starfield’s (2004) students on a thesis-writing course reported a sense of empowerment through accessing corpus data to glean the phraseologies used by experts in authoritative writing; the evaluative comments from Starfield’s students could be taken as evidence of student wants for corpus-based pedagogies. The accounts of syllabi for thesis writing by Richards (1988) and Starfield (2004) illustrate that needs analyses and other stages of the ESP curriculum development process are interdependent, feeding into the assessment and evaluation stages of syllabus design, as noted earlier in this chapter.

Moving to a specific disciplinary field of writing, that of legal discourse, EALP (English for academic legal purposes) presents several challenges to the ESP teacher, as revealed through various types of needs analysis. First, most of the published textbooks target first language (L1) learners; a survey by Candlin, Bhatia, and Jensen (2002) showed only 6 out of 56 legal writing books to be aimed at the second language (L2) learner. Moreover, the extent to which these textbooks can be used is problematic as different countries have different jurisdictions limiting the transfer of published materials across national, cultural, and legal boundaries. One contentious issue concerns to what extent a syllabus for teaching EALP can or should be content-based. Northcott’s (2009: 170) needs analysis study in the UK presents this dilemma when she states that students “cannot learn how to write a legal essay without understanding how to read law reports. This in turn presupposes understanding the socio-legal context within which these texts are interpreted, hence the need for learners to become familiar with aspects of the UK legal system.” Candlin et al. (2002: 314), however, are quite categorical that legal EALP should focus on the linguistic and socio-discursive aspects of legal writing, with authentic legal texts “used for teaching accurate, authentic legal writing, not legal content.”

As far as needs analyses for academic reading are concerned, the same situation pertaining to academic writing prevailed in the 1970s–1980s. In other words, curricula were derived from the writer of the materials own intuitions, were based on rhetorical functions, (Trimble 1985) and tended to take a “wide-angle” approach drawing on material from a variety of scientific topics. A case in point is the Reading and Thinking in English Series (Widdowson 1980), comprising four graded books using a combined notional-functional approach. Implicitly, they can be said
to acknowledge learner needs in terms of level as they progress from a focus on how basic grammar structures and vocabulary are used to express concepts such as processes in simplified text, moving to functional categories in authentic text in the final book in the series.

This implicit approach to needs analysis intuitively targeting learner lacks contrasts sharply with more recent reading materials development projects, which take a much more holistic and learner-centered approach. One such study is that by Holme and Chalauisaeng (2006), who, like Richards (1988), espouse Tudor’s (1996) iterative concept of needs into course design, that is, a method that does not frame needs as solely residing in an objective assessment of the target situation but one in which the learner is considered “in the evolving cultural dynamic that the class creates out of its negotiation with the target situation” (2006: 405). Their participatory appraisal (PA) model puts the learner at the heart of this dynamic needs analysis process by co-opting learners as co-researchers to determine their own needs and learning goals in an EAP reading program. In order to capture this iterative nature of needs analysis, Holme and Chalauisaeng employed two qualitative approaches, (1) participant observation and (2) semi-structured interviews, triangulated with quantitative instruments in the form of questionnaires collected over a period of several months. Of interest, is that occasionally the findings from qualitative observations were not borne out by the quantitative data. For example, while observations of the class’s interactions and behavior indicated a strong shift in motivation, also expressed by student interest and involvement, this perception was not confirmed by the questionnaire data, which the authors explain by the fact that learners “were still coping with the residual feelings of language-learning failure that had dogged these students throughout their school years and beyond” (2006: 416). One lesson to be drawn from this study is the importance of triangulation, prolonged engagement, and participant verification for establishing validity and reliability of needs analysis procedures, as outlined in the first section of this chapter.

Evans, Hartshorn, and Anderson (2010), meanwhile, stress the importance of responsiveness in preparing content-based reading materials, noting that the curriculum should be responsive to the learners, above all, but also to stakeholders, program expectations, quality research (generated within a specific program as well as the language teaching profession in general), market demands and an ever-changing environment. Two aspects demand further comment here. The first is that over the past few years, higher education has shifted to a market-driven model, promoted in such a way as to ensure competition, maximum efficiency, and profits. How education is constructed discursively as a commodity has been examined by Fairclough (1995). By responsiveness to environmental changes, Evans et al. (2010: 137) are referring to the role of the internet in shaping the curriculum. They state that students need to learn the differences between reading online and in-print materials, and exemplify strategies that will help students to be “efficient, effective readers of electronic materials.” Evans et al.’s approach point to some very recent developments taken up in the final section of this chapter.
Needless to say, early EAP books on listening to lectures, such as *Study Listening: Understanding Lectures and Talks in English* (Lynch 1983), one in a series which also covers writing, reading, and speaking, paralleled those for writing and reading in that the materials were based on the writer’s own intuitions on what aspects should be addressed. Of interest here is that Flowerdew and Miller’s (1997) study of authentic lectures in Hong Kong found there to be a mismatch between listening skills in EAP textbooks and those required in mainstream classes. Moreover, other needs analyses of lectures have shown that this genre is not static but dynamic and evolving; for example, Stoller (2001) reports that Ferris and Tagg (1996) found that lectures in the US are becoming more interactive and less formal, making new demands on students.

One of the first studies to seriously consider the role of needs analysis in the lecture comprehension process is that by Schmidt (1981). One issue Schmidt discusses is to what extent findings from needs analyses carried out on one population are transferable to another situation. Citing materials by Candlin and Murphy (1976) prepared for engineering students in Saudi Arabia, based on a needs assessment carried out for foreign students in the United Kingdom, Schmidt points out that while this procedure constitutes a general way of assessing needs, it still “relies on the curriculum developer’s intuition about the similarity of needs between two different populations” (1981: 200). Schmidt’s main thesis in this article is to illustrate the advantages of a case study method over questionnaires and proficiency tests for assessing needs for lecture comprehension. A key advantage is that a case study allows for a more process- rather than product-oriented approach, as direct observation of a student with a follow-up interview can give insights into how a learner appears to acquire knowledge and the difficulties faced, for example, understanding a concept but being unable to record it in English. However, a drawback is that the findings may be unique to a particular student and not reflect general needs of the student population in the same context.

Schmidt’s (1981) case study could be viewed as a precursor to later more ethnographic studies, briefly introduced in the first part of this chapter. One such study is that by Benson (1994) who situates his investigation of how lecturers and students view the L2 academic listening process within a broader framework of the “culture of learning.” Working from a grounded, detailed “thick” description (Geertz 1973), Benson presents an illuminating rich tapestry of the meaning of this speech event through examination of minute patterns in motivation, interaction, roles (adopted or conferred), also considering the effect of hierarchical administrative planning on lecture content and related areas. Through such densely textured ethnographic research, Benson hopes that wider conclusions about the “grander pattern may soon become apparent” (1994: 197). While “needs” are not explicitly referred to, nevertheless this ethnographic perspective has important implications for curriculum development (see Jackson 2002 for an account of an ethnographic investigation into the L2 case discussion in business). Of note is that Benson also underscores the creation of corpus data as a “worthy research goal” in order to gain further insights into the culture of learning in his ethnographic research. One
such corpus of academic lectures is the needs-driven spoken corpus (NDSC) (Jones and Schmitt 2010) for informing discipline-specific vocabulary materials, on which subject lecturers and students were also consulted.

The above accounts all approach EAP needs from the four macro-skills perspective. But it should not be forgotten that both needs and curriculum development can never be completely neutral, being influenced by the analyst/developer’s own ideology (cf the debate on wide- vs. narrow-angle courses and Benesch’s concept of “rights” analysis). Johns’ (Johns and Makalela 2011) reflections on the “frames” underpinning an EAP literacy curriculum, which adopts a critical ethnographic approach to the needs analysis, portray her beliefs that reading and writing should be integrated and grammar and the lexicon studied functionally.

**Needs Analysis in English for Occupational Purposes (EOP)**

The needs analyses for various types of academic purposes discussed in the previous section, with most concentrating on writing, are firmly rooted in the EAP environment. The needs analyses for English for occupational purposes (EOP) discussed in this section straddle both the academy and the professional workplace.

**EOP in the academy**

Needs analyses have been conducted targeting EOP needs for implementation in an EAP course. Belcher’s (2006) overview article discusses several such needs analyses. Part 1 in *English for Specific Purposes* (Orr 2002) contains six case studies for learners in the university covering various EOP fields such as law, nursing, business, and tourism. Below I comment on a few carried out in the field of business and health care at the institutional and national level.

At the institutional level, Flowerdew (2010) describes how a module on proposal writing for the workplace for final-year science undergraduates was modified to take account of various constraints, such as some students’ unwillingness to take a writing course which they could not see any immediate value in. Flowerdew’s needs analysis pointed to a mismatch between the intended target needs and student wants; other needs analyses have highlighted mismatches between current EAP courses and EOP demands. At the national level, Bhatia and Candlin (2001) implemented a large-scale multimethod needs analysis project on business communication across five different tertiary institutions in Hong Kong (see Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson, and Planken 2007: 81–7 for more details of this project). They noted mismatches between current business programs in the academy and the skills demanded in the workplace. This aspect has also been commented on by Crosling and Ward (2002) who, based on the findings of their
survey of oral communication needs carried out in Australia, found a mismatch between the formal deductively-oriented presentations common in English for business programs in the academy and the more informal inductive style in workplace situations. They suggest that universities focus on extending generic oral communication skills, building in assertiveness training when presenting viewpoints, and involving students in group work ideally taking place in cross-gender, cross-cultural and multidisciplinary setting, which can then be adapted in a job-focussed work environment. Meanwhile, Dovey (2006) discusses the issue of transferability from academic to professional contexts from the perspective of the “new vocationalism.” Echoing the views of scholars in rhetorical genre studies (cf Devitt 2008) who emphasize the dynamic and fluid nature of genres which make them somewhat inaccessible to teaching, Dovey argues for a curriculum based on strategic needs which focus on “the ability to participate in/or manage the social and technical processes involved in leveraging knowledge” (2008: 395).

Similar concerns to those uncovered by needs analyses in business communication outlined above have also been revealed by needs analyses targeting EOP health-care communication for designing curriculum in the academy (see Shi 2009 for a summary of studies on needs analyses in English for medical purposes). For example, Bosher and Smalkoski’s (2002) findings from their ethnographic on-site observation of student nurses’ difficulties included being assertive with clients and understanding how cultural values influence interactions with clients from backgrounds different from their own, not dissimilar to those needs identified by Crosling and Ward (2002). Meanwhile Leki’s (2003) case study of a nursing student revealed the student’s antipathy towards writing nonacademic disciplinary documents, specifically the nursing care plan. Leki recounts how the student felt this task to be overly demanding on account of the fact that this genre in the academy required far more detailed writing than the notations used in clinical settings. This finding, in common with Flowerdew’s (2010) analysis of student wants, illustrates the importance of taking into account motivational factors and how meaningful the tasks are perceived by students. Corpus analysis, mainly confined to EAP contexts in the past, is now being applied to health-care communication. Adolphs, Atkins, and Harvey’s (2007) investigation of advice-seeking phone calls by the public to NHS Direct in the United Kingdom highlights the importance of interpersonal language, which, they state, has implications for training of health care professionals.

**EOP in the workplace**

The majority of needs analyses in workplace situations favor task-based needs analyses carried out through ethnographic on-site observations and often supplemented with more quantitative data, an approach advocated by Long (2005). For example, Jasso-Aguilar (2005) researched the daily tasks of Waikiki hotel maids through job shadowing. Garcia (2002) researched the communicative tasks of workers by visiting the factory floor. In fact, both of these studies adopt a critical ethnographic approach as they examine the power differentials existing in these
social contexts (see also Starfield, this volume). While many needs analyses conducted in the occupational sector reveal clearly identifiable task-based language needs, this is not always the case as the needs may vary or the needs analysis targets future rather than immediate EOP needs (see Cowling 2007, who approaches needs analysis from a problematizing perspective).

There are two other aspects that are recurrent themes in accounts of needs analyses for EOP: internationalization and the use of English as a lingua franca (ELF), which go hand-in-hand. The international scope of English was recognized in the 1970s (Mackay and Mountford 1978, cited in Johns and Dudley-Evans 1991) for the transmission of science and technology and internal/international communication, in other words, tailored “to the outside world” (Johns and Price-Machado 2001: 43). As an example of the latter, Holliday’s (1995) ethnographic approach to defining English language needs in an oil company in the Middle East underscores the importance of English as a lingua franca (Nickerson, this volume), not only for communication among local and expatriate staff within the company and within the international oil technology community, but also with the international commercial community.

Since Holliday’s study, the use of English as a lingua franca in EOP contexts has proliferated with Nickerson (2005: 367) stating, “The dominance of English used as a lingua franca in international business contexts is now seemingly beyond dispute.” Nickerson, like Dovey (2006), also argues for a focus on communication strategies, rather than product-based language skills in English for international business purposes syllabus design. What also needs to be taken into account in a strategy-based syllabus, as revealed by ethnographic observations (Gimenez 2001; Poncini 2004), is the role that culture plays in international communications. Of interest is that Gimenez’ small-scale study on business negotiations revealed that some cultural differences seemed to be overridden by status-bound considerations. Corporate language policy is another consideration to take into account in regard to written communication (Evans 2010). More recently, the increasing globalization of legal practice has resulted in English also becoming the lingua franca of this field. This is especially true in the case of commercial lawyers who often represent international clients and who also need to equip themselves with business communication skills (Northcott 2009).

It is evident from this chapter that EAP rather than EOP has been the main focus of needs analysis enquiries. J. Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) attribute this to the fact that those EAP professionals situated in higher education are better positioned than EOP professionals to do research. Another reason could be that as EOP courses in the professional sector are often delivered by discipline-based practitioners rather than ESP specialists there is less focus on needs analyses to inform curriculum design; the teaching of Legal English to lawyers is a case in point (Northcott 2009). It is also evident that, apart from EAP, business communication, Legal English, and health care contexts dominate the literature on needs analysis. That these three fields have been singled out for attention is, as Belcher (2009: 2) acknowledges, because “the fastest growing branches of EOP are those associated with professions that are themselves constantly expanding and gener-
Further Directions

Two key forces are seen as driving future needs analyses and curriculum development in ESP: technologization and transnationalization, aspects of which are interrelated.

The increasing use of English as a lingua franca has been propelled by globalization. Globalization, in its turn, has been driven by advances in technological and communications innovations. To illustrate, several recent needs analyses have underscored the importance of email for efficient workplace written communication transnationally, both in Asian (Evans 2010) and European contexts (Louhiala-Salminen 2002; Rogerson-Revell 2007), and the importance of teleconferencing in oral communicative events for professional engineers in Malaysia (Kassim and Ali 2010). Not only has technology had a profound impact on modes of workplace communication, but it is also being increasingly used in analyses of English as a lingua francs workplace interactions. Whereas in the past monomodal corpora were used for analysis, multimodal corpora are now coming on-stream for capturing English as a lingua franca, transnational spoken interactions. Handford and Matous (2011) analyze face-to-face on-site spoken discourse in the construction industry and Bjørge (2010) the use of backchannelling in negotiations.

However, what about the use of technology for delivery of ESP courses? Belcher (2006: 149) signaled computer-mediated communication, CMC (e.g. blogs) as “an appealing and accessible but still largely unexamined means of motivating both oral and literate L2 proficiencies.” Since then, these “new technologies” have been incorporated into design and delivery of courses, but this has mainly been in ESL/EFL environments; ESP has yet to benefit fully from this era of “new technologies,” but see Bloch (2008 and this volume) for application of technologies to EAP writing. Also, in this increasingly connected world, where communication is mediated by applications such as email, Skype and videoconferencing one would expect future ESP courses to adopt the communication tools of the field, similar to the line of thinking that ESP courses should mirror the activities and methodologies employed in real-life ESP situations (Robinson 1991).

Besides the changing nature of ESP being shaped by advances in technologization in this era of globalization, needs are also being redefined transnationally both in terms of learners’ cultural identity (Belcher and Lukkarila 2011) and societal demands (cf Brecht and Rivers 2005).

Belcher and Lukkarila (2011) argue for broadening the scope of learner-centered needs analyses to focus on multilingual learners’ self-perceived cultural identities, – how such learners see themselves – where they are from and who they want to become, in addition to what they want to do with language. Their research shows that both short- and long-term residents in the States “pointed to ethnolinguistic cultures of origin as the cultures with which they most identified
themselves” (2011: 80). This research also has implications for needs analyses carried out at universities in the Asia-Pacific region with their increasing focus on internationalization.

With education now driven by market forces in a global competitive environment, content and language integrated learning (CLIL), where the integration of content and language is seen to allow for efficient pedagogy, is enjoying a resurgence of interest (see Wolff 2009 for an overview of this approach). One key initiative, coordinated by Beijing Foreign Studies University, is the restructuring of ESP programs in foreign language teaching universities in the Mainland to adopt a cross-disciplinary, language-plus-subject orientation (Zhu and Shen 2010). Another large-scale endeavor integrating language and content in ESP is that taking place in higher education within the new European framework of the Bologna reform designed to harmonize academic and quality assurance standards with a view to increasing mobility and international competitiveness (Fortanet-Gómez and Räisänen 2010). This language planning initiative in Europe seems to take us full circle back to the major aim of Richterich and Chancerel’s needs analysis of the 1970s – to ensure some degree of standardization of language teaching across countries.

Concluding Remarks

Since West’s landmark state-of-the-art survey of needs analysis in 1994, needs analyses carried out in ESP situations have assumed increasing importance; witness the number of articles on various types of needs analysis published in English for Specific Purposes over the last decade. Needs analyses have also taken on a more “problematizing” role with a plethora of different strands to consider. Needs, thus, are often complex, difficult to sort out, and may require a variety of responses in that there are often “competing needs and vested interests in defining and meeting [students’] needs” (Leki 2000: 104). These challenges are compounded by the changing nature of ESP in this increasingly technologized and globalized environment, but which nevertheless holds the promise of exciting possibilities for ESP practitioners.

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