Even Business Students Can Reflect: Gleaning Insights about Research

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An under-researched area in New Zealand is the business-focussed academic literacy required by international and migrant students headed for tertiary study, particularly for Bachelor of Business degrees. Such adult learners need a basis of declarative content knowledge of English as an Additional Language (EAL) supported by the practical procedural knowledge acquired during guided report writing. The knowledge they perceive as most useful is gained via targeted research and staged document production.

This paper discusses themes emergent from open-coding analysis of 39 Reflective Memoranda written by two streams of English for Business and Computing Studies (EBCS) in 2003/4. These texts chart narratives of the learning process during the writing of guided research reports over 15 weeks. Analysis of the reflections identifies the range of skills learners believe they will use in their academic futures and reveals a perception that procedural knowledge, particularly strategies for facilitating the research and group work processes, is of maximum future value due to its potential to foster 'how to' strategies and fashion autonomy. The study is foregrounded by a discussion of effective use of reflection, reflective learning and reflective practice methodology in EAL.

Keywords: Reflective learning, Business English, research, writing reports

Reflective learning from Business report writing

Traditionally, learning how to write a business report involves, for English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners, the appropriate selection and use of lexicogrammatic forms, syntax and discourse for the conventional genre 'business report'. The report typically demonstrates topic-based content knowledge and application of student-generated primary data within a structured format. The report is the product of the course for a student or a group. The learning that occurs during the writing of a business report in English for Business and Computing Studies (EBCS), a level 5 business-track EAL course in the School of English and Applied Linguistics at Unitec in Auckland, New Zealand, also involves the development and application of strategies for research, study, collaborative and autonomous learning and document production. The learning focus is as much on the stages, process, and logistical features of targeted research and report writing as it is on the content.

In this context, reflective learning occurs when students are directed to reflect and act on problems encountered during the process of research and writing, and from solutions discovered by classmates or tutor suggestions. Learners' weekly reflective logs note these problems and any action taken, while focussing on recording specific learning experiences related to learning outcomes for the week. Students use these logs as the basis for reflective Memos, which are written immediately after reports have been handed in. Such

journalisations, as Shiel and Jones (2004) found in final year business undergraduates, "entice students to think in unconventional ways" (p. 2).

The EBCS reflective memos provide rich data of issues foremost in the students' minds at the time of completing their most challenging writing task in the penultimate week of their course: the business report. This research project locates insights into the processes of researching and writing a business report by examining the narratives of learners in their reflective memoranda. The research questions are:

- What insights into research do business-focused EAL students' reflective logs and memos reveal?
- What aspects of knowledge gained from report writing do business-track learners value most for future study?

This study does not merely argue that reflection is a useful tool for improving curriculum, materials and teaching practice (as per Van Maanen, 1991); it also demonstrates a unique instance where reflective learning is applied, specifically to elicit information about business-track learners' understanding of research and their ability to use their insights in future study and work contexts. After identifying themes emerging from the reflective data, I draw conclusions related to curriculum content and praxis for business-track EAL programmes.

Background studies on reflective forms

Reflection
In this context, as in professional development contexts, *reflection* refers to "the ability to be self aware, to analyse experiences, to evaluate their meaning and to plan further action based on analysis and reflection" (de la Harpe & Radloff, 2002, p. 1). In the context, of learning, reflection "is a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations" (Boude, Keogh & Walker 1985, p. 19). *Reflective learning,* then, occurs when learning from mistakes/ successes is systematically recorded, alternative actions and solutions are considered and implemented, and learners become subjects of a cycle of reflective learning. This is what Pennington identifies when she observes that reflection "is viewed as the input for development while also … as the output of development" (1992, p. 47). Pennington's suggestion that application of reflective practice to the learner's situation can produce more motivated and confident second language learners has led to applicability to the writing process (Hillocks, 2002). As de la Harpe and Radloff put it, "students who reflect on their learning are better able to understand themselves and the learning process and exercise control over their own learning" (2002, p. 1). Increased awareness of the experiences, actions and processes of the self and others leads to the valued procedural and autonomous learning that is the subject of this research.

Applying reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action and reflection-for-action
Schön's formulation (1983) and Barnett's reformulation (1992, 1997) inform the use of reflective logs and memos in EBCS. While reflective memos provide learners with a context of retrospective reflection-on-action and prospective reflection-for-action, logs, completed weekly, provide a focus analogous to Schön's reflection-in-action, recast by Barnett as: "some kind of internal dialogue … the reflection occurring during the action of conducting the internal dialogue" (Barnett, 1997, p. 195). The term 'action' refers to engagement in forms of reasoning leading to knowledge claims and the development of personal knowledge (Barnett,

1997). The memos, although retrospective, are the last document of the students' writing course, and best demonstrate their written improvement as well as being about the process of their learning, holding a mirror to reflect the relative values of declarative and procedural knowledge in the objectifying manner described by Van Maanen (1991). Memos embody "the intellectual reflection that occurs at some later time" (Peel & Shortland, 2004, p. 52) while also providing a context for learners to examine their own beliefs and practices (Dewey, 1933; Van Maanen, 1991). At the same time, the memo looks forward to what the learner would do differently next time, when they write a 'real' report in a 'real' Business course. The memos see students questioning their own epistemologies about writing, research and the construction of knowledge and reconfiguring what they considered important about both research and their developing selves. The transformatory potential of reflection is the subject of the work of Habermas (1971).

Reflective Practice Methodology

Recent research supports the value of clearly targeted reflective practice to the learning of EAL/ESL (Pennington, 1992; Santos, 1997; Finch, 2001; Fong, 2004), particularly in terms of student self-assessment (Basoff, 2004; Finch, 2004). The characteristics of reflective practice used by such professionals as TESOL practitioners are that it is systematic, involves questioning and review, and is integrated towards improvement (Bellingham & Neville-Barton, 2000, p. 37), effectively illuminating experience. These, too, are the characteristics of effective use of reflective forms with EAL learners. Using such forms as diaries, journals, weblogs or online discussion forums, learners can visit and revisit their progress towards such course goals as those discussed here: the researching, formatting and writing of an authentic business report. This study focuses on the potential of these forms as narratives of practice in the process and the development of a business student 'self'.

The benefits of reflective learning in developing metacognition, procedural knowledge and autonomous learning strategies are becoming increasingly well documented (Blakey, 1990; Biggs and Moore, 1993; Wenden; 1991, 1995; Birch and Kemp, 2000; Moon, 2000; de la Harpe and Radloff, 2002). Birch (1998) and Birch and Kemp (2000) employ 'the Reflective Practice Method' (RPM) to connect classroom content to meaningful application beyond it: reflective instruction is followed by activation. At all stages, content, purpose and method are carefully explained, using visual models and scaffolds, providing learners with or directing them to resources and issuing details of who can help if they run into problems. Students are encouraged to write, in note form, what they learned and how they learned it; problems they encountered and how they overcame them. This method serves as model to the employment of reflective forms in EBCS.

There are two major theoretical bases and linguistic models informing RPM. Firstly the distinction between declarative (subject content, input) and procedural ('how to' strategies) knowledge derived from cognitive psychology (Anderson, 1985) provides a useful framework for itemising aspects of learning from the cycle of reflection and application. Procedural learning, by applying learning strategies, promotes the completion of meaningful tasks both in and out of class and promotes self-regulation in learners (Vockell, 2004). It has the further advantage of highlighting process and procedure, taught as 'ways to', 'methods of', 'hints to', 'strategies for'. This praxis leads to acquisition of procedural knowledge through application and brings about what Moon (2000) calls 'experiential learning', transferring much of the responsibility for the learning to the learners themselves.

Secondly, the notion of communicative competence (Canale, 1983; Swain, 1985; Scarcella, Andersen & Krashen, 1990) underpins the fact that the strategies a particular learner requires are those needed to communicate effectively in a target environment. For EBCS learners, they wish to acquire the communicative competence required by a Bachelor of Business course and by business contexts. Their rating of useful/valuable learning depends on their perception of the communicative competence they will need. In the context of an EAL research and writing course, communicative competence also refers to the impact of language level on collecting, collating, interpreting, shaping and writing up primary and secondary research data. Business-focussed academic literacy is developed when knowledge is applied beyond the classroom, allowing learners to "operationalise … other components of communicative competence even when they are not yet fully developed" (Birch & Kemp, 2000, p.10). Under the RPM model, reflective learning involves accentuation of strategies or 'how tos' and evaluation of the success or failure of their application.

The reflection on out-of-class tasks is a further component of RPM: "This provides an opportunity for the teacher to draw the learner's attention to relevant aspects of both declarative and procedural knowledge, but of equal importance it allows the learner's peers to share their insights drawn from their own task-based experiences" (Birch and Kemp, 2000, p. 10). The elements of attention drawing and evaluation - of oneself, one's research group and the materials and the external world - are central to effective reflection. Evaluative reflections on language performance, applied research skills and learning strategies provide a focus for developing business-focussed academic literacy.

In the report researching/writing processes, students focus both on what they did – their methods and their products (declarative), and on how they did it – their research and learning strategies and their processes (procedural) in logs and memos. To extend the RPM model, the EBCS students pass through the three stages of the process to become a self-regulated learner (Vockell, 2004): self-observation, self-judgment, and self-reaction in their application of declarative knowledge in the context of applied 'how tos', leading to procedural knowledge. The declarative and procedural content of the report-writing curriculum appears as Appendix 1.

Methodology and data collection
Methodologically, this is action research (of the type defined by Cadman & Grey, 1999) using a grounded theory approach with the processes of open coding, taxonomic classification and data cross-referencing. This is action research in that insights gleaned from students' reflections inform and reconfigure that part of the curriculum concerned with teaching business report researching and writing. The study uses a qualitative form of open coding to elicit specific information about students' perceptions of the processes and problems of researching and writing business reports; which knowledge is valuable; the value of group collaboration and support, and factors impacting on the collection of primary and secondary data during their research. Recurrent themes are coded and their continued repetition indicates their significance as emergent themes. I am interested in the commentaries of individuals on how they experience the key phenomena of the business research and writing process, and in identifying concepts and categories. Emerging from this are generalisations constituting hypotheses, which can be tested in the next teaching cycle.

Discursive data in the form of a 250-word reflective memo from 39 learners (in two classes over two semesters) was collected after the reports were handed in after 14 weeks of applied study of business report writing. Reflective memos had been subject to peer and tutor editing

as part of the drafting process, while the reflective logs they were based on are peer-moderated but not teacher-moderated.

The course, its aims, participants and writing tasks
In EBCS, the class share similar levels of proficiency: the entry criterion is IELTS 5.5 or equivalent. Participants do, however, have varying ages (from 19 to 59) and visa status (International Students and Migrants/ Permanent Residents). There is little variation in their instrumental motivation: most intend to study Business at degree level and to work in or open a business in the future. This fulltime EAL course comprises 18 hours of contact time per week over 16 weeks. These hours include 5 hours of Reading/Writing, 5 hours of Listening/Speaking, 3 hours of Computing and 5 hours of electives/ lectures. The curriculum integrates skills so that all skills impact on the researched writing report and its subsequent presentation in Powerpoint form as a speaking assessment. Data for this study were collected within the Writing/Reading strand.

The participants were all students in two EBCS classes: Semester 2, 2003 and Semester 1, 2004. The mean age of 25 hides an age range from 19 to 59, but with the greatest concentration of participants in their early 20s. There was a balance of 21 females and 18 males, and 21 international students and 18 migrants. Most participants did not have a first degree. In terms of ethnic identification, 32 were Chinese (including Taiwanese and Hong Kongese), with other represented nationalities being Korean, Thai, Nicaraguan, Aghani, Vietnamese and Japanese. All participants reported that this was their first business report, although five said they had done 'something similar' in their jobs previously.

The written exercise described here aims to duplicate the processes and experiences of planning, researching, and publishing research that a first year Bachelor of Business student is likely to have to do. They are required to research and produce a generic 5-part business report with appendices, with the addition of reflective logs and a post-research reflective memo. As well as being motivating, the report demonstrates the students' synthesis of all outcomes of the Reading/ Writing/ Computing strands. It incorporates discourse features for business documents and such sub-skills as paraphrasing, in-text referencing, describing statistical graphics and summary writing, all of which are declarative aspects of business-focussed academic literacy.

In the instructions issued to students, a reflective memo was defined as "a formal written memo to your tutor describing the process of research, what you learned from it and what you would do differently next time". In a series of bullet points, students were asked to consider exactly that skills they had learned; how useful their employment of group, resources and methods were; the relevance of report writing for their future; the problems they met and how they solved them, and what they would improve next time.

Findings: Emergent categories and themes
Analysis of the 39 reflective memos yielded rich qualitative data across 10 categories. The findings presented here pertain to the research questions and belong to three categories:

- Research process (reflection on action)
- Procedural learning
- Future value/ hypotheses of improvement (reflection for action)

What insights into research do business-focused EAL students' reflective logs and memos reveal?

Insights into research as a process
While assessment is product-based, participation in this 14-week business-focussed literacy and report writing course encouraged the learners to gain an insight into research as a process and reflective learning as gradual and cyclic. Of the nine students who commented on a new understanding of research processes, the following is representative: "I realised that the process of researching work … was a gradual improvement (or sometimes a circulatory improvement) when I reviewed it".

The use of reflective forms leads learners to an understanding of research for business writing as a methodical process involving increased communicative competence. Eighteen students commented that the process had prepared them for business research skills. Typical of these comments is one learner's realisation that "I learned a lot of research methods and understand how to effectively use Business English in the report". In a similar vein, another student remarked: "since finishing this business report, I feel very confident to do a better report, because I have learned so many useful skills".

The stages of this process are identified by eight students and are most commonly described as applied, procedural knowledge. In other words, the subjects of learning are frequently introduced with "how to":

- "I have learnt how to utilise the secondary sources, think in English, organise and distribute the information".
- "It is pleasing that I learned how to research, analyse, gather information and make use of the power of brainstorm".

Insights into problem solving
Inevitably, all learners identified their greatest problem during the research/writing process, reflected on action taken and identified what they would do differently next time. Three of the most common themes related to starting the project: selecting a topic, preparing an effective questionnaire to elicit primary data and locating relevant and up-to-date secondary resources. The Chinese proverb "To have a good beginning is the half way of success" recurs throughout the data and the self-advice of one learner "I should spend more time, at first, researching particular topics of practical use before choosing one" typifies the learning from the first problem. The realisation that a good report depends on a well-targeted and thoughtful research instrument was a major theme in the memos: "the most important step for my report". This and the third problem found solutions in teamwork (co-construction of questionnaires, mutual piloting), collaborative library searches and resource sharing: "We shared information from the internet, or books from the library. We all worked hard for the report".

Information selection and integration emerge as the most significant problems for a quarter of the students. Five students commented on the cornucopia of secondary data available: "the main difficulty for me is selecting the treasures from the massive information". Another learner, articulating a common thread, refers to the "chaos collections" that needed to be turned into clear, logical results. Learners identified their need for applied scanning and skimming skills or for closer surveying skills when seeking specific information: "brief reading (skimming a book or reading the abstract of a report) can help me to understand the

topic and write a useful reference list for my further research. It can also save time." One particular student would focus on "… searching for information which is more narrowly focussed on the primary findings" next time, while another, in a reflection-on-action echoed throughout the sample, writes that now "I can recognise what should be included in the report".

Equally problematic was what the learners called "connecting with results". In context this is a reference to the difficulty of integrating primary and secondary research so that reading supports field study. The same student comments: "it was difficult to write the findings because it is hard to find articles to justify my statistic writing". The realisation that primary results need to be supported by reading is itself an insight. Many learners identified collaborative reading and peer or mentor editing as the most useful solutions: "Working in my group was helpful and efficient. We supported each other in such ways as sharing ideas in group meeting and enlightening each other to do in-depth research". The majority of groups contained a member with specific strengths (cited were using library databases, searching the web, using Excel, organising data, proofreading and "more logical thinking"). Mentoring is a successful solution: "[*name*] gave us some good information from the Internet. It actually stimulated me to keep searching for the information".

Insights into logical thinking
The process of researching and writing a report helps to structure learners' logical thinking. Eleven students connected the report writing process with the cognitive and social development of a business-ready self, either for further study or workplaces. In a reflection, one learner notes that report writing is "a creative, motivate way to help me developing the logical, rational thinking in the business field". A similar comment was that the programme helped in "developing the logical, rational thinking in the business field", a sentiment echoed throughout the sample: "Mastering a large amount of business jargon and improving my logical thinking in English were my overriding harvests". These insights indicate that cognitive gains supplement the business-focused academic literacy developed during the course.

Insights into the value of procedural knowledge
The learning most frequently identified by learners as useful can be most often classified as procedural knowledge. Procedural learning outcomes identified by significant numbers of students include:

- **How to structure and organise information for the reader**
  Structure and organisation are the keys to Report Writing for Level 5 EAL Business Students. A 59 year-old Chinese businessman, wrote, "During my working in the past years, I used to write some business reports … the picture and structure in my mind had not been clear enough. But in this report [the sections] are very clear". The process of structuring has as much to do with ease for the reader as generic modelling. Emphasising structure, another learner offered: "I put all the information logically so that the readers can easily understand". This is what another respondent means when she reflects, "Writing in the logical way is the most important skill that I have realised".

- **How to integrate primary and secondary information**
  While one student nominates the "integration of primary and secondary research to write findings" as a major learning outcome, another writes: "I learnt the skills to

analyse the information gained from my primary survey and the secondary research and to present the facts and figures in my report".

- **How to think proactively**
  Envisaging a map of the research process is necessary at the stage when students are constructing questionnaires. This is not merely a product, but a research tool, and its role in future findings needs to be clear. A learner reflects: "When I started to make a questionnaire I had to think about what I needed to know from my target group that could connect with my findings". This theme is echoed often: "I prepared a well-structured and fully-covered questionnaire that would collect useful information from my target group".

- **How to manage time effectively**
  As part of the research process, learners need to know how to construct a viable timetable so that the process of report writing is divided into a series of deadlines, each with its product/ text. For example, one student offers that "a timetable should be made as soon as possible after a topic has been chosen", while a peer identifies "how to arrange the working time" as a major item of learning.

- **How to locate information and read selectively**
  Information location and selection are commonly identified as problems (see above) but they are also, for many learners, procedural skills applied during the research process.

- **How to work in groups**
  Ten students identified how to work in cooperative, supportive research groups as a learning outcome: "I learnt how important team working is … [it offers] useful practice for co-operation".

- **How to design questionnaires**
  As described above, this was one of the major problems for many students, but it also represents one of the most significant learning outcomes: "I found it is very important for you to think about what findings you are going to get and work on, so that you can organise your questionnaire very efficiently".

What aspects of knowledge gained from report writing do business-track learners value most for future study?
Students were asked to comment on which aspects of the report writing process were valuable for their future. The majority of the students (32) referred specifically to the procedural research skills cited above. One student refers to report writing as "an essential skill for my life and future study", a second relates it to his "economic future" and a third, looking to her future, comments: "it is pleasing that I learned how to research, analyse, gather information and make use of the power of brainstorm".

Reflection for action
Students were asked if they were to research and complete another report in the near future, what would they do differently? This encourages students to reflect on their action and apply it to potential contexts of ongoing learning. Five strong themes emerge from analysis of the students' reflections. The first three are concerned with aspects of starting the process:

applying knowledge of locating and selecting secondary data, selecting secondary data to support primary findings and designing an effective research instrument.

Using surveying and scanning skills to select secondary readings is the most significant hypothesis for improvement, as with the learner who next time would focus on "… searching for information which is more narrowly focussed on the primary findings". Only retrospectively can a great number of Level 5 students picture the whole process of working towards the completed artefact: "I can now recognise what should be included in the report".

Selecting a clear topic by "thinking deeply" and "researching topics of practical use" is, surprisingly, the second-most cited focus of reflections for action: "If I have another chance to write this kind of report, I will choose the interesting topic which I can find the information easily". Another learner laments: "If I has chance to do my report again, I would prepare my topic first".

Reflective learning is evident in the observation that "to prepare a good questionnaire is a very important factor, because it relates to all parts of the report". Such an instrument needs to "reflect the topic intimately". Other students learned that a research instrument is vital "to findings and recommendations because it will decide how useful the primary research will be". The fact that business-focused contexts elicit information via research and that the learners have participated in a facsimile of the process is appreciated by one third of the students.

Fourthly, the need for time management skills in planning, conducting and reporting research is recognised as a real-life business skill as well as an academic one by 12 of the learners: Put simply, "in the future, I will need to manage my own time". The need to plan research is also subject of reflection for action: "I will set up an overall framework, or make a plan". A number of students refer to the self-discipline needed in business: "This definitely will relate to my future studies so that I think not only feel I needed to be disciplined enough on myself but that I have to be stricter".

The fifth major theme is connected to the fourth: the recognition of the need to stage research and make the structure of the report logical, with primary research presented in findings, backed up by substantial secondary sources. Two typical self-promises: "I will do it more organising and logical"; I need to "think about the whole structure first, then complete it step by step". The learners' learning of the need for logic in sequencing and presentation emerges from reflective memos, and might otherwise have gone unnoticed. These comments are a useful reminder that even business-track students can reflect.

Conclusions

The value of reflective learning
Reflective learning allows learners to focus not only on how far they have come, but also on how they got there. Reflective logs allow learners to reflect on their just-completed actions and focus on how they will apply them coming weeks, while reflective memos allow them to reflect on process and sequence of actions as well as hypothesise future action and application. Reflection is useful for business-track students as they realise that they will use the procedural knowledge applied during the research process again in Bachelor of Business (or similar) courses. Further, it allows them to focus on the cyclical nature of the process of learning rather than obsessing with the final assessed product, the final draft of the report.

The learners' perception of the usefulness of strategies for business workplaces suggests that the explicit focus on "how to" strategies, procedures and stages resulting from reflection is beneficial and adds value to learning. Reflective learning allows learners to chart their progress and reflective memos encourage them to reconfigure their identities as pre-business rather than EAL students. I concur that reflective learners "have a much stronger sense of 'self' and a positive appreciation of the opportunity to engage with reflective learning" (Shiel & Jones, 2004, p. 24). As one learner writes, "now I have great confidence in myself to write a report or other important information to a business person". Reflection provides learners with a meaningful context in which to articulate such reconfigurations of selfhood.

Implications for curriculum

This study suggests that EAL curricula aimed at business-track, pre-degree learners attend to their business-focussed academic literacy in addition to, even in preference to, the traditional topic/lexis-based Business Writing syllabus. The scaffold of a suggested curriculum, with emphasis on research as a process appears in Appendix 1. This curriculum allows for explicit teaching of strategies by phrasing outcomes in terms of the skills students identified as important facets of learning.

Two stages of the researching and writing process for the report require attention: the outset, and the writing of findings. In the first, the curriculum needs to provide time and context for researching and reflecting on a specific topic. It also needs explicitly and practically to teach information location skills. Many institutes have libraries or information centres whose specialists run targeted programmes to facilitate this. Concurrent in-class practice of scanning and skimming skills informs this stage of research for EAL learners. The researching, writing and piloting of a research instrument for collecting primary data needs to be applied over a period of two weeks to enable learners to reflect on the content and effectiveness of their questionnaire or survey.

At the outset learners require a staged schedule of deadlines with expected outcomes for each week. Such a time frame also needs to allow for the drafting process and for the action that follows observation/reflection to be implemented. This helps with time management, self-discipline and builds proactive thinking. At the same time, individuals can be organised into support groups (based on similarity of topic to maximise synergy) to foster group skills and encourage peer support in terms of sharing skills, information sources and reflections on action. Group work also imposes peer pressure encouraging individuals to stick to schedule and provides contexts for peer editing.

At the stage when learners are drafting and rewriting findings, a number of new and more complex skills are introduced: integration of primary and secondary data; structuring the discourse of findings. A discourse analysis approach enables learners to deconstruct model texts and identify schematic structures, key features and language patterns. If permission has been received, the texts of previous students may be used. The reflections of the learners into the problems encountered during research suggest that explicit teaching of the purpose, selection and referencing of secondary support is needed here.

Implications for praxis and delivery

Emphasising the procedural knowledge that corresponds to declarative knowledge in the EBCS curriculum focuses learners on applied learning that is considered to have future value and is pertinent to ongoing learning contexts. While retention of declarative knowledge is

examined in summative assessments during a semester, application of procedural knowledge is measured in the assessed reflective memo (itself absorbing weekly logs) and charted in the planning, researching, drafting and processing of the report. This study not only supports the value of reflective logs and memos as assessments, but also suggests that they allow realistic insights into the research process. Learners can see the learning curve and not just the outcomes.

This study suggests that an applied focus helps business-track pre-degree learners to attain strategies that are viewed as pertinent to future contexts. Such a programme needs to be delivered in such a way that application of strategies beyond the classroom is exemplified or modelled and that focussed reflections record this application. This will ensure that both scaffolding (of procedural and declarative outcomes) and staircasing (of systematic, staged, timetabled sub-texts and learning events as recorded in Appendix 1) occur to build learners' confidence and awareness of the process of research. Graduating students will be able to declare, as one did, that they "learned a lot of research methods and understand how to use Business English in the report effectively".

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Appendix 1: Declarative and Procedural Knowledge within the 14-week English for Business and Computing Studies Report Writing Curriculum

Week	Declarative Content	Procedural Content
1	**Short Autobiography Vocabulary Log** Syntax, paragraph structure, discourse markers of time Components of learning business vocabulary Vocabulary describing your life and plans Vocabulary learning strategies	How to write about yourself How to describe goals and aspirations How to analyse a model text for syntax and discourse How to lay out and maintain a personal vocabulary record How to reflect on ongoing vocabulary learning
2	**Research Planning Memo Reflective Log** Aspects of the research process: Selecting a topic Analysing past reports Structuring and formatting an initial memo about the selection of the research topic and writing focus questions Language and methods of keeping a Reflective Log – recording activities and responses	How to design a research project How to identify what is important in others' reports How to locate secondary information: finding hard copy; using library databases; searching using the internet How to use focus questions to refine a topic and clarify the suitability of the topic for research How to evaluate own activities and tasks in order to highlight learning
3-4	**Business Letter (2 drafts)** Reading strategies: skimming, scanning, surveying, predicting, interring, vocabulary deduction, using contextual clues, using typographical features and diagrams Language, sentence and paragraph structure in a Business letter asking permission to participate in research Features of a target group and researcher expectations Methods of planning a research project in research groups	How to survey texts for appropriateness and suitability (applied reading strategies) How to adapt a topic to fit an obtainable target group of potential respondents How to conduct research ethically How to collaborate with other students in research, editing and proof-reading How to use other participants as information location resources, sources of specific skills and for emotional support

		How to plan time management
4-5	**Questionnaire (2 drafts)** Language, layout and discourse structure in questionnaires and surveys Types of question – variety Kinds of data produced by various questions – quantitative and qualitative Necessity of trialling questionnaires	How to format and design a research instrument How to think proactively about types of potential data How to collect biodata, quantitative and qualitative data using questionnaires/ surveys How to trial a research instrument
6	**Interview Questions** **References (to be developed)** Language, style and format of references, citations and bibliographies Definitions of plagiarism Reasons why plagiarism is wrong Language for avoiding plagiarism Language and techniques for conducting interviews	How to acknowledge others' work and thinking How to quote from secondary sources How to use the internet responsibly How to avoid plagiarism How to interview an 'expert' as a means of primary data collection
7	**Terms of Reference** **Procedure** Language and discourse features of subgenre *Terms of Reference* Language and discourse features of *Procedure* Ways of describing research methodology	How to write documents in the style of *Terms of Reference* and *Procedure* How to apply theory of research methodology to own ongoing research
8	**Summary Paragraph** Structure and content of paragraphs in research findings Structures, purposes and of sentences used in paragraphs summarising selected secondary readings Categories of discourse markers for cohesion within and between paragraphs	How to write topic sentences, write sentences developing a main idea, present and summarise examples, write a sentence of analysis and write a bridging sentence How to link ideas logically How to paraphrase ethically and summarise succinctly
9-11	**Findings (3)** Language and discourse features of *Findings* and statistical writing Vocabulary of describing statistics	How to select and order lexis in statistical writing How to integrate and synthesise primary and secondary data

	and graphics	How to apply referencing and citation skills to written Findings
	Elements of Findings	
	Ways of presenting quantitative and qualitative data effectively in graphics	How to match collected primary research data with appropriate graphic forms
	Types of graphs and tabulations generated by Excel	How to apply Excel to the presentation of research findings
12	**Conclusions** The language, content and layout of subgenre *Conclusions* The elements and purposes of peer editing	How to identify areas where others can improve How to apply an editing checklist to the work of others How to evaluate others' (and own) work
13	**Recommendations** The language, content and layout of subgenre *Recommendations* The elements and purposes of proof-reading	How to use bullet points to present suggestions How to apply the principles of proof-reading to own work, using a checklist of key errors
14	**Reflective Memorandum** Content, structure and purpose of Reflective Memo Mind map of research process	How to evaluate own work and group's contribution How to identify the features and stages of the research process How to identify aspects of learning and research needing further development