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REVISITING THE UNDERGRADUATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SYLLABUS IN PAKISTAN: AN ESP-ORIENTED EVALUATION OF THE EXPOSITORY WRITING COURSE

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Abstract

Writing is among the weakest areas of English teaching in Pakistani universities, yet undergraduates need it for study and work. Expository Writing (URCG-5119) is one of two English courses mandated by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to move undergraduate instruction away from product-oriented, grammar-based writing, but its fit with students' communicative needs has not been examined systematically. This article evaluates the course through English for Specific Purposes (ESP). It reports part of a descriptive-evaluative study at the University of Sargodha in which 200 undergraduates and 20 English teachers, completed Likert-scale questionnaires analysed in SPSS. Students expressed a strong need for English, above all for career purposes, and judged the course favourably. They agreed most with the relevance of its topics and least with the claim that it had improved their essay organisation, although even that item drew agreement. Teachers also rated instruction favourably, yet they agreed that students still struggle to write coherent texts independently. Their ratings were only moderate for needs analysis, the alignment of assessment with communicative aims, and ESP/EAP training, and all of them reported only partial or no formal training. The course design is sound; the conditions of delivery limit it. Recommendations are offered for course design, teachers and policymakers.

1. Introduction

In the field of science, technology, business and higher education, English is the major language used for international communication (Hyland, 2006). In Pakistan it has a special place as it is an official language, it is used along with Urdu as medium of instruction in majority of Universities and it is the language of academic writing, research communication and professional jobs (Rahman, 2002). To this end, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) has mandated that all undergraduate

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programmes include two English courses, Functional English and Expository Writing, to equip students to participate in academic discourse communities as well as to communicate professionally after their graduation.

Both courses are ambitious in design, but Expository Writing (URCG-5119) is the more ambitious of the two. It is organised as a project-based course of six units: self-reflection, personalised learning, oral presentation, critical reading, community engagement and letter writing. Its self-reflection unit also introduces students to a five-stage writing process of prewriting, outlining, drafting, revising and editing. The course is thus an intentional move from product-oriented writing to extended, purposeful and audience-oriented writing activities. Whether that design actually serves the communicative needs of students from very different disciplines is an empirical question, however, and one that has rarely been investigated systematically or in a theory-driven way.

The question matters because struggles with academic writing persist. After several years of formal English teaching in Pakistan, many undergraduates still have difficulty writing, presenting orally in lectures, and reading and communicating professionally in English (Aftab, 2011). Students typically produce acceptable text at sentence level but fall short in paragraph organisation, logical development and argumentation (Siddiqui, 2020); and although a communicative curriculum is formally in place, classroom writing instruction is still dominated by product (Rashid et al., 2021; Naseem & Shah, 2022). A further structural issue is uniformity: the same course, materials and assessment tasks are used for students of law, business administration, sociology and linguistics, without making any systematic distinction in the requirements of formal communication within the disciplines. This uniform approach is the very mismatch that gave rise to English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

The impetus for ESP was the realization that the best way to teach a language is to focus on its actual uses by the learner in academic or occupational activities, and not on language for language's sake (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). It is characterised by systematic needs analysis, authentic materials, a communicative focus and learner-centred design (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). Its academic branch, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), treats writing as a social activity shaped by genre, discipline and audience (Hyland, 2006, 2009). ESP therefore offers principled criteria for evaluating a writing course such as Expository Writing. The evaluation reported here applies those criteria to the perceptions of the students who took the course and the teachers who taught it.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Expository Writing is a genuine institutional effort to break away from the grammar-translation and product-based approaches that have shaped undergraduate writing instruction. On paper, its project-based design rests on communicative language teaching and ESP principles. In practice, however, a considerable body of research shows that classroom teaching and assessment at Pakistani universities are often not communicative, and focus instead on grammatical accuracy and examination preparation (Aftab, 2011; Rashid et al., 2021; Ali & Chandio, 2025). Teachers work under constraints and may not have received formal training in ESP/EAP pedagogy (Tariq et al., 2023).

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The course is also delivered in a common form to students in disciplines with vastly different communication norms, which departs from the ESP requirement that teaching be adapted to learners' target language needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Little empirical evidence from the students and teachers who experience the course directly shows whether it meets these expectations, and this study addresses that shortfall.

1.2 Purpose, Objectives and Research Questions

This study evaluates the Expository Writing course from an ESP perspective and examines how well the course, as designed and delivered, prepares students from different academic fields for academic and professional communication. Its objectives are:

1. To assess how far the course meets the academic and professional communicative needs of undergraduate students from different disciplines, based on students' and teachers' perceptions.
2. To examine students' and teachers' perceptions of the course's effectiveness, the relevance of its material and its ESP orientation in content, pedagogy, assessment and skills integration.
3. To identify where the course design and delivery align with ESP principles and where they depart from them, and to suggest evidence-based directions for revision.

The study addresses three research questions:

1. How effectively does the Expository Writing course meet the academic and professional communicative requirements of undergraduate students from varied academic disciplines?
2. How do students and teachers view the relevance, effectiveness and ESP orientation of the course in relation to students' communication needs?
3. Where does the existing design differ from ESP principles, and how can it be improved through revision?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study offers an ESP-informed, course-level evaluation of one of the two English courses that are compulsory for nearly all undergraduate students in Pakistan. Previous studies have tended to focus on English language teaching problems at a general level and this study focuses on a single named course, its learning goals, methods and assessment, so that its findings can inform course design, teachers and administrators. Its 'dual perspective' puts students' and teachers' information side by side, uncovering the disconnect students experience between provision and need, and the structural and institutional barriers that teachers face. Because the course is required by the HEC, the findings and recommendations may transfer to other universities, and the methodology can be adopted elsewhere. Lastly, the study documents a university setting in which English is the language of instruction and first-language culture remains strong, a context that is under-represented in the international ESP literature.

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2. Literature Review

2.1 English for Specific Purposes and English for Academic Purposes

The key to ESP is that the language learned should be directly related to the academic or occupational purpose of the learner, and that language itself is not the focus of study (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). ESP differs from general English in its focus on needs analysis, authenticity of materials, discipline-specific communication and learner-centredness (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). These commitments are aligned with communicative language teaching and task based language teaching which both emphasize the importance of authentic language use and meaningful interaction in the classroom (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004). English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is a branch of ESP that focuses on the language skills needed to study in academic environments, including critical reading, academic writing, academic discussion and understanding of the conventions of academic communication (Hyland, 2006).

Five ESP principles serve as evaluative criteria in this study: needs analysis, authenticity of material and task, communicative competence, discipline specificity and learner-centredness. Following Robinson (1991), the written syllabus alone cannot support a sound evaluation; the experience of those who learn and teach the course must also count. The evaluation therefore draws on both student and teacher data.

2.2 Needs Analysis in ESP Curriculum Design

ESP syllabus design begins with needs analysis. Language courses should be designed around learners' needs, the contexts in which the language will be used and the skills required, not around institutional norms (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). For Richards (2001) needs analysis is a systematic collection and analysis of data to define a curriculum in a way that is grounded in the actual objectives of the learners, while Long (2005) sees it as a process of data collection and analysis which is systematic, repeated and is used to inform decisions on goals, content, methodology and evaluation. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) also distinguish target needs from learning needs, the conditions required to learn the target language well; a course succeeds only if it meets both. Present Situation Analysis (Richterich & Chancerel, 1980) describes a learner's current situation, Target Situation Analysis (Munby, 1978) describes the task and types of genres needed in the context of use, and deficiency analysis (West, 1994) relates them by describing the gap between two situations. Research in Pakistan suggests that such practices are rarely carried out formally in undergraduate English courses (Tariq et al., 2023).

2.3 Communicative Language Teaching, Authenticity and Task-Based Instruction

Both Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Language Teaching hold that language should be used meaningfully rather than in isolation from context (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004). Authenticity of materials and tasks, meaning texts, situations and purposes drawn from real use, is a focal point in ESP (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Gilmore, 2007) because it helps learners transfer classroom learning to their target situation. Good task-based teaching with

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mixed-proficiency groups also provides scaffolding that is gradually withdrawn as proficiency grows, which is consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development. The evaluation of Expository Writing therefore examined the authenticity and discipline connection of its tasks and materials, the communicative integration of the four skills and the effectiveness of scaffolding for a mixed-proficiency undergraduate audience.

2.4 Academic Writing and Approaches to Writing Instruction

Academic writing is the main means by which students in higher education build, explain and communicate disciplinary knowledge. It demands more than grammatical accuracy: good academic writers organise their texts well, build arguments, treat sources critically and respond to genre and audience (Hyland, 2009). These competencies are not learned incidentally during language learning, but must be targeted and related to the disciplines (Hyland, 2006).

Three methods of teaching writing can be distinguished. The product approach focuses on the formal aspects of the final product, including grammar, vocabulary and structure, often by copying model texts. It can produce surface accuracy but gives little attention to the rhetorical, cognitive and social aspects of writing. The process approach is a recursive and developmental method of writing that emphasizes metacognitive awareness, feedback and revision multiple times, through planning, drafting, revising and editing the text (Tribble, 1996). The genre approach, particularly popular in ESP and EAP, focuses on the structure of texts for specific audiences and purposes in specific discourse communities (Hyland, 2007). An ESP-informed evaluation of a writing course must therefore ask how these approaches are weighted in the course and whether the teaching is adequate to the range of academic writing skills the course claims to cover.

2.5 The Expository Writing Course: Design and ESP Alignment

The Expository Writing course is a project-based course. Project-based instruction is structured around sustained, collaborative, real-world tasks that integrate language skills and has been linked to greater learner engagement, better integration of language skills and higher-order thinking (Stoller, 2002; Fried-Booth, 2002). ESP theory identifies these as outcomes of effective, needs-responsive teaching (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Several units are of particular interest from an ESP perspective. The community engagement unit requires students to research topics related to the community, engage in fieldwork, interview community members, and create public-facing texts much like the authentic communicative tasks advocated in ESP pedagogy (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). The critical reading unit is based on authentic reading texts, annotated bibliographies and academic reading strategies, which EAP treats as key to undergraduate success (Hyland, 2006). The oral presentation unit deals with the design of slides, choosing the presentation topic, delivering the oral presentation and peer review, which helps to address one of the priority needs among Pakistani undergraduates (Tariq et al., 2023). The self-reflection unit supplies the process elements (prewriting, outlining, drafting, revising and editing), while the letter-writing unit and the writing projects rest on genre awareness. In design terms, then,

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the course aligns more closely with ESP principles than a grammar-centred course would. The question this study asks is therefore less whether the design is appropriate than how well these units are delivered in practice to build independent, discipline-relevant writing competence.

2.6 Academic Writing Challenges in Pakistani Higher Education

The challenges Pakistani undergraduates face in writing are well documented. Aftab (2011) found that writing instruction remained product-oriented, focused on grammatical accuracy and memorised sentences rather than on the cognitive and rhetorical aspects of authentic academic writing. Siddiqui (2020) concluded that students generally lacked sufficient paragraph-level organisation, logical development and argumentative structure, which are the very areas the Expository Writing course targets. Mansoor (2005) attributed some of these challenges to the shift from Urdu-medium schooling to English-medium university education. In the present sample, 64.3% of students had been educated in English-medium schools while 35.7% had been educated in Urdu-medium or mixed-medium schools.

According to Rashid et al. (2021), teaching and learning of writing in Pakistani universities are predominantly product-based, which means students do not experience the kind of teaching that research shows to be most effective, a process of writing with intensive feedback. Naseem and Shah (2022) also found that in classrooms where communicative curricula have been formally introduced, the focus on writing frequently returned to product-oriented approaches to preparing students for written exams. Together, these findings point to a likely implementation problem for Expository Writing at the delivery stage: examination pressure and weak alignment between the course and its assessment.

2.7 Assessment in Communicative Writing Courses

Assessment has a strong backwash effect on teaching and learning. Whatever a communicative course design intends, it is unlikely to hold in practice if assessment keeps rewarding grammatical accuracy instead of communicative performance (Black & Wiliam, 1998). In a communicative course, the purposes and criteria of assessment should be made clear to learners before the course begins, and formative feedback should run throughout it in place of a single summative, grammar-oriented test (Wiggins, 1998; Hamp-Lyons, 2001; Basturkmen, 2010). For a process-based writing course, this means assessing the writing process as well as its products.

2.8 Teacher Professional Development and Institutional Support

Sustained, structured professional development is widely recognised as a prerequisite for curriculum change (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Project-based, ESP-oriented writing instruction demands more of teachers than traditional grammar teaching: it requires teachers to guide student research, arrange fieldwork and oral presentations, and give iterative, genre-specific feedback on students' writing. Teachers may accept a needs-based approach in theory yet lack the skills and institutional backing to implement it consistently (Aftab, 2011).

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2.9 Research Gap

International ESP researchers have long stressed that courses must be analysed alongside learners' and teachers' classroom reality (Robinson, 1991; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). The findings from the Pakistani studies indicate that the communicative objective of undergraduate English courses is not achieved because grammar and exam preparation continue to take priority in classrooms (Aftab, 2011; Rashid et al., 2021; Naseem & Shah, 2022; Tariq et al., 2023; Kolachi & Ahmed, 2024; Ali & Chandio, 2025). To date, no empirical study has examined the HEC-mandated Expository Writing course from an ESP perspective using both student and teacher data. The present study fills that gap.

2.10 Conceptual Framework

The evaluation was organised around six dimensions drawn from the literature reviewed above: (1) curriculum goals and content, namely whether the declared goals are communicative; (2) methodology, namely whether teaching is communicative, task-based, needs-based and responsive to the disciplines; (3) authenticity, namely whether the language and tasks used in the course are authentic; (4) integration of skills, namely whether listening, speaking, reading and writing are integrated through authentic language use; (5) assessment, namely whether assessment measures communicative competence; and (6) teacher training and institutional support, namely whether teachers are prepared and supported to teach ESP-oriented, needs-based language courses. The questionnaires and the organisation of the results follow these six dimensions.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The design of the study was quantitative, descriptive-evaluative. Because it did not set out to test causal hypotheses or to generalise statistically to a wider population, a descriptive-evaluative approach was suitable for collecting and analysing numerical data that describe patterns and trends in learners' and teachers' perceptions and the extent to which the course reflects ESP principles and learners' communicative needs (Creswell, 2014). Survey research was selected because it is an efficient way to gather attitudinal and perceptual data from a large sample and is widely used in curriculum evaluation (Cohen et al., 2018).

3.2 Population and Sample

The student participants were undergraduates from different academic disciplines at the University of Sargodha who had taken Functional English, Expository Writing or both. The teacher participants were English language teachers at the same university with recent, direct experience of teaching these courses. There were 200 students (from 4 programmes: BS English Linguistics and Language Studies, LLB, BS Sociology and BBA) and 20 teachers in the final sample. Students were selected intentionally from four disciplines to examine whether a common syllabus can serve students with varied communicative needs. Of the 20 teachers, 16 taught both courses, three taught

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only Expository Writing and one taught only Functional English, so 19 had direct experience of the course evaluated here.

Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants. Teachers had to have taught either course, or both, within the past few years, and students had to have taken at least one of them; this ensured that responses rested on first-hand experience and not on impressions (Cohen et al., 2018). All 200 student questionnaires were retained, and the valid N is reported where respondents skipped an item.

3.3 Instruments

The student questionnaire was a structured, closed-ended instrument that measured perceptions for each of six constructs: English Language Needs (ELN), Current English Ability (CEA), Evaluation of the Functional English Course (FEC), Evaluation of the Expository Writing Course (EWC), Preferred Learning Environment (PLE) and Gaps in English Learning (GEL) using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Categorical preferences were obtained with a supplementary Section H of 5 multiple-choice items. A parallel teacher questionnaire, using the same five-point agreement scale, measured eight constructs: Curriculum Content (TC), ESP Orientation (ESP), Functional Grammar Teaching (FG), Expository Writing Instruction (EW), Integrated Skills and Teaching Approach (IS), Needs Analysis (NA), Assessment Practices (AS), and Professional Development and Institutional Support (PD). This article draws mainly on EWC, EW and the constructs that describe the conditions under which the course is delivered. Both instruments were based on the literature reviewed above, specifically from Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), Brown (1995), Richards and Farrell (2005), Nation and Macalister (2010) and Aftab (2011).

3.4 Validity and Reliability

Content validity was ensured through a detailed literature search that identified constructs and items, and revision based on expert feedback from English language teaching (ELT) and applied linguistics to ensure clarity, relevance and appropriateness (Creswell, 2014). Both instruments were pre-tested with respondents who did not form part of the final sample and minor changes to the wording of items and order of sections were made based on feedback. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess each construct's internal consistency and reliability, with all scores above .70 for acceptable internal consistency (Cohen et al., 2018).

3.5 Data Collection and Analysis

With institutional permission and informed consent, the researcher administered the questionnaires personally, clarified items where necessary and collected the completed forms immediately to reduce attrition. The data were analysed descriptively in SPSS in four stages: data entry, data cleaning, computation of frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations for each item and construct, and tabulation and interpretation in relation to the research questions and

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conceptual framework. Means were interpreted using a five-band scale (Pallant, 2020): 1.00-1.80 (Strongly Disagree/Very Low), 1.81-2.60 (Disagree/Low), 2.61-3.40 (Neutral/Moderate), 3.41-4.20 (Agree/High) and 4.21-5.00 (Strongly Agree/Very High). A low standard deviation was read as a high level of agreement among respondents. A high standard deviation combined with a mean near the midpoint was read as genuine disagreement within the group rather than collective indecision.

4. Results

Part A presents the student findings (N = 200), Part B the teacher findings (N = 20) and Part C a comparative summary of the two. Items EW7, TC5, TC7 and AS3 were worded to describe a problem (a high mean indicates agreement that the problem exists) and are interpreted accordingly.

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Most student respondents were from BS English Linguistics and Language Studies (88.4%), followed by BS Sociology (5.0%), LLB (3.5%) and BBA (3.0%); all percentages for students are based on valid responses. Third- and fourth-semester students were almost equally represented (53.8% and 46.2%). Most were female (80.9%), had attended English-medium schools (64.3%) and came from urban school backgrounds (58.6%). Among the 20 teachers, 65% had 1-5 years of teaching experience and 80% taught both courses. Regarding ESP preparation, 50% reported moderate familiarity with ESP principles, 35% advanced and 15% basic familiarity, but only 5% had received full formal training in ESP/EAP pedagogy, while 55% had received partial training and 40% none. Thus 95% of teachers were partially trained or untrained, a fact that shapes the teacher findings reported below.

4.2 Part A: Student Findings

Table 1 presents the overall means for the six student constructs. All fell in the Agree band, from 3.53 (Gaps in English Learning) to 4.02 (Preferred Learning Environment). The Expository Writing course (M = 3.75) was rated somewhat higher than Functional English (M = 3.62), which is included for reference.

Table 1. *Overall construct means, Student Questionnaire (N = 200)*

Construct	Overall Mean	Interpretation
English Language Needs (ELN)	3.89	Agree (High)
Current English Ability (CEA)	3.74	Agree (High)
Functional English Course (FEC)	3.62	Agree (High)
Expository Writing Course (EWC)	3.75	Agree (High)
Preferred Learning Environment (PLE)	4.02	Agree (High)
Gaps in English Learning (GEL)	3.53	Agree (High)

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Needs and ability. Students' English needs were consistently high across all seven ELN items (construct M = 3.89, with item means reaching 4.28). The strongest were English for career purposes (ELN5, M = 4.28, SD = 0.90), English leading to better job opportunities (ELN6, M = 4.13) and English for writing reports and essays (ELN4, M = 4.06, SD = 0.86). This supports Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) argument that instruction should rest on real needs, and it shows that students see writing as a professional as well as an academic tool. On current ability, students rated receptive skills higher than productive and affective outcomes: understanding the teacher's English (CEA3, M = 4.15) and reading course texts (CEA4, M = 4.09) were strongest, while writing a clear paragraph (CEA1, M = 3.73), oral expression (CEA2, M = 3.52) and confidence in speaking (CEA5, M = 3.30, SD = 1.03, the lowest mean in the ability construct) were weaker. Students also acknowledged a continuing need to improve grammatical accuracy (CEA6, M = 3.67).

Evaluation of the course. Table 2 shows that every EWC item fell in the Agree band (M = 3.64 to 3.83). The highest-rated item was the relevance of course topics to students' fields of study (EWC5, M = 3.83, SD = 0.65). Its standard deviation was the lowest among the student items reported here, indicating unusually strong consensus. The course was also rated as useful for academic reports and assignments (EWC4, M = 3.79), as teaching useful writing skills (EWC2, M = 3.77) and as useful overall (EWC7, M = 3.78). The lowest-rated item was improvement in organised essay writing (EWC1, M = 3.64, SD = 0.81), followed by the relevance of tasks to other subjects (EWC3, M = 3.73) and the contribution of feedback to writing (EWC6, M = 3.73, SD = 0.86).

Table 2. ***Descriptive statistics for the Expository Writing Course (EWC), students (N = 200)***

Item	Statement	Mean	SD
EWC1	Improved organised essay writing	3.64	0.81
EWC2	Learned useful writing skills	3.77	0.86
EWC3	Tasks relevant to other subjects	3.73	0.83
EWC4	Helped academic reports/assignments	3.79	0.83
EWC5	Topics connected to field	3.83	0.65
EWC6	Feedback improved writing	3.73	0.86
EWC7	Overall useful	3.78	0.83
	Overall EWC mean	3.75	

The ordering of the EWC items is telling. Students rated most favourably the features that reflect the project-based, community-engaged design, namely topical relevance and usefulness for academic work, and rated lowest the feature that depends most on repeated, scaffolded practice. This is consistent with the view that organisation is learned through multiple drafts and feedback, as the process approach (Tribble, 1996) and genre pedagogy (Hyland, 2007) suggest, and it indicates that

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the writing-process cycle introduced in the self-reflection unit may not be sustained long enough to transfer to independent essay writing.

Preferences and gaps. Preferred Learning Environment had the highest construct mean on the student questionnaire (M = 4.02) with low standard deviations. Students most strongly endorsed learning through practice rather than grammar drills (PLE3, M = 4.09, SD = 0.75), real-task practice such as writing letters and giving short talks (PLE2, M = 4.02) and writing tasks tied to real subjects (PLE5, M = 3.95). The Gaps in English Learning construct (M = 3.53) pointed to a moderate-to-high mismatch between provision and need. The largest gaps concerned field-specific vocabulary (GEL5, M = 3.87, SD = 0.80), practice connected to the discipline (GEL7, M = 3.74) and the fit between classroom English and the English the discipline requires (GEL8, M = 3.58). Students still found academic writing challenging (GEL2, M = 3.43), and agreement that the courses had failed to prepare them for subject texts was lower (GEL3, M = 3.27, Neutral). Table 3 summarises the items most relevant to writing.

Table 3. ***Selected student items relating to writing needs, ability, preferences and gaps***

Item	Statement	Mean	SD
ELN4	Need English to write reports/essays	4.06	0.86
ELN5	Need English for career	4.28	0.90
CEA1	Can write a clear paragraph	3.73	0.86
CEA6	Grammar needs improvement	3.67	0.90
PLE2	Prefers real-task practice	4.02	0.83
PLE3	Learns better via practice than grammar drills	4.09	0.75
PLE5	Prefers writing tasks tied to real subjects	3.95	0.79
GEL2	Still finds academic writing challenging	3.43	0.90
GEL5	Needs field-specific vocabulary	3.87	0.80
GEL7	Wants field-connected practice	3.74	0.76
GEL8	Gap between class English and real need	3.58	0.88

Section H confirmed these patterns. Speaking and writing were most often named as the most difficult skills. Writing academic reports and assignments, together with using subject-specific vocabulary, were most often named as the skills most important for students' programmes. Oral presentations, class discussions and writing paragraphs and essays were most often chosen as the most helpful classroom activities, and grammar exercises and drills were least often chosen. Most students reported that teachers used discipline-related examples only rarely or sometimes. The

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changes students most often wanted were more vocabulary from their discipline, more writing tasks related to their subject area and a better connection between English tasks and their other courses.

4.3 Part B: Teacher Findings

Table 4 summarises the eight teacher constructs. Means ranged from 3.30 (Curriculum Content and Professional Development, tied lowest) to 3.96 (Integrated Skills, highest). Expository Writing Instruction (M = 3.89) was the second highest.

Table 4. ***Overall construct means, Teacher Questionnaire (N = 20)***

Construct	Overall Mean	Interpretation
Curriculum Content (TC)	3.30	Neutral (Moderate)
ESP Orientation (ESP)	3.59	Agree (High)
Functional Grammar Teaching (FG)	3.83	Agree (High)
Expository Writing Instruction (EW)	3.89	Agree (High)
Integrated Skills and Teaching Approach (IS)	3.96	Agree (High)
Needs Analysis (NA)	3.74	Agree (High)
Assessment Practices (AS)	3.51	Agree (High)
Professional Development and Institutional Support (PD)	3.30	Neutral (Moderate)

Expository Writing instruction. As Table 5 shows, teachers rated the instruction favourably on all seven EW items (M = 3.75 to 4.05). The strongest and most consistent result was that the course focuses on organisation, coherence and argumentation (EW3, M = 4.05, SD = 0.51, the smallest standard deviation in the construct). Teachers also agreed that its tasks reflect genuine disciplinary writing requirements (EW4, M = 3.90) and that it trains students in organised academic genres (EW2, M = 3.90). A process-based approach was reported to be in use (EW5, M = 3.85), and discipline-specific genre conventions were addressed (EW6, M = 3.75). Yet teachers also agreed that students struggle to produce coherent academic texts independently (EW7, M = 4.00, SD = 0.65).

Table 5. ***Teachers' perceptions of Expository Writing instruction (EW), N = 20***

Item	Statement	Mean	SD
EW1	Course develops academic writing competence	3.75	0.72
EW2	Trains students in organised academic genres	3.90	0.72

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Item	Statement	Mean	SD
EW3	Focuses on organisation, coherence and argumentation	4.05	0.51
EW4	Tasks reflect genuine disciplinary writing requirements	3.90	0.64
EW5	Process-based approach to writing is used	3.85	0.67
EW6	Addresses discipline-specific genre conventions	3.75	0.64
EW7	Students struggle to produce coherent texts	4.00	0.65
	Overall EW mean	3.89	

The combination of EW3 and EW7 is the most important teacher finding about the course. Teachers believe that the course prioritises the right things and that its tasks are authentic, yet they see the intended outcome, independent coherent writing, as not reliably achieved. This is the same gap between guided performance and autonomous production that appears across the teacher data, and it points to the amount and quality of practice and feedback and not to the aims of the course.

Pedagogy and skills integration. Teachers rated Integrated Skills and Teaching Approach highest of all constructs (IS, M = 3.96). They endorsed variety of activities (IS2, M = 4.20, SD = 0.52), flexible methods and materials (IS4, M = 4.05), the promotion of higher-order thinking (IS3, M = 3.95) and effective task-based teaching (IS5, M = 3.95). Scaffolding for different proficiency levels was rated at 3.85 (IS6, SD = 0.49), and the systematic integration of all four skills slightly lower (IS1, M = 3.75). The use of authentic, discipline-specific texts received moderate endorsement (ESP7, M = 3.70).

Curriculum, needs analysis and assessment. Table 6 shows that the constructs describing the conditions around the course were rated lower and with more disagreement. Teachers were moderately positive about the realism of the Expository Writing objectives (TC3, M = 3.50, SD = 0.95) and agreed that the curriculum complies with HEC guidelines (TC6, M = 3.90, SD = 0.55). Opinion was divided on whether objectives and classroom practice are mismatched (TC5, M = 2.84, SD = 1.12) and whether objectives neglect discipline-specific needs (TC7, M = 2.90, SD = 1.33, the highest standard deviation on the teacher instrument). In needs analysis, teachers endorsed adding authentic discipline-specific materials (NA4, M = 4.00), the value of ESP-oriented courses for academic success (NA5, M = 4.10) and the need for collaboration between English and subject departments (NA8, M = 4.15). They were far less sure that a formal needs analysis had informed course design (NA2, M = 3.30, SD = 1.03). On assessment, teachers were divided on whether assessments reflect communicative competence (AS1, M = 3.10, SD = 1.02) and on whether grammar-based examinations still dominate (AS3, M = 3.15, SD = 0.99), but they agreed that assessment should shift towards task-based formats (AS6, M = 3.85) and that criteria are clearly communicated (AS4, M = 3.80). Formative assessment was seen as only moderately well incorporated (AS5, M = 3.45).

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Table 6. *Selected teacher items on the conditions for delivering the course (N = 20)*

Item	Statement	Mean	SD
TC3	Expository Writing objectives are realistic	3.50	0.95
TC5	Mismatch between objectives and classroom practice	2.84	1.12
TC7	Objectives fail to address discipline-specific needs	2.90	1.33
NA2	Formal needs analysis was conducted	3.30	1.03
NA4	Authentic discipline-specific materials should be added	4.00	0.56
NA5	ESP-oriented courses would aid academic success	4.10	0.64
NA8	English-subject department collaboration is needed	4.15	0.93
AS1	Assessments reflect communicative competence	3.10	1.02
AS3	Grammar-based examinations still dominate	3.15	0.99
AS5	Formative assessment is adequately incorporated	3.45	0.89
AS6	Need to shift to task-based assessment	3.85	0.75
PD1	Received adequate formal ESP/EAP training	3.00	1.03
PD2	Institution supports curriculum revision	3.25	1.07
PD3	Encouraged to collaborate with subject faculty	3.25	1.07
PD4	Workload constrains ESP implementation	3.35	1.04

Professional development. The lowest mean among the favourably worded teacher items was for the adequacy of formal ESP/EAP training (PD1, M = 3.00, SD = 1.03), which the demographic data confirm: only 5% of teachers had received full formal training. Institutional support for curriculum revision (PD2, M = 3.25) and for collaboration with subject faculty (PD3, M = 3.25) was rated only moderately, and workload was seen as a real constraint on ESP-oriented implementation (PD4, M = 3.35). These conditions bear directly on Expository Writing, whose project-based design requires teachers to guide student-led research, coordinate fieldwork, assess oral presentations and give process-based feedback, a repertoire that goes well beyond conventional ELT training.

4.4 Part C: Comparative Summary

Read together, the two data sets show the same underlying structure. Both groups gave their most positive ratings, and showed the most consensus, on the domains closest to their own experience: for students, needs and preferences; for teachers, classroom practice (Expository Writing instruction and integrated skills). Domains one step removed from that experience were rated more moderately

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and with more disagreement: for students, the evaluation of the course and of learning gaps; for teachers, the curriculum, assessment and institutional support. That the same pattern emerged independently from two instruments and two groups suggests that the quality of individual teaching does not by itself determine how adequate the course is; course design, assessment and support appear to matter more.

5. Discussion

Students' need for English was high and genuine, above all for career and professional purposes (ELN, M = 3.89; ELN5, M = 4.28), and they placed writing reports and assignments as among the most important skills for their programmes. By contrast, the course received a positive but moderate rating (EWC, M = 3.75), and students saw a moderate gap between provision and need, focussed on the subject-specific vocabulary, the practice that is connected to the subject, and the match between classroom English and disciplinary needs (GEL, M = 3.53). The course is therefore reasonably adequate in what it offers, and its relevance is evident in the consensus on EWC5, but it is not fully adequate for students whose disciplines place other demands. Teachers' clear in-principle support for authentic, discipline-specific materials (NA4, M = 4.00) and for cross-departmental collaboration (NA8, M = 4.15), together with their limited confidence that a formal needs analysis informed course design (NA2, M = 3.30), suggests that the inadequacy is structural. These data give no evidence that the course was developed from a needs analysis of the kind Long (2005) treats as the foundation of any needs-responsive curriculum, so it cannot yet be claimed to be 'fitted' to learners' needs across disciplines.

Perceptions of Effectiveness, Relevance and ESP-Orientation

Both groups saw the course as moderately effective, and as more closely related to ESP principles than a grammar course would be. Students responded most positively to the relevance of topics to their discipline (EWC5); teachers responded most positively to the focus on organisation, coherence and argumentation (EW3), authentic disciplinary tasks (EW4) and a process orientation (EW5). The design of the course is sound because it promotes practices that ESP and communicative theory advocate: authentic, project-based tasks and varied, flexible, task-based methods (IS2, IS4, IS5) (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Perceived effectiveness was tempered, however, when it came to independent writing. Students rated improvement in organised essay writing (EWC1) lowest, and teachers agreed that students have difficulty producing coherent texts (EW7). Students' own evaluation of their paragraph writing (CEA1, M = 3.73) and their reported ongoing problems with academic writing (GEL2, M = 3.43) point the same way. That two independent groups report the same pattern lends it some credibility. It is consistent with the observation of Siddiqui (2020) that students' writing is satisfactory at the sentence level, but poor at the level of organisation and argument; it also accords with the process-writing and genre literature, which holds that organisation is acquired gradually through repeated, feedback-rich writing (Tribble, 1996; Hyland, 2007). While the process stages are named in the

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syllabus, and teachers report using them (EW5), the number and depth of the feedback cycles might not be sufficient to take students from guided to independent production; students' moderate ratings of feedback (EWC6, M = 3.73) support this view.

The course is only partially oriented toward ESP. Teachers' moderate ratings for authentic discipline-specific texts (ESP7, M = 3.70) and discipline-specific genre conventions (EW6, M = 3.75), together with students' reports that discipline-related examples were used only rarely or sometimes, indicate that discipline specificity is the least developed of the ESP principles in the course. This result is particularly tentative because English majors dominate the sample (88.4%), which could lead to an underestimate of the mismatch that students in other disciplines experience.

5.3 Gaps Between Design and ESP Principles, and Directions for Revision

The data reveal three areas of weakness. The first is the absence of a documented needs analysis (NA2) and of mechanisms for English-subject collaboration (NA8, PD3) that would allow the course to be differentiated by discipline. The second is assessment alignment. Teachers were split on whether assessments reflect communicative competence (AS1, M = 3.10) and on whether grammar-based examinations still dominate (AS3, M = 3.15), but they agreed that assessment should move towards task-based formats (AS6, M = 3.85). If assessment rewards grammatical correctness over communicative effectiveness, backwash (Black & Wiliam, 1998) may turn the communicative intent of the course into product-oriented exam preparation, as Rashid et al. (2021) and Naseem and Shah (2022) report for other Pakistani settings. The third is teacher preparation. Only 5% of teachers had received full formal ESP/EAP training, 95% had received partial training or none, and adequacy of training was the lowest-rated favourable item (PD1, M = 3.00). Yet the course asks teachers to guide student research, coordinate fieldwork, assess oral presentations and give process-based feedback, expertise that current professional development does not appear to supply.

Students' data indicate the direction of revision. Their strong preference for practice-based tasks relevant to their fields (PLE, M = 4.02), and their choice of oral presentations, discussion and writing about their subjects over grammar drills, describe the kind of instruction to expand; these tasks already appear in the course units. The structural prerequisites suggested by teachers' data are: professional development in ESP/EAP, assessment reform towards task-based, portfolio-based formats, and a formal and documented needs analysis. Teachers rate their classroom practice highly, so revision can build on existing strengths without redesigning the whole course.

6. Conclusion

This study evaluated the Expository Writing course from an ESP perspective, using the perceptions of 200 undergraduates and 20 teachers. Three conclusions follow. First, both groups see the course as moderately effective and relevant to students' fields, but not yet fully, consistently or systematically ESP-oriented. Students perceive a gap between what the course provides and the discipline-based, practice-based teaching they need and prefer, while teachers support needs-based teaching in principle but report little systematic use of it in the curriculum, assessment and institutional support.

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Second, the main strength of the course is its project-based, community-engaged design, which drew the strongest agreement and fits authentic-task and EAP principles; its weakest outcome is independent, well-organised writing, which depends on sustained process practice with feedback. Third, and most important, the remaining gaps are not mainly pedagogical. Teachers rated their classroom practice highly, while assessment practices and professional development were rated lowest and drew the most disagreement. With no documented needs analysis, most teachers only partly trained in ESP/EAP and no formal channel for collaboration between English and subject departments, individual teachers cannot close these gaps, and changing the course alone will not close them either. Closing them requires coordinated action at course, department and HEC levels. The study adds a dual-perspective, course-level ESP evaluation to a literature that has mostly examined English teaching in general terms. Its findings are indicative rather than generalisable, because they rest on perceptions gathered at one university from a student sample dominated by English majors. Even so, they point one way: the design of the course is worth keeping, and the next revision should begin with a documented needs analysis, assessment aligned to communicative performance and ESP/EAP training for the teachers who deliver it. Testing those changes against observed classroom practice and students' written work is the natural next step for research.

7. Recommendations

7.1 For the Expository Writing Course

The project-based, community engaged design should be maintained and strengthened, particularly the community engagement and critical reading units, which are best suited to ESP principles. The next revision should be preceded by a formal, documented needs analysis with the students and teachers and subject area faculty to establish a core of common tasks and genres and to identify where tasks and genres differ across disciplines. Because teachers report that students still struggle to write coherent texts without teacher or peer support (EW7), the prewriting, outlining, drafting, revising and editing cycle should be practised with teacher and peer feedback at several stages, not merely described. The oral presentation unit and the community engagement unit should be adapted so that students study, read and write about problems in their own disciplines: law students about legal issues, BBA students about business and economic issues, and sociology students about social research issues. Lastly, assessment for the oral presentation and community engagement units should focus on communicative performance, research quality and rhetorical effectiveness rather than generic criteria, and portfolio assessment should be used to document the writing process.

7.2 For Teachers

Teachers of the course should receive continuous, formally recognised professional development in ESP/EAP, genre-based writing pedagogy, needs-analysis methods and authentic assessment design, delivered through classroom observation, peer coaching and reflection. Co-operation and collaboration between English and subject area teachers needs to be institutionalised, with shared planning sessions for materials development and cross-departmental workshop sessions, where tasks

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and assessments are based on the real communicative needs of each subject. If the design of the course is to be realised, institutions must also address the workload and preparation-time constraint that teachers identified (PD4, M = 3.35).

7.3 For Institutions and Policymakers

A documented, periodic needs analysis should form part of the HEC's curriculum approval process, and course specifications should state the evidence base for their objectives. Universities should also run a formal evaluation of the course at least every three to five years, involving students, teachers and employers; the process used in this study can serve as a model. HEC-level guidelines for discipline-differentiated delivery would allow universities to tailor tasks and assessments to students' disciplines while keeping common learning outcomes. Institutions must also invest in the conditions that make the design workable across universities: staff training and development, teacher time and teaching materials.

8. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The study has several limitations. The teacher sample was very small (N = 20) and both samples came from one university, so the results are indicative and cannot be generalised to Pakistan as a whole. The study primarily used questionnaires and did not involve classroom observation, student performance data or analysis of course materials and assessment instruments, so perceived gaps do not necessarily reflect practice. Students of BS English Linguistics and Language Studies made up 88.4% of the student sample, which prevents cross-disciplinary comparison, a central concern of ESP, and may over-represent the views of English majors. The design was cross-sectional and cannot show change over time or after revision. Because the study is evaluative, it does not itself produce a new syllabus.

Future studies should repeat the evaluation with more diverse, discipline-balanced samples drawn from different institutions and university types, so that the needs profiles of the various disciplines can be compared directly. Mixed-methods designs combining classroom observation, analysis of materials and assessment instruments, and interviews with teachers and students would show whether the reported gaps match what teachers actually implement and how far practice varies between teachers. The impact of particular revisions (e.g., scaffolding through multiple drafts with feedback or portfolio assessment) on the quality of students' writing and their readiness to communicate in a disciplinary way should be measured using a pre-post or longitudinal design. Lastly, a formal needs analysis (Long, 2005), including subject faculty, present situation analysis and deficiency analysis, should be conducted before the next revision cycle.

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