

## 8. An awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in current academic writing materials

### Academic writing materials

#### Discuss with a partner.

1. What types of materials do you use with your students? Why?
2. Do you think the materials you use fully address the needs of your students?
3. Do you feel they cover the main areas of academic writing in sufficient detail?
4. When using an academic coursebook do you go through systematically or pick and choose the materials/units?
5. How do the students feel about the materials?
6. Do you ever write your own materials? Why? / Why not?

### Published academic writing materials

We are now going to review a collection of published materials and comment on their applicability to a particular set of learners.

The group of learners are:

- Low level international pre-university students on Access or similar courses
- Undergraduates or in-session EAP programmes
- Postgraduate students on in-session EAP programmes
- 6 / 11 week pre-session students

**You can also consider your own students or other learner categories.**

### Criteria

#### Task 1

Before reviewing materials, it is essential you establish a **set of criteria** which you can draw on to assess their suitability for your students.

- With a partner, discuss what you consider when choosing materials.

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- Can you come up with your own criteria for your target group of learners? (A good criteria usually includes 8 areas).

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### Often teachers consider the following areas:

1. Stand-alone potential (can be used in an individual lesson)
2. Transfer across levels
3. Clarity of rubric
4. Relevance of input to academic skills development
5. Appropriacy of the approach
6. How explicit is the account of language and skills + learning outcomes
7. Relevance of tasks in relation to real-world tasks
8. Teachability

### Time to reflect

- Having looked at these areas, do you want to change your own criteria?
- Decide if any of your criteria should have more weighting than others (e.g. some may be **ESSENTIAL** while others are only **DESIRABLE**).

### Evaluation

Typically, a text book evaluation process involves:

- Designing criteria in relation to your understanding of the needs of a set of specific learners
- Reviewing materials against these criteria
- Rating the materials on each criterion. It's probably easier to use a star rating than a numerical rating (Remember: **for a book to be useful it's got to have a decent rating against the criteria you designate as ESSENTIAL**).

## Task 2

Review three sets of materials/coursebooks completing the table below. You will be asked to present the materials/coursebook you felt was the most appropriate and the least appropriate.

### Evaluation of published materials – Report form

Criteria	Title	Title	Title
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

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8.			
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### Writing your own materials

#### Based on what we have seen and discussed today:

1. Do you feel inspired to write your own materials?
2. What would you need to consider?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of writing your own materials?
4. What would you need to do if you wanted to get published?

*Adapted from class material written by Tribble, C (2011) on the MA in ELT and Applied Linguistics at King's College, London.*