

**How Suitable are EGP Textbooks for ESP Classes:** *An Analysis of  
Passport and Passport Plus*

by

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Module 3: Syllabus and Materials

## Introduction

This paper will look at the coursebooks *Passport* and *Passport Plus*. While this paper is an evaluation of two particular coursebooks in the context of a specific teaching situation, this paper could be taken as an example of how coursebooks can be evaluated, and if need be, modified to better meet the needs of students.

However, there is an inverse relationship between the utility of a coursebook and the amount of adaptation required by teachers to make it suitable for their situation. The *Passport* coursebooks are inadequate for my learner's needs and to render them so requires more than mere modification. Rather, the coursebooks need to be extensively reworked and supplemented, making the *Passport* coursebooks unsuitable for the current classes in which they are used.

### 1.0 The School and Curriculum

A coursebook could be defined as:

“...a textbook which is meant to provide the core materials for a course. It aims to provide as much as possible in one book and is designed so that it could serve as the only book learners necessarily use during a course” (Tomlinson 1998: p.ix).

As such, the content of a coursebook can only be evaluated in relation to the aims/goals of a given course. *Passport* and *Passport Plus* are (respectively) the coursebooks for the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> years of the English component (syllabus) of the Service Attendant (SA) curriculum; taught at the two-year vocational college in Japan where I am currently employed<sup>1</sup>.

Initially, the primary difficulty evaluating the *Passport* coursebooks was that it was not made clear to the English teachers what a ‘SA’ curriculum is meant to be. Discovering this required asking students and non-English teachers what they learn or teach in the non-English components of the SA programme. By doing so, the following picture of the SA curriculum was formed.

The Service Attendant curriculum is intended to prepare students to find jobs in the air-travel industry, specifically as airport ground staff and airhostesses<sup>2</sup>. All non-

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper “syllabus” will be used for classes in a specific subject and “curriculum” for the sum total of all subjects taught in a given programme.

<sup>2</sup> All SA students, at least this year, are female.

English components of this curriculum are directly related to the above, and include such things as:

- General department
- Preparation and serving of in-flight meals
- The booking of flights, confirming reservations, checking in passengers and luggage; all which require the teaching of computer skills.
- Air safety standards, emergency procedures, and airport security (e.g. how to “read” the baggage X-ray images).
- International air-traffic regulations concerning baggage limits, banned goods, and international flight coding systems.

## **2.0 SA English Syllabus specification according to the Administration**

It is clear from the above that the SA curriculum is a vocational one. One could then assume that the SA English component of the SA curriculum would be an English Specific Purposes (ESP) syllabus, also with a vocational focus. To confirm this, the Head English teacher and the Head of the Service Attendant programme were consulted.

According to the Head (native) English teacher, the *Passport* series was chosen for the SA students because it was the only commercially available coursebook found that was anywhere close to being relevant to SA studies, by which he meant training/vocational goals. However, the Head English teacher believes that many SA students entering the college “are not interested in English” so ‘some’ deviation from vocationally oriented English lessons is acceptable to generate student interest in speaking English. The (Japanese) Head of the SA programme also thought the goals of the SA English syllabus should be for students to be able to use English at their (future) jobs; although she felt that students may need to be taught general English before they can be taught “more difficult” English for specific purposes. Both teachers therefore somewhat dilute the claim that the SA English syllabus is meant to have an ESP focus. Nonetheless, overall the institution intends *Passport & Passport Plus* to be used in an English for Specific Purposes syllabus in line with the Service Attendant vocational goals of the curriculum. The rest of this paper will be devoted to an evaluation of the *Passport* coursebooks with this criterion in mind.

## **3.0 ESP vs. EGP**

The SA Department Head's statement above may indicate that she believes ESP to be General English with a specialist vocabulary. In fact, ESP syllabi (in this case an English Vocational Purposes syllabus) differ from English General Purposes (EGP) syllabi, both in goals and content. Below is an outline of some major differences adapted from Widdowson (1983 in White 1988: pp.18 & 26), Hutchinson & Waters (1987) and Stevens (1988) (both in Dudley-Evans & St. John 1998: pp. 2-4).

English General Purposes	English Vocational Purposes
<p>The focus is often on <i>education</i>.</p> <p>As the future English needs of the student's are impossible to predict, course content is more difficult to select.</p> <p>Due to the above point, it is important for the content in the syllabus to have a <i>high surrender value</i>.<sup>3</sup></p>	<p>The focus is on <i>training</i></p> <p>As the English is intended to be used in specific vocational contexts, selection of appropriate content is easier (but note not 'easy' in itself).</p> <p>Therefore, an EVP syllabus need only have a <i>high surrender value</i> linguistic content in terms of the English foreseen to be most relevant to the vocational context. The aim may only be to create a restricted English competence.</p>

Widdowson (1983) sees the difference between *Education* and *Training* as that of creativity versus conformity (in White, 1988: p.18). ESP is for training, that is, the teaching of predetermined skills, whereas education is meant to lead students to an understanding of underlying principles (Widdowson, *ibid.*). In an ESP syllabus, objectives (short-term goals of specific units) *equal* syllabus aims (the long-term goals of an entire course) and the development of a restricted English competence. In contrast, EGP has education as a goal, so objectives *lead* to aims, i.e. the development of a general capacity whose eventual use (aims) will differ from student to student (Widdowson, *ibid.*: p.26).

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<sup>3</sup> 'Surrender value' is a term from insurance policies (see: Corder 1973 in Willis 1990: p. 42). Basically, it is the cash value of a policy when it is cashed in. In teaching terms, this is the overall utility (value) of the English taught by the end of a specific course; the higher the surrender value the greater the utility (usefulness) of the English taught.

Hutchinson & Waters (1987) and Stevens (1988), (both in Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998: pp. 2-4) concur. Hutchinson & Waters feel that ESP is based on one question: "Why does the learner need to use English?" and that an ESP syllabus must start with specification of purposes which will determine content (ibid.:p.2). Stevens states that ESP has four absolute characteristics:

1. Is designed to meet specific needs.
2. Is related to themes and topics particular to occupation.
3. Is centered on language appropriate to those activities, in terms of lexis, syntax, discourse pragmatics, semantics and so on.
4. The above is in contrast to General English (Stevens 1988 in Dudley-Evans & St. John 1998: p.4).

Yet, as Widdowson (1983) rightfully points out, ESP:

"...outlines what is to be taught, but does not (and cannot) outline or predict how the learner uses the taught items, nor what processes cause the learner to acquire it" (in White, 1988: p.19).

Nevertheless, in ESP it is easier (in theory) to select content which is likely to be useful for the students *relative* to doing so in EGP.

#### **4.0 *Passport*: an evaluation of Situational/Topical content**

The *Passport* series is intended as a speaking and listening course for Japanese students interested in going abroad for whatever reason. Due to this broad target market, they are general English coursebooks. The series consists of two books, *Passport* and *Passport Plus*. *Passport* according to its back cover advertises itself to be:

"...a low level *speaking and listening* course in American English. It has been written specifically for *Japanese* students who are thinking of travelling overseas for *study, work, or pleasure*. It may also be used as a *general English* conversation course." (Italics added).

Despite its title, *Passport Plus* is not "higher" than *Passport*. According to the back cover:

"(*Passport Plus*) has the same level, emphasis on speaking and listening, and focus on practical language, as the original *Passport*, making it equally suitable for use as general English conversation course."

Both *Passport* books are notional/functional texts, using common travel scenarios as the situational examples of the notions/functions in use, with grammar structures to

fulfill those notions/functions provided. Both books contain 20 units with such travel scenarios. Many of the notions/functions covered in both books are identical, with many of the travel situations in both books being similar.

For example, all of *Passport*'s situations involve Japanese abroad. Unit 5 in *Passport* uses the situation of asking/giving **street** directions with the functions listed (in the *Passport Teacher's Guide*, p.26) as being 'asking for directions', 'giving directions' and 'saying where places are'. Similarly, all the situations in *Passport Plus* involve foreigners staying in or visiting Japan. Unit 5 of *Passport Plus* uses the situation of giving directions in an **office building** and has the same notions and functions as Unit 5 in *Passport*. Unit 5 of both books cover: prepositions of place and "instruction/direction" phrases (e.g. turn left/right, go up/down), and ordinal numbers (e.g. the *first* left).

In an ESP syllabus where students need English for encounters with English-speaking customers at their (future) workplaces, a situational syllabus makes sense as an organizing principle. Also, in a given school year there are only 29 lessons of 90 minutes (once a week over 29 weeks) maximum. This equals only 43 (less than two days) hours of English instruction over 365 days a year, however due to school events and national holidays, this year there are only 27 lessons taught. This is very little 'English time', so it makes sense to recycle the linguistic content from *Passport* in somewhat different situations in *Passport Plus* during the second year.

This is in line with Valdman (1980), who asks: "If you only have a two-year course, how far (or high) can you expect a learner's interlanguage to develop?" He feels it is wiser to teach a 'reduced or little language' syllabus in harmony with the interlanguage competence that can be developed in the time available (in Stern 1992: p. 137). This is also in line with the idea that ESP students primarily need a restricted (limited) competence relevant to their occupation, in other words an occupational 'little language'.

All of this hinges on whether the situations & notions/functions **are** relevant to the student's future occupational/vocational field. *Passport* & *Passport Plus* fail to meet this requirement, not surprising in coursebooks intended for EGP purposes. There is a vast difference between the English requirements of travelers and of those employed in the air-travel industry (albeit with some overlap).

For the ESP purposes of SA English, the 20 units of both *Passport* coursebooks can be divided into three groups (for an example list see **Appendix 1**).

- 1. Units with situations and notions/functions relevant to SA ESP purposes, requiring little or no teacher modification of content.** For example: Unit 20 of *Passport* “How many bags do you have?” uses the situation of checking-in for a flight. The notions/functions are outlined in the *Passport Teacher’s Guide* (p.75) as “Asking where to check in”, “Saying where you want to sit” and “Finding out about the flight” (gate number, departure time etc.). This is also clearly relevant for check-in counter staff.
- 2. Units with appropriate (useful) notions/functions but inappropriate situations, often requiring extensive modification of content but parts of the Unit’s original content can be salvaged.** For example: Unit 5 of *Passport* uses the situation of giving street directions to teach the notion/function of giving directions generally (ibid.: p. 26). Change the situation from “street” to “in an Airport” and the Unit becomes relevant, but then much of the unit’s vocabulary has to be substituted with relevant “Airport” vocabulary not found in the unit.
- 3. Units with wholly irrelevant situations and notions/functions, which cannot be modified into relevance.** For example: Unit 10 of *Passport*, “My father works in a bank”, with the notion/functions “Understanding questions about your family”, “Talking about/describing your family” and talking about where you live” (ibid.: p. 43) is irrelevant in a SA - ESP course.

Yet not all units of the coursebook need be covered. The teachers responsible for the SA English classes are expected by the administration to cover the same units by the time of end-of-semester exams. What this means in practice is that the pacing of the Units is set by the slowest (lowest) class, and last semester this equaled a Unit every two weeks. This year, out of 27 weeks, this equals 13 Units. As the coursebooks are not structurally (or lexically) sequenced, teachers could choose to cover only those units with situations relevant to, or with notions/functions adaptable to, SA student vocational needs. In this writer’s opinion, there are only six (possibly seven) Units in either *Passport* or *Passport Plus* of these types (which make up only 35% of the coursebooks: see **Appendix 1**).

Yet, it is very difficult for the English teachers, none of whom have any experience working in the air-travel industry, to decide what is relevant. Without input from people

who have had experience in the SA field, all judgements of relevance (including those in this paper) can only be based on the English teachers' experience as airline customers/passengers.

### **5.0 Content: Lack of relevant vocabulary**

The above caveat aside, even a layperson can see that due to the inappropriate coursebook situations, much vocabulary that would be useful to SA students is lacking from both *Passport* books. Some examples are -- **safety procedures, seat belt, fasten, domestic, international, and complimentary** (in the sense of *gratis*).

The above are English words commonly used in every airport and flight, yet none of the above words are found anywhere on any of the 20 Units proper in either *Passport* or *Passport Plus* nor in the *Word List* section in the back of the coursebooks. However, these words do appear in the *Unit One* (in-flight meals) *Background notes* section in the back of the *Passport* coursebook (p.58). These notes are short expositions (between 400-500 words) about travelling abroad. According to the *Passport Teacher's Guide -- Background Notes* (p.5):

“the authors intend that the background notes be used before the lesson proper, in order to provide the necessary background knowledge (e.g. cultural, thematic, linguistic) to help learners understand and benefit from the lesson.”

Here is an excerpt from *Passport Unit 1. Background notes*:

“Before takeoff, you will be asked to **fasten** your **seatbelt** and to listen to the airlines **safety procedures**. During the flight you will be served drinks and meals. On most **international** flights these are **complimentary**, but certain airlines (especially on **domestic** flights) charge for alcoholic drinks.”( *Passport*: p. 58, **bold** added).

The words in **bold** have a 'high surrender' value for SA students, but while the **bold** vocabulary is useful, it is used in the coursebook in a written expository passage. In their future jobs, SA students will not need to talk or write about the air-travel industry in English, but rather to be able to interact with English speaking passengers to service passenger/traveler needs. SA students need to be able to demonstrate emergency procedures or tell passengers to fasten their seat belts directly. Even with the background notes, much needed air-travel vocabulary is missing from the coursebooks, and the *Background notes* do not show how such important vocabulary that is



contained in the coursebooks could be used in spoken exchanges between air-travel employees and their customers.

## **6.0 Content: Tapescripts**

In those rare units that are situationally **and** notionally/functionally relevant, one doubts how representative the tape dialogues are of the English actually (commonly) used by fluent/native speakers of English in such situations. This is because the *Passport* series tape dialogues are patently scripted and inauthentic. Here 'authentic' is defined, as any text not deliberately scripted for the purpose of incorporating a linguistic structure (or lexis) into the text for teaching purposes; and 'scripted' for those that are. For example: the dialogue in a scene from a film is authentic for teaching purposes because it was not scripted with a particular linguistic teaching point in mind<sup>4</sup>.

Carter, Hughes & McCarthy (1998 in Tomlinson (ed.) 1998: p .68-69) looked at a teacher/textbook-writer scripted text (*Making a Doctor's Appointment*) from an Australian English textbook and compared it with an authentic recording of an Australian native speaker making an actual doctor's appointment. From this comparison, they made the following general observations about the differences between texts that are scripted and authentic recordings.

Unlike authentic texts:

- 'Speakers' in scripted texts rarely interrupt each other nor speak at the same time.
- Scripted texts lack content-less words such as 'oh', 'erm' or 'um', which serve to show surprise or incomprehension.
- Lack phrases that oil the wheels of conversation rather than contribute specific content or propositions (oh I see; I see what you mean).
- Scripted texts usually terminate with ritualistic polite closing strategies often not found in authentic texts.
- Scripted texts represent a 'can do' society in which interaction is generally smooth and trouble free; conversation is neat, tidy and predictable; utterances are made in complete sentences. (Ibid. p.69).

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<sup>4</sup> Often film writers are trying to write an accurate simulation of natural speech. However, because the film script has been extensively rehearsed, delivery of dialogue tends to be smoother than in real life, but film dialogues still often represent an 'order of reality' much closer to real life than many coursebook ones.

Scripted texts and authentic texts “represent two different orders of reality”(ibid.), the former unlikely to actually be encountered outside a classroom.

*Passport's* and *Passport Plus'* dialogues have the above scripted characteristics. For example:

Attendant: Hello sir.

Makoto: Oh, hello.

Attendant: Would you like a newspaper sir? We have English and Japanese newspapers.

Makoto: May I have an English newspaper please?

Attendant: An English newspaper? We do have some Japanese ones.

Makoto: Oh no! An English newspaper! I have to practice my English!

Attendant: Ah, I see. OK. (*Passport Teacher's Guide*, p.98).

It is not clear why the Attendant questions Makoto's choice of newspaper, perhaps it is because he is Japanese. When one listens to the tape, Makoto's English does sound slow and halting, however it is doubtful whether a flight attendant would question a passenger's choice of newspaper, which is rather a rude thing to do. Also, this listening passage is tied to the following 'circle the correct answer' -type listening question:

- 5 Makoto wants
- a. a Japanese newspaper
  - b. an English newspaper
- (*Passport Unit 1*, p.6)

It seems that the Attendant's repetition of Makoto's choice of newspaper was only scripted to make the correct answer more salient, rather than attempting to simulate authentic discourse.

Makoto's declaration that he “has to practice his English” is definitely a ‘can do’ statement, perhaps scripted to inspire students to do the same. Since a flight attendant would be unlikely to question a passenger's choice of newspaper, it is unlikely that Makoto's ‘can do’ explanation of his choice would ever be said in reality. The dialogue does not provide students a realistic model of conversations they may actually encounter in their (future) jobs. Nor can we be certain that the linguistic structures

being covered in a given unit of *Passport* or *Passport Plus* are actually indicative of patterns native/fluently English speakers would actually employ in the unit's situation.

Carter, Hughes & McCarthy (1998) found that a common pattern in Australian English -- tails -- naturally occurred in their authentic *Doctor's appointment* text. This pattern did not appear in the scripted text (in Tomlinson [ed.] 1998: p.70). The point for this paper is that authentic texts are likely to contain 'high surrender' value (because they frequently/commonly occur) linguistic features missed by scripted ones. As the *Passport* texts are scripted, one has to wonder what linguistic features with a 'high surrender' value for SA students may have been missed even in the units relevant to SA- ESP purposes<sup>5</sup>.

## **7.0 Methodology in *Passport* and *Passport Plus***

One simple but important element of any coursebook is the layout. The units in both *Passport* books have attractive presentation, with colorful pictures and lots of white space between unit sections, making the sequencing of unit activities clear. The page layouts are uncluttered, predictable and user friendly, which helps put students at ease. However, once we begin to look at the sequencing of Unit activities we venture from content towards methodology. The content of every unit is laid-out in a sequence intended to be taught within a **P**resentation-**P**ractice-**P**roduction (PPP) methodology.

Willis (1996) highlights key features of the PPP methodology.

- PPP entails a good deal of language control by the teacher in the interests of accuracy.
- PPP is based on the assumption that from accuracy comes fluency.
- Students are expected to conform to and utter only the language form(s) sanctioned by the teacher.
- The Presentation and Practice components of PPP are centered on controlled drills.
- The Production (last) stage of PPP, while in theory meant to be a fluency/communicative stage, in actuality has no less a focus on conformity than the prior two stages.

(Willis in Willis & Willis 1996: pp. 45-46)

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<sup>5</sup> It could be argued that low level students (like the SA students) need scripted texts for the text to be comprehensible. As a possible compromise, authentic texts could perhaps be simplified and re-recorded while retaining clear examples of the high surrender value linguistic features uncovered.

Willis argues that:

“...a focus on accuracy must take account of meaning. Accuracy should describe the relationship between what is intended and what is achieved in communication”. (ibid.: p.45).

In PPP the teacher tells the students both *what* to communicate and *how* to communicate the meaning (i.e. students must conform to the language given by the teacher to communicate the meanings that are also generated by the teacher). In PPP, the students are not trying to communicate their own self-generated meanings, nor are they intended to communicate new or unknown information to each other or to the teacher. Rather, they are conforming to a predictable, pre-scripted exchange orchestrated by the teacher.

Skehan (1996 in ibid.: p.18) notes the underlying theory of the PPP approach—that accuracy leads to fluency--has now been discredited:

“The belief that a precise focus on a particular form leads to learning and automatization no longer carries much credibility in either linguistics or psychology...learners do not simply acquire the language to which they are exposed...however carefully that exposure may be orchestrated by the teacher.”

Willis notes that even in the “free” Production stage of PPP, students have spent so much of the lesson being expected to conform to the language provided by the teacher that they logically assume that this demonstration of their ability to conform should be carried over to the production stage. While the production stage is intended to give students free reign over what they produce, students actually restrict themselves to only using the forms presented and practiced in the earlier stages of the lesson (Willis in Willis & Willis 1996: p.46).

In PPP the teacher controls all input and output and students are not encouraged to produce their own novel utterances. To demonstrate that the *Passport* coursebooks are tied to a PPP methodology, we will use Littlejohn’s criteria for evaluating tasks:

1. What is the learner expected to do in each task?
2. With whom?
3. With what content?
4. Who determines these things?

(Littlejohn 1998 in Tomlinson (ed.) 1998: p.195)

Every Unit of *Passport/Passport Plus* contains and follows the exact same sections, here shown below as out-lined in the *Teacher's Guide(s)*<sup>6</sup> (see also, **Appendix 2**).

**Listening:** “a simple task-based activity such as checking the correct boxes or circling True/False” (*Passport Teacher's Guide, p.6*)

Students need not understand the dialogue, only catch a single key word to successfully complete the ‘task’. As seen in section **6.0**, the dialogues are deliberately scripted to give the students a single answer, rather than having them to do anything with the information. Little here to challenge students.

**Look and Learn:** “This is the language study section of each unit. These are most commonly presented as questions to study and practice in pairs”(ibid.).

This section is controlled practice. Students read aloud a pre-scripted question and give pre-scripted answers. Students neither have to create their own utterances or communicate self-generated meanings; rather they mechanically go through and conform to the language provided.

**Conversation:** “This is the focal point of each lesson, a listening task based on a conversation. The target structures from **look and learn** are thus reinforced in a natural situation context which provides the students the first *real opportunity for learners to try out the language* (ibid. Italics added).

Students are expected to listen to the tape and fill in the conversation blanks, or fill the blanks out speculatively and then listen to confirm their answer. Then they read the dialogue in pairs. Here again, students are only expected to parrot the conversation provided verbatim. They do not actually try out the language at all. There is no room for student creativity and all input is provided by the teacher/text.

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<sup>6</sup> Note, in both the *Passport* and *Passport Plus Teacher's Guides*, the *Using the Teacher's Guide – Lesson outline* - sections are identically worded.

**Over to you!** “As the title implies, now it is the turn of the learners to expand and build upon the conversation already studied. *Over to you!* Is a basic substitution drill: students are given prompts and invited to practice the conversation, substituting the new information.”(ibid.)

Again, students do not have to generate any language themselves, or communicate any of their own information. Everything is provided by the teacher/text.

**Activity:** “These oral exercises are intended to provide the freer practice stage of the lesson, where students can expand creatively upon the language and skills practices in the unit... The *Activity* usually takes the form of a role-play between two people and is intended to give the learners intensive class-room practice of a real world situation.”(ibid.).

Firstly, the *Activity* -section gives students prompts, so the *Activities* are still substitution drills. Secondly, students have no reason to role-play the situation, other than having been directed by the teacher to do so, nor any real need to communicate the information. For example: in a hotel reservation role-play, students might substitute their own names, randomly choose the type of room they request and randomly select the day(s) they ‘want’ the room; but they only do so to “spice up” what is otherwise likely to be performed as a conformity exercise, as noted by Willis earlier. The *Activity* is no different from the *Conversation/Over to you!* drills. Again, the input and output is still controlled by the teacher/text leaving almost no room for student creativity.

### **8.0 Passport: A lack of tasks.**

An alternative to PPP is a task-based lesson. Willis (1996 in Willis & Willis 1996: p.53) defines a ‘task’ as “a goal-oriented activity in which learners use whatever target language resources they have to achieve a real outcome”. For example: an activity which requires the student to self-generate his or her own English utterances to communicate information another student does not already know and needs to know to complete the activity would be a task. By this definition, the *Passport* coursebooks are wholly devoid of tasks.

As Willis (ibid.: p.54) points out, one could turn the type of role-plays found in *Passport/Passport Plus* into tasks. For example: In a ‘reserving a hotel room’- task, if the “guest”-students are given specific room, price and date requirements; and the “Hotel clerk”-students are given a schedule of room availability (with some rooms already reserved), finding a ‘hotel’ that matches the ‘guest-student’s’ requirements

becomes a task. If this task were sequenced at the beginning of the lesson (as suggested by Willis in *ibid.*: p 60) students would have valuable practice:

- a)** attempting to use the limited English resources they have to communicate their needs/meaning and...
- b)** managing in English in situations that are not perfect or predictable

Both of the above are very important for the SA English students. They need to develop skill 'a' given the limited amount of in-class English exposure they will get over two years. In the future students will need to stretch whatever English resources they learn from the SA English course on the job. Skill 'b' is also needed because often Air-travel employees cannot meet a customer's needs/wants, such as when desired flights are fully booked, desired seats are unavailable, or when a passenger's bags are too large for 'carry on'. As mentioned earlier, these types of problems/situations are rarely covered in the 'perfect' conflict-less universe presented in the *Passport* coursebooks.

Also, sequencing the task first would give students a reason to attend to the forms presented in the dialogues. A teacher could encourage students to pay attention to the differences between the English they produced to complete the task and the English used in the scripts to complete the same task. However, the materials as laid out in the *Passport* books are not usable as tasks. Teachers would be required to bring in their own task materials to supplement the coursebooks. This requires teachers both to know how to design tasks and to be willing to take the (unpaid) time to do so.

Please note that the *Passport* coursebooks are not being criticized because they *have* drills. Drills are useful for pronunciation practice, can develop student confidence by giving students the sense that they have (at least in class) 'mastered' a target structure, and perhaps will make it easier for learners to recognize the pattern when they hear it in the future. Also, as Japan has many of the characteristics of what Hofstede (1986 in Brown 2000: p.190) calls a high "Uncertainty Avoidance"<sup>7</sup> culture, it might be culturally inappropriate *not* to include drills in the lesson. The point here is that *Passport/Passport Plus* is seriously flawed because it employs a methodology based solely upon drilling.

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<sup>7</sup> "...the extent to which people within a culture are made nervous by situations they perceive as unstructured, unclear, or unpredictable which they therefore try to avoid..." (Hofstede 1986, in Brown 2000 p.190).

Furthermore, regardless of the methodology contained in a coursebook, any coursebook should have at least some variety of task types. Students fed *Passport's* unvarying diet of units that follow the exact same formula and contain the same activities throughout will inevitably become bored and motivation will flag.

## **Conclusion**

In a paper of this size it is impossible to examine all the possible criteria by which a coursebook could be evaluated. However, by just asking the following fundamental questions...

- What are the aims of the curriculum and syllabus?
- Is the coursebook's topical content relevant to these aims?
- Is the book's linguistic content (structures, patterns, lexis) relevant to these aims?
- Where is the linguistic content is derived from (i.e. authentic or inauthentic)?
- What activities are included in the coursebooks, and what learning opportunities do they provide for the learner?
- Do these learning opportunities give students occasion to develop skills relevant to course aim/goals?

... we can see that the *Passport* coursebooks are wholly unsuited for the ESP goals of the SA English syllabus.

If the administration is serious about providing SA students an ESP syllabus, and this is not entirely clear, *Passport/Passport Plus* should be rejected after asking the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> questions above. If indeed the *Passport* coursebooks are the best commercially available for such a course, perhaps the college should consider attempting to develop its own materials.

Even if the college chose the *Passport* coursebooks to be used -- as the authors intended--in an EGP course, the coursebooks would still be inadequate. The coursebooks' total lack of authentic texts, lack of tasks, and the fact they are wedded to a PPP methodology laid out in units of unvarying design, make both *Passport* and *Passport Plus* a poor choice for any course.



## **Appendix 1.**

**Category I.) Units of *Passport* with situations relevant to a SA - ESP course (3/20)** (Unit titles and Topic/functions transcribed from *Passport Teacher's Guide: passim*)

**Unit 1.** "Would you like beef or fish?"

**Situation:** Serving/ordering in-flight meals

**Topic/Functions:** Asking for things politely/Accepting and refusing things politely/  
Asking for repetition.

**Relevance:** While intended for practice for future travelers, flight attendants will need to be able to offer and serve in-flight meals to their passengers and respond to passenger requests.

**Unit 2.** "Can I see your passport please?"

**Situation:** Going through Immigration.

**Topic/Functions:** Understanding questions at Immigration/Answering questions at Immigration.

**Relevance:** Those students who obtain work at an airport may work at Immigration. They would need to be able to ask, and understand the answers to, questions asked as Immigration officers.

**Unit 20.** "How many bags do you have?"

**Situation:** Checking-in at the airport.

**Topic/functions:** Asking where to check in./Saying where you want to sit/Finding out about the flight.

**Relevance:** Future check-in staff need to be able to communicate with passengers in this type of situation on a regular basis.

**Category II.) Units with useful notions/functions but presented in situations inappropriate for a SA English ESP course (4/20).**

**Unit 3.** "Can I change some money here?"

**Situation:** Changing money in a bank.

**Topic/functions:** Understanding amounts of money/Asking about exchange rates/  
Asking about commission.

**Relevance:** Flight attendants do often sell in-flight goods to passengers. Passengers may need to pay with differing currencies. While the 'bank' situation is inappropriate, explaining exchange rates and being able to convert the price of items into another currency is of use to SA students.

**Unit 5.** "Go straight along Seventh Avenue."

**Situation:** Asking and giving street directions.

**Topic/functions:** Asking & Giving directions/Saying where places are.

**Relevance:** At large airports especially, passengers may become lost and ask directions from airport staff. Change street to airport to make relevant.

**Unit 7.** "How do you feel?"

**Situation:** Visiting a doctor.

**Topic/functions:** Saying what's wrong/Saying when the problem began/  
Understanding (medical) instructions.

**Relevance:** Somewhat relevant as passengers may develop airsickness or headaches.  
Relevance here is questionable.

**Unit 18.** "Where did you lose it?"

**Situation:** Reporting lost (possibly stolen) items to hotel staff.

**Topic/functions:** Reporting what you have lost and where/Describing lost items/  
Talking about place and time.

**Relevance:** Passengers often lose or have personal belongings stolen at airports. Only minor supplementation is required to make this unit situationally relevant.

### **Category III.) Units that are irrelevant to SA ESP purposes (13/20).**

**Unit 4.** "Do you have any vacancies?"

**Situation:** Checking into a hotel.

**Relevance:** None. Even when flights are cancelled, stranding passengers, airport staff would be reserving rooms for their passengers in Japan in Japanese. Most of the functions in this unit, such as explaining check-out times and hotel services are outside the responsibilities of airport ground staff.

**Unit 6.** "Do you mind if I watch TV?"

**Situation:** At a host (homestay) family's house.

**Topic/functions:** Checking house rules/Finding out the best time to do something.

**Relevance:** None.

**Unit 8.** "Are you free this weekend?"

**Situation:** Arranging to meet people.

**Topic/functions:** Making social invitations/Accepting and refusing politely.

**Relevance:** None.

**Unit 9.** "Are you ready to order?"

**Situation:** In a restaurant.

**Topic/functions:** Ordering and asking for things in a restaurant.

**Relevance:** None, adequately covered for SA purposes in Unit 1.

**Unit 10.** "My father works in a bank"

**Topic/functions:** Understanding questions about your family/Talking about your family.

**Relevance:** None.

**Unit 11.** "What's your favorite food"

**Topic/functions:** Talking about Japan/Answering questions about Japan/Giving opinions.

**Relevance:** None.

**Unit 12.** "What would you like to drink?"

**Situation:** In a pub.

**Topic/functions:** Offering someone a drink/Expressing likes and dislikes

**Relevance:** None. Offering drinks to passengers covered in Unit 1.

**Unit 13.** “I won’t be home for lunch today”

**Situation:** Homestay

**Topics/functions:** Saying what time you’ll be home/Apologizing for changing your plans.”

**Relevance:** None

**Unit 14.** “Could you tell me when we’re there please?”

**Situation:** Bus station.

**Topic/functions:** Asking for information about buses/Asking for price about tickets.

**Relevance:** None. Already covered for SA purposes in Unit 20.

**Unit 15.** “How would you like to pay?”

**Situation:** In a shop.

**Relevance:** None. Already covered for SA purposes in Unit 3.

**Unit 16.** “Can I send this airmail?”

**Situation:** In a post-office

**Topic/functions:** Asking about mailing things.

**Relevance:** None

**Unit 17.** “What time does the show start?”

**Situation:** Box office.

**Topic/functions:** “Ordering tickets/asking about times/asking about seats.

**Relevance:** None. For SA purposes, covered in Unit 20

**Unit 19.** “Goodbye and thanks!”

**Situation:** At an airport departure gate with homestay family.

**Topic/functions:** Giving and receiving gifts/Expressing wishes for the future/  
Saying goodbye.

**Relevance:** None. While flight attendants do thank passengers for taking their flight, this Unit covers the social niceties of saying farewell to guests.

## **Appendix 1 (B).**

**Units of *Passport Plus* categorized as above** (adapted from *Passport Plus Teacher’s Guide, passim*).

<b><u>Category I.</u></b>	<b><u>Category II.</u></b>	<b><u>Category III.</u></b>
<b>Unit 3.</b> “Tell me about yourself.”**  <b>Unit 18.</b> “Could I have your flight details?”  **This unit’s topic/function is answering questions about yourself at a job interview. Students who apply for a job with a foreign airline may have at	<b>Unit 4.</b> “Hello, is this room service?”(Addressing customer complaints)  <b>Unit 5.</b> “Can I help you?” (Giving directions)  <b>Unit 11.</b> “You can take the <i>Shinkansen</i> ” (Explaining alternate forms of travel) Potentially useful if flights are grounded.	<b>Unit 1.</b> “Welcome to Japan” (meeting guests/friends at the airport).  <b>Unit 2.</b> “Pleased to meet you.” (Introductions/Giving personal information)  <b>Unit 6.</b> “What would you like to do while you’re here?” (Planning a trip/tour).

<p>least part of the interview conducted in English.</p>	<p><b>Unit 16.</b> “You have to leave your shoes here.” (Using ‘have to’ to explain rules/regulations) Useful function for SA staff.</p>	<p><b>Unit 7.</b> “Would you like to see my pictures” (Talking about past vacations/ describing pictures).</p> <p><b>Unit 7.</b> “Lets shop till we drop.” (Going shopping).</p> <p><b>Unit 9.</b> “Can I take a message?” (Taking messages over the phone)</p> <p><b>Unit 10.</b> “I can’t stand soccer!” (Discussing likes and dislikes/ expressing opinions).</p> <p><b>Unit 12.</b> “Don’t forget your cameras!” (Asking questions about bus tours).</p> <p><b>Unit 13.</b> “Where can I buy some souvenirs?” (Asking where you can buy things/ making suggestions)</p> <p><b>Unit 14.</b> “What would you like to eat?” (Describing Japanese food)</p> <p><b>Unit 15.</b> “What a beautiful apartment!” (Giving compliments/ describing a room, specifically, Japanese ones).</p> <p><b>Unit 17.</b> “I agree with you” (Giving opinions/ agreeing and disagreeing politely)</p> <p><b>Unit 19.</b> “There’s a mistake on my bill” (Asking questions about bills and charges)</p> <p><b>Unit 20.</b> “Have a safe trip home!” (Saying fond farewells/ giving and receiving gifts).</p>
<p><b>2/20</b></p>	<p><b>4/20</b></p>	<p><b>14/20</b></p>

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**Appendix 2: Unit 18 from *Passport & Passport Plus* as examples of the layout and design of the coursebooks.**