

Need Analysis on English for Specific Purposes of Visual Communication Design Student at Vocational High School

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ABSTRACT

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) plays a vital role in preparing vocational students for effective workplace communication. However, many ESP programs do not fully address learners' actual needs due to the lack of a structured needs analysis. This study applies Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) framework: Target Situation Analysis (TSA), Present Situation Analysis (PSA), and Learning Situation Analysis (LSA) to examine the English language needs of Visual Communication Design (VCD) students at SMK PGRI 13 Surabaya. Employing a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 89 students, 4 teachers, and 6 industry practitioners through questionnaires and interviews. Findings revealed that 46.5% of students identified speaking as the most essential skill, followed by reading (30.7%) and listening (13.9%), which aligns with the demands of professions such as motion graphic designer and content creator. Despite this, only 8.9% of students felt proficient in speaking, and 66.3% acknowledged their English skills were insufficient for future professional use. 44.6% reported that English was rarely integrated into their design-related subjects. Regarding learning preferences, 57.4% favoured design-based games, 54.5% preferred tutorial videos, and 63.4% were inclined toward visual materials such as infographics. These findings highlight the importance of creating a student-centred ESP curriculum that truly reflects what Visual Communication Design students need, including industry-relevant content, engaging visuals and digital media, and interactive activities to help them build their language skills and career readiness.

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1. INTRODUCTION

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is becoming more important in vocational schools, as students need English not only for their studies but also to prepare for the workplace. In programs like Visual Communication Design (VCD), having English lessons that relate directly to their field can make a real difference in helping them succeed. This field combines creative areas such as graphic design, advertising, and multimedia, where English plays an essential role in helping students understand global trends, communicate with international clients, and access design resources from around the world. In Indonesia, Visual Communication Design is often called "Dekave" among vocational school students, and its popularity continues to grow (Tinarbuko, 2015). As the global creative industry develops, students in this field are expected to have sufficient English skills to prepare them for international work environments. Several studies have emphasized the importance

of learning English to apply knowledge in real-life settings (Nasution et al., 2020). However, research such as that by Fantinelli et al. (2024) also notes that English learning should be aligned with real-world purposes, and more specific research in Indonesian vocational contexts is still needed.

ESP uses a student-centered approach that focuses on the practical use of English in specific fields. For VCD students, English is essential for understanding design briefs, explaining ideas, and presenting work to clients. This approach helps bridge the gap between general English and the communication needs of the creative industry (Hyland, 2006). Moreover, student-centered learning, primarily when supported by modern online or distance learning technologies, has been shown to enhance engagement and develop practical skills relevant to students' future careers (Kerimbayev et al., 2023). According to (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), ESP should be designed to meet students' professional goals by focusing on the types of language and communication skills needed in their future careers. One of the most important components of ESP is Needs Analysis (NA), which helps teachers understand what students need in terms of English learning. It includes identifying their future career goals, current level of English, and how they prefer to learn (Guzal Uralovna, 2025). In the context of VCD, NA is useful in finding out what kind of English is needed in the design field, including technical terms, communication with clients, and presentation skills. Similar to VCD, a study on Physical Education students in two Indonesian universities highlighted the importance of tailoring ESP materials to match students' professional aspirations. The study emphasized the need for specific topics such as English for sports journalism and coaching and the importance of developing speaking and writing skills to enable students to compete internationally (Pranoto & Suprayogi, 2020). However, even though teachers may be aware of the specific needs of vocational students, research by Mulyah & Aminatun (2020) found that English teachers' beliefs about teaching ESP in vocational schools are not always reflected in classroom practices. This discrepancy is often caused by practical challenges such as limited time, class size, inadequate textbooks, and heavy workloads. These findings underline the importance of aligning curriculum and material design with learners' needs and ensuring that institutional support enables teachers to implement ESP principles effectively in real classrooms.

To conduct a more complete needs analysis, structured frameworks such as Target Situation Analysis (TSA), Present Situation Analysis (PSA), and Learning Situation Analysis (LSA) can be used (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Munby, 1998). TSA focuses on the English skills students will need for their future work, PSA looks at students' current ability and problems in learning English, and LSA explores their motivation, preferences, and learning styles. Even though many researchers agree that needs analysis is important, several previous studies in vocational school settings still use limited approaches, such as simple surveys or interviews, and do not apply complete models like TSA, PSA, and LSA. As a result, many of those studies do not fully explain what students need to learn to learn English effectively. Some only focus on certain skills or text types (Abidah et al., 2023; Hajar & Triastuti, 2021; Wennyta et al., 2025), while others only explore general preferences without linking them to students' current abilities or future career needs (Dele et al., 2025).

Until now, no research has explored the English language needs of Visual Communication Design students in vocational schools using a comprehensive framework like TSA, PSA, and LSA. This study addresses that gap using an ex post facto design and a mixed-methods approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data were collected through structured questionnaires from students based on the TSA, PSA, and LSA frameworks and supported by semi-structured interviews with English teachers and vocational subject teachers. This combination of methods is intended to provide a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the linguistic and professional needs of VCD students, so that the development of ESP materials can be more relevant, effective, and aligned with the demands of the creative industry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review discusses key concepts and previous studies related to the English language needs of vocational students in Visual Communication Design (VCD). It begins by explaining the role of VCD in vocational education and how this field shapes students' English needs. It then reviews the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) concept, focusing on the importance of needs analysis. Finally, it examines previous studies to identify gaps, which this current research aims to address.

2.1 Visual Communication Design (VCD)

Visual Communication Design (VCD) is a multidisciplinary field covering graphic design, advertising, digital media, and branding. VCD is becoming more important in vocational schools as the demand grows for creative professionals who can express ideas visually and work in global contexts. As Tinarbuko (2015) points out, VCD blends artistic creativity with technical skills and often involves using English in real-world settings.

The popularity of VCD among vocational students in Indonesia reflects both the international nature of design work and the growing need for English communication skills. Nasution et al. (2020) explain that English is important for working in multicultural teams, presenting portfolios to international audiences, and accessing global design resources. It supports findings from (Fantinelli et al., 2024), which show that language learning becomes more effective when connected to practical, real-world activities. However, since their study focused on European college students, further research is needed to understand how these findings apply to the Indonesian vocational school (SMK) context, where the learning environment and job market differ.

2.2 English for Specific Purposes

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has become an effective approach to meet the specific language needs of learners in certain fields or professions (Basturkmen, 2010). (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) explain that ESP focuses more on what learners need to use English for than just teaching grammar or general language skills. This approach is especially useful in vocational and technical education because it helps prepare students with more relevant language instruction for the workplace.

In the design context, ESP is important because it helps students understand project briefs, present ideas, and respond to client feedback, activities that require strong communication skills in English. Dudley-Evans & St John (1998) highlight that ESP

should be flexible and responsive to workplace changes. Although ESP has been applied in various vocational programs in Indonesia, many design-related curricula still lack deep integration of specific communication tasks related to the field. It shows the need for more focused, needs-based curriculum development in creative areas like Visual Communication Design (VCD).

2.3 Needs Analysis

Needs Analysis (NA) is essential to designing effective ESP programs. According to (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Richards, 2009), a complete NA includes three components: Target Situation Analysis (TSA), Present Situation Analysis (PSA), and Learning Situation Analysis (LSA). TSA identifies the language skills students will need in their future professions, PSA looks at their current language proficiency, and LSA explores how students prefer to learn.

In the context of VCD, NA should go beyond general language needs. For example, understanding how students explain design ideas, work in teams, or respond to feedback can help develop more authentic learning tasks. However, such practical applications are still rarely seen in vocational ESP programs. Moreover, traditional NA frameworks often overlook important elements like creative problem-solving and visual-verbal communication, suggesting the need for adaptations tailored to the visual design field.

2.4 Previous Studies

Several recent studies have attempted to explore ESP in vocational education in Indonesia (Abidah et al., 2023; Hajar & Triastuti, 2021; Khalida & Refnaldi, 2020). While these studies recognize the importance of tailoring English instruction to vocational needs, many lack a comprehensive needs analysis framework. For example, Wennyta et al. (2025) focus on multimedia learning preferences but do not consider students' current English proficiency (PSA) or how they will use English in future workplace settings. Similarly, Shofa & Chandra (2024) explore students' descriptive texts but do not link these preferences to the communication tasks required in their future professions.

Some studies, such as Dele et al. (2025), describe learners' general attitudes toward English without specifying the communicative tasks needed in fields like VCD. This lack of contextual detail makes applying the findings to real-world teaching difficult. In addition, many of these studies rely on qualitative methods, such as open-ended interviews or anecdotal observation, limiting the results' broader applicability. Very few have used a mixed-methods approach that combines data from students, teachers, and industry needs using structured models like TSA, PSA, and LSA.

More methodologically proper ESP studies exist internationally, but most are based in university or corporate settings. Although their findings are useful, they must be adapted to fit the specific needs of SMK learners in Indonesia, who may have different goals, learning challenges, and access to educational resources.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively understand the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) needs of Visual Communication Design (VCD) students at SMK

PGRI 13 Surabaya. This design was chosen to provide measurable data and deeper insights into students' language proficiency, instructional relevance, and learning preferences.

3.1 Research Instruments and Participants

This study employed two main instruments: a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was developed based on the needs analysis framework proposed by Hutchinson & Waters (1987), which includes target situation analysis (TSA), present situation analysis (PSA), and learning situation analysis (LSA). TSA was used to identify the English language skills required in students' future careers; PSA assessed their current level of English proficiency and the relevance of existing learning materials; while LSA explored their preferred learning styles, instructional media, and classroom environments. The questionnaire included a combination of Likert-scale items, multiple-choice questions, and checkbox questions to collect a broad range of data. It was administered to a diverse group of respondents, consisting of 98 active VCD students from grades X, XI, and XII, 4 VCD teachers, 2 English teachers, 3 VCD alums, and 6 practitioners currently working in the visual communication industry. The questionnaires were distributed and completed in a supervised classroom setting to ensure accuracy and clarity in student responses. Meanwhile, the questionnaires for teachers, alums, and industry professionals were distributed and completed online via WhatsApp.

Table 1. The student questionnaire framework of the research

Dimension	Objectives	Inquiries
Personal Information	To collect personal data regarding students to conduct a needs analysis.	3 Items
Target Situation Analysis (TSA)	To determine the objectives for learning English	There are 10 Items containing: Likert Scale 2 Items Multiple Choice 2 Items Checkbox 5 Items Open-ended 1 Item
Present Situation Analysis (PSA)	To identify the students' strengths in ESP To recognize the students' weaknesses in ESP	There are 9 Items containing: Likert Scale 6 Items Checkbox 2 Items Open-ended 1 Item
Learning Situation Analysis	To identify the essential language skills required by students for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) To explore what students want to learn in ESP	4 Items contain: Multiple Choice 1 Items Checkbox 2 Items Open-ended 1 Item

In addition to the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain deeper insights and to validate the quantitative data. The interviews involved selected English teachers, VCD teachers, and several chosen students based on their questionnaire responses or active involvement in the teaching and learning process. The interview

questions were guided by the TSA, PSA, and LSA frameworks, aiming to explore participants' perspectives on English teaching practices, students' language needs, learning challenges, and the use of English in real-world VCD contexts. This qualitative component enabled the researcher to gather rich narrative data that complemented and contextualized the findings from the questionnaire.

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants from key groups, namely VCD teachers, English teachers, alumni, and industry practitioners with relevant knowledge and experience aligned with the research objectives. The six-industry practitioners were specifically chosen based on their professional involvement in the Visual Communication Design (VCD) field and their experience working with or evaluating VCD graduates. Although the number of experts was limited, each provided valuable and in-depth insights into the English language skills required in workplace settings. In line with the needs analysis framework proposed by Hutchinson & Waters (1987), including industry professionals served to inform the Target Situation Analysis (TSA), focusing on the specific communicative demands of professional contexts. Since TSA emphasizes relevance and specificity over generalizability, selecting a small but highly relevant sample was deemed appropriate. This approach was further supported by the qualitative nature of the study, where depth of insight and contextual relevance are prioritized, consistent with the qualitative research principles outlined by Miles & Huberman (1994).

3.2 Validity and Reliability

The development and validation of the questionnaire followed several stages to ensure its relevance and appropriateness for the study. The items were constructed based on the needs analysis framework proposed by Hutchinson & Waters (1987), which includes target situation analysis (TSA), present situation analysis (PSA), and learning situation analysis (LSA). Once the initial draft was completed, it was reviewed by an ESP expert, who also served as the researcher's thesis supervisor and had expertise in curriculum development, English language teaching, and ESP.

The review process focused on content validity, ensuring that each item accurately represented the core aspects of the TSA, PSA, and LSA components. Based on the expert's feedback, several items were refined for better clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives. This process was carried out in multiple rounds of revision until the instrument was deemed sufficiently valid and aligned with the study's goals.

Although formal reliability testing, such as Cronbach's Alpha and pilot testing, was not conducted due to limited time and contextual constraints, several measures were taken to ensure consistency and clarity. These included standardizing the structure and wording of items, eliminating ambiguous or misleading questions, and consistently consulting expert judgment during the revision process. Furthermore, the consistent response patterns across different respondent groups, students, teachers, alums, and industry professionals, also indicated a reasonable instrument reliability in practice.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection for this study took place during the 2024/2025 academic year and followed an explanatory sequential design. The process began with the quantitative data

collection, followed by qualitative data collection to further explore and clarify the findings. The quantitative, structured questionnaires were administered directly to students during classroom sessions. The researcher was present throughout to supervise the process, provide explanations when needed, and ensure that students fully understood the items, reducing the risk of misinterpretation.

The qualitative study involved semi-structured interviews with selected participants, including English teachers, VCD teachers, and students. Depending on participants' availability and preferences, interviews were conducted in person or via WhatsApp. All interviews were conducted with informed consent and were recorded to ensure the accuracy of the data. The recordings were then transcribed and prepared for in-depth qualitative analysis.

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. Responses to the Likert-scale items were scored on a 1–5 scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The data were then processed to calculate the frequency and percentage distributions for the multiple-choice and checkbox items. A scoring formula was also applied to determine students' average perceptions and identify the most essential English language skills based on their responses. This method provided a clear overview of VCD students' prevailing trends and preferences.

For the qualitative data, analysis followed the three-step framework proposed by Miles & Huberman (1994). The first step, data reduction, involved selecting and condensing relevant information from interview transcripts to focus on responses directly related to the study's research questions. In the second step, coding and categorization, the data were organized into key themes such as skill gaps, learning challenges, and preferred instructional methods. The final step involved identifying patterns and drawing conclusions based on recurring themes, which helped generate deeper insights into the students' English language needs and the alignment of current instructional practices with their future professional demands.

Several verification strategies were applied to enhance the validity and reliability of the qualitative analysis. First, peer debriefing was conducted through regular discussions with the thesis supervisor to review emerging codes and themes, helping reduce potential researcher bias. Second, member checking was used by sharing summarized interview findings with selected participants to verify the accuracy of interpretations and ensure that the data reflected their intended meanings. Third, an audit trail was maintained throughout the research process, including preserving original interview transcripts, coding frameworks, and analytic memos, ensuring transparency and traceability in the analysis. Although inter-rater reliability was not measured due to the individual nature of the inquiry, these validation techniques were implemented to uphold the trustworthiness and rigour of the qualitative findings.

3.5 Data Triangulation

This study employed data triangulation to strengthen the validity and consistency of the research findings. It involved comparing and cross-verifying information from the questionnaires with insights gathered through interviews. By integrating numerical data

and narrative explanations, the triangulation ensured that the conclusions drawn were statistically supported and contextually grounded (Brown, 2007). This comprehensive approach helped reveal consistent patterns and validate key themes emerging from both data sources, thereby enhancing the overall credibility and reliability of the study.

This section presents the key findings from the data analysis, which aimed to explore the linguistic and professional needs of Visual Communication Design (VCD) students. The results are organized according to the three core components of the needs analysis framework: Target Situation Analysis (TSA), Present Situation Analysis (PSA), and Learning Situation Analysis (LSA). Each component offers valuable insights into different dimensions of students' language use, current proficiency levels, and preferred learning environments. The findings for each category are discussed in detail in the following subsections.

4. FINDINGS

This section presents the main findings from the data analysis, which aimed to examine the linguistic and professional needs of visual communication design (VCD) students. The results are organized according to the three core components of the needs analysis framework: target situation analysis (TSA), present situation analysis (PSA), and learning situation analysis (LSA). Each component provides meaningful insights into students' language use, proficiency levels, and preferred learning environments. The findings for each component are discussed in detail in the following subsections.

4.1. Findings from Target Situation Analysis (TSA)

According to the Target Situation Analysis (TSA) findings, speaking is the most essential English language skill for Visual Communication Design (VCD) students, with 46.5% of respondents identifying it as their highest priority. It reflects the communication demands of roles such as social media manager, motion graphic designer, and content creator, where tasks like presenting ideas, negotiating with clients, and discussing design projects are integral to daily work. Reading was the second most prioritized skill, selected by 30.7% of respondents, highlighting its importance in understanding design briefs, project guidelines, and digital platforms. Listening accounted for 13.9%, indicating its relevance in following client instructions and learning from online resources or tutorials. Writing received the lowest ranking at 8.9%, suggesting that it is considered less central to the typical communication demands within the VCD profession, while still necessary in certain contexts.

Table 2. The most important skill in the VCD field

English Skill	Percentage (%)
Speaking	46.5
Reading	30.7
Listening	13.9
Writing	8.9

The findings also reveal unusual skill gaps among students, particularly in speaking. Many reported feelings anxious and uncomfortable when using English orally, often due to a limited understanding of design-related terminology. It indicates a significant deficiency in their communicative competence, especially in professional contexts. These concerns are cited by insights from six industry professionals, who emphasized the critical role of effective spoken communication in the workplace, particularly for tasks involving client interaction, project discussions, and collaborative teamwork.

4.2. Findings from Present Situation Analysis (PSA)

The Present Situation Analysis (PSA) results reveal a significant mismatch between the English language competencies expected by the Visual Communication Design (VCD) industry and students' current learning experiences. Only 8.9% of students consider themselves proficient in spoken English, while 66.3% acknowledge their inability to communicate effectively enough to meet the demands of design-related professions. Furthermore, 44.6% of students reported that English is rarely incorporated into their design-related courses, indicating a lack of associative integration between English instruction and vocational subject matter.

Table 3. Students' current English proficiency and curriculum integration

Indicator	Percentage (%)
Students proficient in speaking	8.9
Students who feel their English is not yet adequate	66.3
Students reporting little English integration	44.6

These findings highlight a concerning gap in student preparation. Current classroom materials are often too general and fail to address the specific language needs of the visual communication context. English teachers also acknowledged that they rarely utilize English for Specific Purposes (ESP) materials, resulting in lessons that inadequately support the development of real-world communicative competence, particularly in tasks that require industry-relevant language. Both educators and students expressed strong interest in more engaging and context-specific learning resources, such as pitching design concepts, drafting design briefs, and creating portfolio content. Such practical, task-based materials should be systematically integrated into the curriculum to better equip students for professional communication within creative industries.

4.3. Findings from Learning Situation Analysis (LSA)

The Learning Situation Analysis (LSA) revealed a strong student preference for practical, technology-enhanced learning experiences. A significant proportion, 57.4% preferred acquiring English through design-based educational games, while 54.5% found tutorial videos effective in supporting their language development. These preferences indicate students' desire for engaging, interactive formats that align with their interests and professional aspirations. In addition, 63.4% of students preferred learning materials incorporating visual elements such as infographics, images, and animated explanations. It

suggests a dominant visual learning style among students, consistent with their academic orientation in Visual Communication Design.

Table 4. Students' current English proficiency and curriculum integration

Preferred Learning Method	Percentage (%)
Learning through design-based games	57.4
Using tutorial videos as learning tools	54.5
Materials with visual elements (infographics, etc.)	63.4

Regarding independent learning, students frequently utilized digital platforms, social media, and AI-based applications to support their language development. However, several challenges were also reported. Students expressed difficulty keeping up with fast-paced instruction and noted a lack of opportunities to receive constructive feedback, particularly in speaking practice, a skill previously identified as a critical need in the TSA findings.

5. DISCUSSION

Applying the TSA, PSA, and LSA frameworks provided a more structured and targeted analysis than prior studies, offering deeper insights into what learners need, lack, and prefer in their ESP instruction. The findings reveal that while students urgently require speaking and vocabulary skills for real-world communication tasks, existing teaching materials and methods often fail to address these needs. It underscores the importance for curriculum developers to integrate authentic industry contexts into learning resources, aligning with (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) emphasis on identifying "necessities" and "lacks" in ESP course design.

The combined analysis of TSA, PSA, and LSA uncovered key English language needs among Visual Communication Design (VCD) students. TSA findings suggest that students are expected to engage in tasks such as explaining design concepts, presenting portfolios, discussing revisions with clients, and interpreting briefs from international partners. However, PSA data indicate that most students lack the confidence and competence to perform these tasks, particularly in speaking, vocabulary, and listening. LSA results further show that students prefer interactive, visually supported, and technology-integrated learning methods, including design-based projects, video tutorials, and collaborative presentations.

Compared to earlier ESP needs analyses (Abidah et al., 2023; Khalida & Refnaldi, 2020; Mao & Zhou, 2024; Wennyta et al., 2025; Wijayanto et al., 2023), this study's structured application of the TSA, PSA, and LSA frameworks offers more nuanced and practically relevant insights. While previous research often focused on general skills or single components, such as procedural texts, they did not always distinguish between workplace demands and students' current competencies. It limited the practical implementation of their findings in developing targeted ESP programs.

Moreover, triangulation with input from industry professionals strengthens the credibility of the findings, confirming that tasks such as presenting, negotiating, and

describing design work in English are vital in real-world settings. This alignment supports the call for a student-centered, needs-based ESP curriculum incorporating technology-supported, creative, and adaptive learning activities. As supported by (Hastuti, 2022; Yao et al., 2024), aligning instruction with learner preferences, especially in tech-oriented fields like VCD, can significantly enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

In summary, the structured use of TSA, PSA, and LSA bridges the gap between classroom instruction and industry expectations and guides educators and materials developers in designing more responsive, relevant, and effective English learning experiences for vocational learners.

6. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that English proficiency, particularly in speaking and vocabulary, is critical for visual communication design (VCD) students aiming to enter the creative industry. However, a significant mismatch exists between students' current language abilities and the professional demands they are likely to encounter. By applying the frameworks of target situation analysis (TSA), present situation analysis (PSA), and learning situation analysis (LSA), this research offers a comprehensive understanding of students' English language needs. It provides concrete recommendations for developing more effective English for Specific Purposes (ESP) materials.

Findings from the TSA indicate that speaking is the most essential skill for VCD students, especially for tasks such as presenting ideas, discussing design projects, and negotiating with clients. It underscores the importance of incorporating simulated speaking activities into ESP materials such as mock design presentations, client dialogue practice, and pitching sessions. Meanwhile, the PSA reveals that most students lack confidence in their English-speaking abilities and that classroom materials are generally generic, failing to address the specific linguistic demands of the VCD context. In response, ESP instruction should be contextualized with content relevant to the design field, including vocabulary-building exercises based on authentic texts such as design briefs, portfolios, and workplace communication scenarios.

Furthermore, the LSA highlights students' preference for visually engaging and technology-driven learning formats. Many students favoured learning through design-based educational games, tutorial videos, and visually rich materials. It suggests ESP programs should incorporate multimedia-supported content, digital learning platforms, and interactive tools that enable real-time speaking practice and feedback. In conclusion, the data-driven findings of this study emphasize the urgent need for career-specific, visually enhanced, and digitally accessible ESP materials that align with real-world communication tasks. By aligning instruction with industry expectations and learners' preferred learning modes, educators can more effectively support vocational students in developing the communicative competencies essential for success in the design profession.

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