

Supporting Business English Students in Developing Good Research Habits

Professional Development Workshop, 29th September 2022 Dr. Stephanie Ashford and Nathan Keeves

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Outline

- Why it matters
- Stages of research
- Activities for developing academic research skills



Over to you: Create your own activities



Comparing output and discussion



Some questions

- 1. Do students at your institution do academic research?
- 2. What type(s) of research do they do
 - a. for Business English?
 - b. for other subjects?
- **3**. How are they are prepared for this?
- 4. What is your role in preparing them?



What DHBW students do

Example: BA degree in Industrial Management

- » Mostly secondary research (literature reviews, wider reading)
- » Some primary research, e.g. surveys, but most likely for bachelor's thesis
- » Preparation: 35 contact hours (47 TUs) in academic research skills, scientific theory, and methods of empirical research, all taught in German

*TU (teaching unit) = 45 minutes



Students need to...

- ... learn about research methods early;
- ... start doing research early;
- ... do research little and often;
- ... experience highs and lows of research;
- ... see themselves as researchers;
- ... receive regular feedback at each research stage.



Process of research The conventional cycle 5. Finding a Reporting focus 2. 4. Research Analysis design 3. Data collection



Stage 1 Finding a focus

Formulating research questions; defining the problem

Analysing from different perspectives; considering the target audience

Critiquing the literature; framing issues in relation to theory; identifying gap(s) in research

Learning about the topic and context/background; identifying key issues; deciding what to investigate



Stage 2

Research design

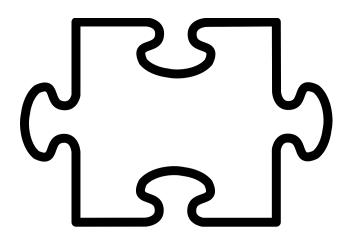
- » Which method(s) will answer the research questions?
- » Qualitative or quantitative? Mixed?
- » Desk or field? Secondary or primary? Both?





Stage 3 Data collection

- Collecting and recording data as specified in research plan
- Using reliable sources





Stage 4

Analysis

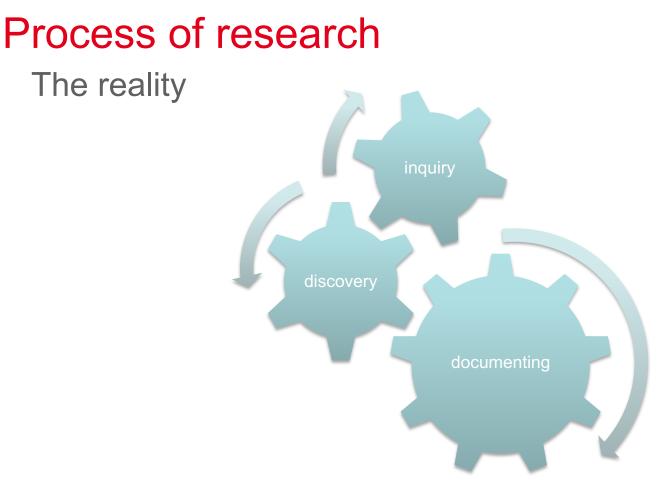
- » Analysing data
- » Interpreting and extrapolating
- » Deciding what is significant
- » Drawing conclusions
- » Making recommendations



Stage 5 Reporting

- » Presenting findings orally and in writing
- » Applying conventions of academic writing
- » Dealing with sources (citing and referencing)
- » Writing for different contexts/audiences
- » Presenting an issue from different perspectives
- » Using appropriate tools to present data
- » Creative methods of reporting, e.g. story-telling, text development, news item, talk show.





Research questions (RQs) likely to evolve



Process of research

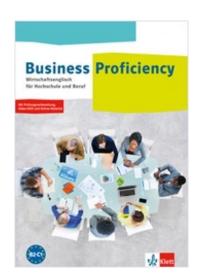
Support





Sample activities

From and beyond the coursebook







Business English curriculum

Topics as springboards for skills development





Industrial revolutions

Finding a focus, data collection, reporting

7 Manufacturing

B Business briefing 1 Revolution or evolution?

a Read the first paragraph and complete the title of the article. Then do the tasks that follow.

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION THE

The digitisation of manufacturing will transform the way goods are made - and change the politics of jobs too

The first industrial revolution began in Britain in the late 18th century, with the mechanisation of the textile industry. Tasks previously done laboriously by hand in hundreds of weavers' cottages were brought together in a single cotton mill, and the factory was born. The second industrial revolution came in the early 20th century, when Henry Ford mastered the moving assembly line and ushered in the age of mass production. The first two industrial revolutions made people richer and more urban. Now a third revolution is under way. Manufacturing is going digital. [...]

A number of remarkable technologies are converging: clever software, novel materials, more dexterous robots, new processes (notably three-dimensional printing) and a whole range of web-based services. The factory of the past was based on cranking out zillions of identical products: Ford famously said that car-buyers could have any colour they liked, as long as it was black. But the cost of producing much smaller batches of a wider variety, with each product tailored precisely to each customer's whims, is falling. The factory of the future will focus on mass customisation

The old way of making things involved taking lots of parts and screwing or welding them together. Now a product can be designed on a computer and "printed" on a 3D printer, which creates a solid object by building up successive layers of material. The digital design can be tweaked with a few mouseclicks. The 3D printer can run unattended, and can make many things which are too complex for a traditional factory to handle. [...]

The applications of 3D printing are especially mindboggling. Already, hearing aids and high-tech parts of military jets are being printed in customised shapes. The geography of supply chains will change. An eer working in the middle of a desert who finds he lacks a certain tool no longer has to have it delivered from the nearest city. He can simply download the design and print it. [...]

laboriously mühselig | weaver Weber | usher in einleiten | converging sich aneinander annähern, zusammenlaufen | dexterous geschickt, gewandt | mind boggling irrsinnig | tweak fein einstellen | disruptive revolutionär, umwälzend | rocked erschüttert, auf dem Kopf gestellt | crockery Geschirr | loom Webstuhl | farrier Hufschmied | shudder schaudern | grimy schmutzig | squeaky clean makellos deserted menschenlos

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5 Other changes are nearly as momentous. New materials are lighter, stronger and more durable than the old ones. Carbon fibre is replacing steel and aluminium in products ranging from aeroplanes to mountain bikes. New techniques let engineers shape objects at a tiny scale. Nanotechnology is giving products enhanced features, such as bandages that help heal cuts, engines that run more efficiently and crockery that cleans more easily. Genetically engineered viruses are being developed to make items such as batteries. With the internet allowing ever more designers to collaborate on new products, the barriers to entry are falling. [...]

6 Like all revolutions, this one will be disruptive. Digital technology has already rocked the media and retailing industries, just as cotton mills crushed hand looms and the Model T put farriers out of work. Many people will look at the factories of the future and shudder. They will not be full of grimy machines manned by men in oily overalls. Many will be squeaky clean - and almost deserted. Some carmakers already produce twice as many vehicles per employee as they did only a decade or so ago. Most jobs will not be on the factory floor but in the offices nearby, which will be full of designers engineers, IT specialists, logistics experts, marketing staff and other professionals. The manufacturing jobs of the future will require more skills. Many dull, repetitive tasks will become obsolete: [...]

The revolution will affect not only how things are made, but where. Factories used to move to low-wage countries to curb labour costs. But labour costs are growing less and less important: a \$499 firstgeneration iPad included only about \$33 of manufacturing labour, of which the final assembly in China accounted for just \$8. Offshore production is increasingly moving back to rich countries not because Chinese wages are rising, but because companies now want to be closer to their customers so that they can respond more quickly to changes in demand. And some products are so sophisticated that it helps to have the people who design them and the people who make them in the same place. [...]

The Economist, 21 April 2012

g Collect adjectives in the text that describe the nouns below.

materials | processes | machines | products | tasks

b The use of square brackets '[...]' in a text denotes that something has been omitted. Identify the paragraphs in which the excerpts below originally appeared

A you no longer need riveters when a product has no rivets.

- B The days when projects ground to a halt for want of a piece of kit, or when customers complained that they could no longer find spare parts for things they had bought, will one day seem quaint.
- C This could change not just business, but much else besides.
- D and may look more like those weavers' cottages than Ford's assembly line.
 E In time, these amazing machines may be able to make almost anything, anywhere - from your garage to an African village.
- F Ford needed heaps of capital to build his colossal River Rouge factory; his
- modern equivalent can start with little besides a laptop and a hunger to invent
- G The Boston Consulting Group reckons that in areas such as transport, computers, fabricated metals and machinery, 10–30 % of the goods that America now imports from China could be made at home by 2020, boosting American output by \$20 billion-55 billion a year.

rivets Niete | for want of mangels | piece of kit (hier) Teil der Ausrüstung | quaint (hier) altmodisc

c Find words in the text that match the German translations below. (Paragraph numbers are in brackets.)

1.	Baumwollspinnerei (1)
2.	Fließband (1)
3.	am laufenden Band produzieren (2)
4.	nach jeden Kundenwunsch
	zugeschnitten (2)

d Make notes under the following headings for each of the industrial revolutions described.

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS I IMPACT ON BUSINESS I IMPACT ON SOCIETY I IOBS

e Compare your notes and discuss the wider implications. Below are some points to consider

5. Chargen (2)

6. haltbar, langlebig (5)

7 Lohnkosten zügeln (7)

8. Ersatzteile (Task b above)

 According to the article, digital technology The article was published in 2012. What, if has "rocked the media and retailing anything, has changed since then? industries". How has this happened, and what ... What might be the next revolution? other industries have been affected?

f Explain what you understand by the following. The paragraph numbers are in brackets.

- 1. the geography of supply chains (4)
- 2. the barriers to entry are falling (5)
- 3. offshore production (7)
- Suggest further examples of adjectives

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Industrial revolutions

The task

Summary: Text development based on analysis of core text and further reading, and using findings to extrapolate future trends

Instruction

- 1. The article was published in 2012. Discuss what has changed since then, and what the next revolution might be,
- 2. Find out what has happened since then, noting your sources. Draw conclusions about what the next revolution will be.
- **3.** Write a final paragraph for the article, based on your research. Remember to reference your sources.



Conducting a survey

Research design, data collection, analysis, reporting

4 Marketing

E Research | Conducting a survey

- a You are going to hear an interview with Julia
 A1.20 Hobday, a market research expert. Before listening, read the following statements and decide which is true or false. Then listen and check your answers.
 - Personal interviews are less effective than online surveys, because people don't like human contact.
 Many people don't like phone interviews
 - Many people don't me phone interviews because the caller is intruding into their private lives.
 - Focus groups are a good way of observing customer behaviour, by watching how shoppers respond.
 - Customers in supermarkets don't like tasting new things because they think they'll have to pay for them.
 A personal interview can be an opportunity to
- A personal interview can be an opportunity to influence the customer to answer in a particular way.
- b Create a mind map to show how information can be gathered through market research.

2 Questionnaires

- a The type of questions asked in a survey depends on what information is needed. Match the following question types with those in the questionnaire on the right.
- Ranking (with a scale, e. g. 1-5.)
 Either / Or (only one box can be ticked).
 Open (people can say anything).
 Multiple choice (only one answer allowed)
- Multiple choice (more than one answer allowed)
- b What type of product might the questionnaire be about?

c Suggest further open questions that a researcher could ask to get more information about consumer preferences.

d Write an email to respondents that could accompany the questionnaire, with the aim of maximising the response rate.

- Surveys pp. XX

 Word bank | Market research

 to do research | to conduct a study | to carry out a survey | to gather nand

 to do research | to do aministra - qualitative / quantitative research | desk research | field research | primary / secondary research | desk research | field research | primary / secondary research | desk research | field research | primary / secondary research | desk research | to down behaviour | dot call | response to the primary | to desk research | primary / secondary time to evaluate the findings | to identify a trend | to avoid bias | to draw conduction | to maker recommendations

Please tick the boxes that apply, adding information as requested.

a. Which of the following age ranges are you in? below 18 18-25 40-50 over 50 25-40 What is your occupation? office worker shop worker factory worker student other Where does your annual income fit on the following scale? below €30 k 📕 €30-40 k €40-50k over €50k d. What is your family status? (You may tick more than one item.) single couple one child more than one child e. How often do you go food shopping? once/twice a month about once a week several times a week Have you ever been to an Asian country? Yes No g. If so, which one(s)? . Do you like Asian food? Yes No Do you know the names of any Asian desserts? If so, give examples . What flavours of dessert are popular at the moment? Would you ever try a savoury ice-cream? Yes No Maybe m. How do you rate the following aspects in a dessert? (1 = very important, 2 = quite important, 3 = less important) creamy _____ sweet exotic colourful spicy

 brow important are the following aspects when you buy a dessert? ingredients brand packaging

k = 1,000 | **savoury** pikant, salzig | **spicy** scharf, würzig

price _____ flavour _

(ip | Tick (') or cross (*)? Questionnaires in English ask people to 'tick' boxes because a ndicates a positive response (correct) and a cross indicates a

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3 A vox pop survey

a Read the following brief from a client in Scotland who wants to launch a product on the German market.

Market research brief: MacDougall's Little Chieftain

The traditional haggis producers MacDougal's of Troon have been successful in repositioning their product on the UK market as an upmarket specially food, eaten at celebration such as Burns Night and weddings. Now they are keen to break into the German-speaking regions of Europe, where sausages and other meast products are said to be very popular. The proposed strategy is to appeal to the mass market with a new type of haggis sold under the brand name The Little Chieftain'. This is a revolutionary concept: a highly nutritious, bife-sized snack food that may be eaten cold or microwaved and enjoyed in the Scotish way with 'mashed tatties and neeps'. This concept has not been tested in other markets, so it carries some risk. Research should aim to assess potential demand in Germany, Switzerland and Austria with a view to recommending a suitable marketing mix. Please carry out background research as well as a vox pop survey. An English version of your questionnaire should be submitted with the findings. Where possible, conduct the interviews in English.

6. Should you try the questionnaire out on a test person

7. Will you film or record the interviews? If so, for what

8. If you are carrying out the survey in a team, how will

before taking it out to the public?

auestions.

purpose? And will you need permission?

you allocate tasks? Who should do what?

nutritious nahrhaft, gesund | bite-sized mundgerecht | mashed tatties and neeps Kartoffelpüree und Steckrüben

b Research the history of haggis, the ingredients, why 'Little Chieftain' was chosen as the brand name, and any interesting myths surrounding the product.

 Before administering the vox pop survey (in teams or on your own), consider the following points:

- What type of people do you want to interview?
 Where will you conduct the interviews?
- How big should your sample be? How many responses are needed for reliable data?
- 4. How long should your questionnaire be?
- 5. What kind of questions do you need to ask to get the right information?
- d Below are some tips for interviewers. Explain the words marked in bold.
- When conducting a survey it is important that you remain impartial.
 Don't be overbearing when approaching a member of the public.
- Don't ask questions that might result in ambiguous answers.
 Resist the temptation to anticipate the answer.
 Interviewees will be put off by long or confusing
- answers.
 Make sure you don't reveal any personal bias during the interview.
- e Before conducting the interviews, discuss how to optimise your response rate. Can you suggest a gimmick or event that might encourage people to give their time?
- f Afterwards, analyse your findings and decide how to present them. Consider the following points:
- What kind of information is best presented visually?
- How will you present the visual information?
 Do the findings correspond to what you expected?
- What responses do you find particularly surprising?
- Where are majority opinions clearly shown?
 Were any questions not satisfactorily answered?

2 Reports, pp: XX -2 Trends and statistics, pp: XX

- How do you interpret the more subjective responses
 What findings are difficult to evaluate?
 Where is further research needed?
- g Write a report for MacDougall's in which you describe your research and present your findings.



Conducting a survey

Skills and expectations

Research skills: Designing an investigation in teams; choosing appropriate methods, collecting and analysing data; interpreting findings; drawing conclusions; making recommendations; presenting findings

Performance criteria: Awareness of market research methods (strengths, weaknesses); producing a questionnaire that is user-friendly, free of bias, fit-for-purpose, and linguistically accurate; presentation or report that communicates results clearly and with effective use of media/visuals; conclusions and recommendations supported by evidence



Conducting a survey

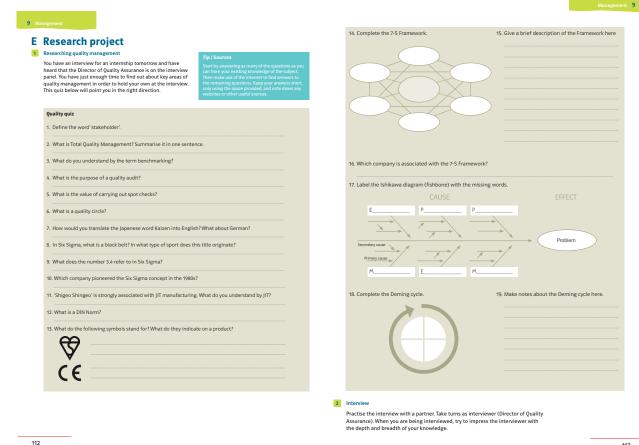
Extension activity

You have been asked to investigate the market for dog grooming supplies. Hold a meeting to discuss the following:

- what data you need, and why;
- how you will collect the data;
- possible challenges;
- how to respond to the challenges.



Quality management web search Data collection and reporting



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Quality management web search

Skills and expectations

Research skills

Data collection (looking for specific information); using reliable sources; reporting on findings in an interview

Performance criteria

Demonstrating understanding of key concepts in quality management by answering questions correctly, succinctly (OR: in detail), and in good English



Quality management web search Extension activity

A. In groups, discuss the following questions.

- 1. What sources did you use?
- 2. Why did you choose them?
- 3. Would you recommend them? Why/why not?
- 4. How can you avoid unreliable sources?
- **B.** Nominate a spokesperson to report back to the full group.



Supply chain scandals

Task instruction

Find an example of supply chain fraud and investigate the causes and consequences. Deal with the points below:

- What is supply chain fraud?
- How did the scandal come to light?
- Who was involved? How does this relate to the supply chain?
- What happened as a result?
- How could the scandal have been prevented?

Your presentation should be interactive (involving the audience), and illustrated with a diagram of the supply network and chain of events.



Supply chain scandals

Data collection, analysis, reporting

Task summary

Researching the topic of supply chain scandals, finding an example, investigating the causes and consequences, drawing conclusions and recommendations, and holding an interactive and clearly illustrated presentation of the findings

Performance criteria

A clear presentation that shows detailed understanding of a complex topic, and makes effective use of graphics and strategies for engaging the audience



Financial reporting

Analysis

Task summary: Presenting the financial situation of an airline, focusing on key information drawn from analysis of the financial statements

Task instruction: Work in groups. Research the current financial situation of a well-known airline. Note down <u>three significant or</u> <u>interesting findings</u>, and be prepared to report back to the group.

Research skills? - Performance criteria? – Extension activity?



Research rocket

Data collection and reporting

Task instruction:

The Internet of Things – Brexit – English as a global language – university tuition fees – work-life balance – non-fungible tokens

- Choose one of the topics above. Find out as much as you can in ten minutes, using only your classmates as a resource. Make notes.
- 2. Write the <u>introductory paragraph</u> of an academic paper, based on your notes.



Research rocket

Resources

PHRASES: Stating aims/purpose

- The aim of this paper is to ...
- The purpose of this investigation is to ...
- The aim of this essay is to explore the relationship between ...
- This paper reports on the results obtained from...
- This paper argues that
- In this essay, I defend the view that ...
- This paper attempts to show that ...
- The main issues addressed in this report are: a), b) and c).
- In the light of recent developments in..., this paper draws attention to...
- This paper offers a critical analysis of...

PHRASES: Explaining structure

- This paper is divided into four parts. The first part deals with... The second part focuses on...
- This report is structured as follows.
- The essay has been organised in the following way.
- The first section of this thesis reviews the literature on...
- This paper begins by ... It then goes on to ...
- The paper concludes with a summary of the main issues followed by suggestions of pathways for further research
- Finally, this report offers recommendations for ...



Alternative methods of reporting

- Talk show or news item (presenting issue from different perspectives)
- **Narrative**, e.g. a story from one of the people involved
- Explanatory video, e.g. a new management approach
- Writing for the reader, e.g. legal reform explained in plain English for the layperson
- Researching and creating a video documentary
- **Case study** as exemplar of theory or concepts



Research rocket

Research task plan

Research rocket: Research task (Stage 5)

Subject	Business English				
Lesson topic	Research skills				
Relevance to	Business topic(s):		Language skills:		
curriculum	• Any		 □ Reading ☑ Writing ☑ Speaking ☑ Listening □ Translating 		
Research task	Researching a topic using classmates as a resource to write an introductory paragraph		Time (minutes): 60		
Research skills	Interviewing and note-taking; writing an introductory paragraph of a research paper, applying conventions of academic writing				
Research stage(s)	Finding a focus Research design Data collection Analysis Reporting				
Activity	Process:	Task instructio	n:		
	Students choose from a list of topics and then find out as much as they can about in ten minutes by interviewing their classmates. They then write the introductory paragraph or outline of an academic paper on the topic, based on their notes and with reference to some 'useful phrases'.	academic paper, based on your notes.			
Resources	 Phrases for stating the aims/purpose, e.g., "The aim of this paper is to []", "The purpose of this investigation is to", "In the light of recent developments in [], this paper draws attention to []", "This paper reports on the results of []" Phrases for explaining the structure, e.g., "This paper is divided into four parts. The first part deals with [], while the second part focuses on []", "In is report is structured as follows. It begins by [], and then goes on to []" 				
Whole class or in groups of?	Individually for the writing task Pairs when interviewing Groups (each group deals with a different example) Whole class for discussion and evaluation				
Performance criteria	Clear and concise introductory paragraphs written in an appropriate academic style				
Possible extension	 Instead of asking students to choose from a list, the session could begin by eliciting topics that are currently in the news, ideally where there is some controversy or a need for research. 				



Take a break

15 minutes



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Business English curriculum

Topics as springboards





Design your own task Empty template

Research ta	sk:		
Subject			
Lesson topic			
Relevance to curriculum	Business topic(s):		Language skills: Reading Writing Speaking Listening Translating
Task summary			Time (minutes):
Research skills			
Research stage(s)	 Finding a focus Research design Data collection Analysis Reporting 		
Research activity	Process:	Task inst	ruction:
Resources			
Whole class or in groups of?	Individually Pairs Groups Whole class		
Performance criteria			
Possible extension			
Author Date			



Design your own task Template with tips

Research task: Title of activity (+ Stage it focuses on)

Subject	Course title, e.g., Business English, English for Auditing			
Lesson topic	The theme of the lesson of which the research task is a part			
Relevance to curriculum	Business topic(s): The curriculum topic(s) providing the context of the research task, e.g., • Corporate Strategy • Human Resources •	Language skills: Reading Writing Speaking Listening Translating		
Task summary	Summary of the activity	Time (minutes):		
Research skills	Which specific research skill(s) does the task develop? What should students have accomplished by the end of the task?			
Research stage(s)	 Finding a focus Research design Data collection Analysis Reporting 			
Activity	Process	Task instruction:		
	Outline of the activity (what it involves)	Instructions to the student		
Resources	What students need in order to do the research, e.g., text(s), materials internet access, web links, library,			
Whole class or in groups of?	Individually Pairs Groups Whole class			
Performance criteria	What to look for when assessing how well the student has accomplished the task			
Possible	Further tasks for preparation, consolidation or extension. If relevant, note further skills/stages in the research cycle that the task deals with.			



Take a break

15 minutes



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Discussion

Points to discuss

- The research tasks you produced (differences/similarities)
- How BE in higher education differs from BE in companies
- Obstacles/challenges/constraints in supporting students in developing academic research skills
- How can the institute support you?
- Next steps?



Conclusion

Start early





Last but not least...





References and further reading

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Image sources

- Slides 6, 7, 12, 15, 28, 30, 32: Stephanie Ashford
- Slide 8: Graphic of research tools. Image by <u>Chen from Pixabay</u>
- Slide 9: Graphic of jigsaw puzzle piece. From Pixabay. No attribution required
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- Slides 16, 18, 21: Pages from Business Proficiency, Ashford, S. and Smith, T. (2017) published by Klett Verlag
- Slides 33, 34: Research task templates, Stephanie Ashford and Nathan Keeves
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