
Saturday 29\textsuperscript{th} June 2013: University of Essex, Colchester

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**Parallel session strands**

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Desmond Thomas (University of Essex) & Mehmet Izbudak (SOAS)

The Contexts of Research Writing Support

This introductory plenary session will consider how PhD study has changed in the last 20-30 years and how this has also affected Masters level research. The requirement to complete a PhD within 4 years maximum has put extra pressure on relatively inexperienced researchers, particularly during the ‘writing-up phase’ of PhD study where students effectively become full-time writers. Different kinds of support, some technical and some psychological, are required to ensure that writers reflect the quality of their research in their PhD theses. And different providers are there to lend support ranging from supervisors to research or transferable skills trainers to EAP teachers. The theme of this PIM is to consider how the different providers might work together to ensure that research students achieve success in their writing, starting at Masters level and continuing until they are fully equipped with the knowledge and skills that they need for PhD study and beyond.

Desmond is the Director of the MA TESOL course at the University of Essex. He teaches research methods modules at Masters level within his department and also runs a year-long research writing course for PhD students across all departments.

Mehmet is responsible for academic teaching development and support at SOAS. He runs and teaches the Higher Education Academy (HEA) accredited SOAS Professional Development in Higher Education Programme (PDHEP).

Weronika Gorska & Saima Sherazi, Queen Mary, University of London

Redefining Research Writing Support: what are the missing links?

This paper reports on a project investigating how institutional research support assists doctoral students in responding to complex requirements of research writing. The project is informed by the theoretical perspectives of New Literacy Studies and takes an Academic Literacies approach to the understanding of academic writing conventions. On the empirical level, the paper draws on ethnographic methods of data collection and presents a discussion based on open-ended questionnaires and interviews with doctoral students participating in a 10 week research writing course (RWC) offered by a support unit. Student data is supplemented with the end of term focus group discussion with writing tutors teaching on the RWC. Initial findings suggest that students’ needs are best catered for when research support 1) combines both disciplinary focus and study skills provision, 2) builds writing skills on reading, and 3) is offered in critical stages of doctoral degree, e.g. before upgrade, writing-up and submission.

Weronika is a Teaching Fellow at QMUL specialising in research writing, editing/proofreading and legal writing. Her research interests focus on multilingual literacies, linguistic ethnography and internationalisation of higher education.

Saima teaches research writing to PhD/MA students at QMUL and overseas all discipline specific ELSS modules that QM offers. Blending and evaluation of learning technologies and the teaching of writing in the disciplines are her research interests.
SOAS, University of London

Adapting one-to-one Insessional tutorials to research student needs

SOAS runs a variety of Insessional courses designed primarily to meet the needs of Masters degree students who make up the largest proportion of the international student body at SOAS. Also the needs of undergraduate students are met with a variety of courses including Academic Essay Writing, Seminar Speaking Skills or Reading and Notetaking, for example, and some one-to-one tutorials. However up to now there has been to my knowledge no special provision for research students from Insessionals. In the spring term a number of international Phd candidates, in varying degrees of distress, approached me for help with their Phd writing, mainly either for upgrading from MPhil to Phd or to help finish the writing up stage. In response to this I organised some one-to-one tutorials specifically for research candidates with some of our more experienced EAP teachers. This presentation examines how the tutors and students responded to the provision and possible implications for future provision.

Neil is currently running the Insessional support programmes at SOAS, University of London in an acting capacity. He has worked in EAP for many years, chiefly in Japan and UK and in SOAS since 2004. His research interests include teaching writing and the place of grammar teaching in EAP and how to design materials for Insessional classes.

Nick Barratt, University of Southampton

What a difference a day makes. Looking beyond traditional models of English Language and Study Skills support.

The ‘School of Management Dissertation Conference’ was prompted by feedback from colleagues at the Centre for Language Study (CLS) who deliver in-sessional EAP support, from Academics in the School, as well as from Management students themselves. Perhaps a rather grandiose title, but our intention was to attract as many students as possible and a similar title worked in 2012. Crucially, the Conference was open to all SOM Masters level students, mostly MSc, including NNS and NS of English. In 2012 we organised a similar conference over 3 days with some interesting results. The 2013 conference was timed to take place on the first day of the Easter vacation and demonstrated that this is not necessarily an impediment to attendance.

The paper discusses our rationale in organising the Conference, the content delivered on the day and reveals some of the feedback from those who attended.

Nick has worked at the University of Southampton since 2007 teaching English for Academic Purposes to International Students from Foundation to Post-Graduate level. He previously worked for the British Council.
Generic or Bespoke Training? An investigation into the writing skills needs of Doctoral Researchers at the University of Surrey

The current trend towards internationalisation in UK universities brings with it a number of challenges for EAP professionals. One such challenge is to ensure that the writing needs of both NNS and NS doctoral researchers are satisfied as fully as possible.

The University of Surrey recently funded a project to investigate its current writing training provision and to identify gaps in that provision. Preliminary findings indicate a need for more discipline-specific training in the various faculties. Two of the questions arising from the project are: 1) What are the specific needs of researchers at PhD level? 2) Do the needs vary sufficiently across disciplines to warrant bespoke training using discipline-specific materials?

This presentation outlines some of the key findings of the investigation at Surrey and describes some of the initiatives currently being developed in response to the two questions above.

Alison is Research Fellow in School of English and Languages at the University of Surrey. She has recently completed a study into doctoral writing training provision and needs at Surrey.

Who reads a PhD thesis? – Raising students’ awareness of their readers and their needs through a reader response protocol.

This presentation suggests how, by using feedback strategies developed from the reader response protocol (Alexander, 1999), teachers can help students to see the purpose of many of the conventions of thesis writing, for example, in the literature review and methodology section.

The reader response protocol involves the EAP practitioner taking on the role of the reader rather than language and writing specialist. This reader response is captured in a systematic way, using a bank of questions and comments related to the needs and perceptions of possible readers. This narrow, systematic approach helps raise students’ awareness of key issues which hinder the effectiveness of their own writing. Using real examples of such feedback, the presentation will illustrate how this approach can be used without the teacher having specialist knowledge of the subject field or providing students with a level of help that might be considered inappropriate, in academic terms.

Jenifer is co-author of EAP Essentials (2008). Formerly EAP tutor at Heriot-Watt University. Currently working 1:1 with PhD and Masters students from a range of Universities and disciplines.
Experiencing supervision: two case studies of master's dissertation writers

We report the experiences of two students and their supervisors in different disciplines as the students tackled their master's dissertations at a UK university. We charted the students’ progress with their dissertations from the initial proposal to the finished product. Using a multiple case study approach (e.g. Duff 2008; Merriam 1998), we interviewed students and their supervisors about the supervision, analyzed students’ drafts and final dissertation chapters, their supervisors' comments and feedback on this writing, as well as supporting materials provided by the students’ departments (e.g. handbooks, dissertation writing guidelines).

We focus on student-supervisor pairs in accounting and economics. While we do not wish to suggest there is a direct causal relationship between supervision and students' academic success, we argue that the varying supervision practices we encountered, together with supervisors' contrasting attitudes towards their role and students' differing expectations of their supervisors, have potentially profound implications for all concerned.

Nigel is a senior lecturer at the University of Essex. His main research interests are in the areas of academic writing, English for Academic Purposes, and textbooks/teaching materials.

Bojana is a lecturer in the Department of Language and Linguistics at the University of Essex. She has published papers in the area of academic writing, on topics such as citation use, plagiarism, contrastive rhetoric and writer identity.

Just in Time Proposal Writing: Integrating reflective autonomous extended scientific reading and writing practices into an electrical engineering curriculum for Masters and PhD dissertation and theses by means of proposal writing.

This paper presents an example of the introduction of content and language integrated learning (CIL) in an electrical engineering postgraduate research degree. The previous practice of proposal writing is described and the new method is outlined. The paper defines the purpose of academic research proposal writing and delineates its development in academic discourse. The paper deals with inserting a new reflective practice as the building bloc to developing autonomy and critical thinking for extended reading and writing into a curriculum. It analyses research topic formulation in electrical engineering and the research question. The paper shows how proposals form the 'scaffolding' for embarking on research writing. The postgraduate researchers, featured, are both students of pre-sessional courses and students who had previous research and writing experience.

David is Course Director of the Summer Pre-sessional Programme at Bangor University.
Mehmet Izbudak, SOAS, University of London

The MPhil Core Chapter Writing Skills course at SOAS

The presentation will introduce the MPhil Core Chapter Writing Skills course at SOAS, which was developed as a result of collaboration between the EAP and the Learning and Teaching units at the School in response to research student requests.

All subject areas at SOAS require MPhil (1st year PhD) students to produce a significant sample of written work in the first 12 months of doctoral study, as part of the upgrading process. This usually entails 1 or 2 ‘core’ chapters. The course helps research students to engage effectively with the range of methods of writing and drafting involved in the various stages of this process.

The course has evolved and developed over seven years. Its design, content and structure have always been led by research student needs.

Mehmet is responsible for academic teaching development and support at SOAS. He runs and teaches the Higher Education Academy (HEA) accredited SOAS Professional Development in Higher Education Programme (PDHEP).

Andy Gillett, Freelance & Siegrid Beck, University of Hertfordshire

Ploughing the ground: Preparing students for empirical research. Issues and solutions.

The Hertfordshire business school pre-masters course is a fifteen week course leading up to starting a masters degree in semester A or semester B. Students include foreign language, second language and first language speakers of English, coming from a range of first degree subjects.

One of the compulsory modules on the programme is introduction to research methods. This is a six-week course of ten hours per week, taught jointly by a business research methods lecturer and an EAP lecturer. Many professional bodies – e.g. CIPD – require students to do a dissertation that involves the collection of primary data. In this talk we will look at some of the difficulties that the students face with this kind of dissertation - defining a research question, focusing a literature review, justifying methodology and critically reflecting on the process - and how we have addressed them in this module.

Andy is involved in a range of projects connected with electronic and paper-based EAP materials writing as well as course planning and teaching for a number of clients.

Siegrid is Senior lecturer in the department of marketing and enterprise at the university of Hertfordshire business school. She is programme tutor of the Graduate Certificate in Business.
Cross-cultural academic research supervision: How can EAP practitioners support colleagues in the disciplines?

This workshop will consider issues that might affect ‘international’ students embarking on Masters and PhD research in the UK, or on UK-based distance programmes. In particular, it will consider the student-supervisor relationship across cultures and how this might affect both staff and student expectations. It aims to explore ways in which EAP teaching staff might help research supervisors develop strategies for supporting students who are new to UK or Western approaches to postgraduate research, and/or whose first language is not English.

The workshop will start with a brief presentation on some of the challenges of cross-cultural supervision and outline support available for staff at Oxford Brookes University. It will then invite participants to share their experiences and perspectives, capturing examples of good practice, which will be recorded, with permission, by the facilitator and subsequently shared on the BALEAP PIM site.

Louise is an Educational Development Consultant at the Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Developing, Oxford Brookes University

Writing for Masters research – working with Schools to prepare international students: a practitioner’s view.

This paper gives an insight into recent collaboration between academics, professional and academic skills tutors from the Business School and the Language Centre in trying to prepare students for writing the dissertation on the International Business Masters degree. It discusses my research into the Research Methods module requirements and the students’ needs in meeting these from various perspectives and presents my findings. It then critically evaluates the materials produced and the success of the session delivered as a result of the research.

Joanne works for the Language Centre at the University of Leeds
**3D 13.45-14.25  Room 4.336  Workshop**

**Dan Jones**, University of Leicester

*What do they actually do? Building a writing syllabus for research students*

A workshop for EAP tutors, Research Skills trainers and subject specialists to develop a syllabus for in-sessional research students by using the data from a survey of research students at the University of Leicester.

The workshop will begin with a brief presentation of the findings of the survey. Research students from a variety of fields were asked what writing tasks they had been working on since starting their degree. The survey was conducted in order to identify priority task types for inclusion in a syllabus. In the second part, participants will use the findings to identify 8 topic headings for an in-sessional course aimed at PGR students from a variety of disciplines.

*Dan works for the English Language Teaching Unit at the University of Leicester. He coordinates an in-sessional course for research students and staff from a variety of academic fields.*

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**3E 13.45-14.25  Room 4.130  Presentation**

**Joy Robbins**, University of Essex

*On the path to the MSc dissertation: supporting research writing skills in the strange terrain of Computer Science*

Masters students in Computer Science and Electronic Engineering often do not have to produce anywhere near the amount of writing required in other disciplines, particularly those in Arts & Humanities or Social Sciences. Yet, as is the case with almost all Masters courses, Computer Science and Electronic Engineering students must write a dissertation to complete their degree. As a result, these students end up facing a huge academic writing task for which they may be ill-prepared.

The difficulties in providing ESAP for this situation are twofold: how to develop students’ research writing ability to the point that they can engage with dissertation writing, and how to deliver effective research writing support in a field whose academic conventions are a rather strange terrain, quite different from those of perhaps more familiar or more commonly supported fields. This session will present possible approaches to these issues derived from the teaching and ongoing development of a dedicated ESAP module.

*Joy teaches EAP, EFL and Academic Literacy at the University of Essex. Her research interests include ESAP writing pedagogy and genre-based materials design.*
**Katherine Taylor**, University of Leeds

**Exploring International Students’ Expectations of Doctoral Study in the UK**

I present and invite discussion about a small project exploring how international students reconcile their own and university expectations of doctoral study.

Students in our Language Centre are ostensibly engaged in improving language - particularly writing - and study skills. However, for students en route to their departments, the Centre is also a transitional location where different and often challenging ways of (academic) being and doing first become apparent. Whilst we have developed expertise in this area, and e.g. created links with departments, it can be argued that (i) we can only ‘tell’ students, generally, about ways of being and doing which are ultimately very specific to individual disciplines, and which can only be appreciated by participating in them directly; and (ii) that they in fact are inadvertently ‘socialised’ into the Centre’s community of practice which hinders rather than helps them when they move on. What works and what could we do better?

*Katherine* teaches both international students within the Language Centre and home students in the university-wide development unit. She supports primarily postgraduate students from a wide range of disciplines and is particularly interested in issues around transition. She is currently pursuing a PhD in practice-based learning and knowledge development.

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**Tatyana Karpenko-Seccombe**, Huddersfield University

**Supporting international PhD writers – are pastoral duties part of the package?**

International PhD students constitute a particular group of learners for several reasons – academic, language, social, and psychological. Academically, PhD students often have significant experience of research work in their own country. Experience gained in a different academic culture may sometimes be counterproductive: students may have different preconceptions about academic writing from academic conventions in British universities. Also, when academic writing skills of an accomplished academic are challenged, it can lead to psychological difficulties involving loss of face. This, in its turn, can lead to loss of confidence which might undermine the student’s ability to carry on working productively.

Socially, PhD students also constitute a distinct group characterised by very limited student-peer or student-lecturer interaction, which is sometimes counter to the cultural expectations of students. Living away from their families, PhD researchers miss their loved ones and worry about them particularly if they are coming from the countries with on-going unrest. The paper discusses the particular needs of PhD students and the related pastoral role of the EAP tutor.

*Tatyana* completed her doctorate at Lancaster University in cognitive text analysis and has published several articles on cross-cultural communication and cross-cultural issues in translation. She is now a lecturer in EAP at the University of Huddersfield, teaching English for Academic Purposes to PhD students. At present her main area of interest is teaching academic skills, including critical writing, to research students.
Claire Quinn, Bangor University

A PG Research Skills / EAP Discipline Specific Writing Project at Bangor University - its origins and development.

The research skills/academic writing module was set up in 2003 to provide our pre-sessional postgraduate students with the opportunity to go through both the basic research process and the writing involved. This involved the forming of a research question, going through the subsequent relevant research steps involved in investigating the question, and writing the process up in the form of a mini-research paper. The module has evolved from being a generic small-scale research project to being more discipline specific. It originally involved only EAP teaching staff dealing with both the writing and academic research issues; however, it now relies on cooperation from Bangor University academic staff in the form of research skills input. Close collaboration occurs between the academic and EAP tutors in dealing with the related research and writing needs of the students; the demands of discipline specific postgraduate writing, though not wholly met, are thus better catered for.

Claire is senior EAP tutor at the English Language Centre for Overseas Students at Bangor University, Bangor. She was previously premaster course co-ordinator and Pre-sessional co-ordinator at the same university.

Dustin Hosseini & Andrew Struan, University of Glasgow

Bridging the gap through collaboration: a discussion of the commonalities of EFL and Student Learning Service provision

This paper aims to look at the approaches taken from both EFL and Student Learning Service points of view, with the hope of discussing possibilities for future collaboration and development of joined-up approaches to teaching research training skills. Focusing on the experiences of teaching pre-sessional and matriculated Masters (PGR and PGT) students English for Academic Purposes through the EFL Unit, and teaching PGT students in social sciences (primarily international, but with some home students) through SLS, the paper will explore commonalities of provision and the unique challenges each approach presents for international students.

In particular, the paper seeks to analyse the ways in which engagement with skills in areas such as research question development; resource analysis and interpretation; development, and defence, of a sustained argument through advanced writing techniques can be promoted by linked approaches from the EAP and student learning perspectives

Dustin teaches on a range of EAP courses at the University of Glasgow. Interests include academic writing, e-learning and the social construction of attitudes on native-speakerism.

Andrew works in the Student Learning Services at the universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen. With interests in widening participation and academic literacy, he is involved in developing home and international students’ writing skills.
Support for public health dissertation students at Masters level: integrating writing skills support into the research process

Clear communication of ideas is one of the main criteria on which Masters in Public Health (MPH) dissertations are assessed at the University of Sheffield. Providing support in meeting this criterion to a mixed cohort of students, including medical professionals, recent undergraduates from a variety of different disciplines and international students (50% of the cohort) represents a significant challenge.

We use this session to outline the ways in which new teaching sessions were devised to support students across every stage of the dissertation process, from the generation of research questions to the interpretation and presentation of findings, for various types of dissertations including quantitative or qualitative studies and systematic or narrative reviews.

We reflect on the ways in which language skills were embedded within a taught module for dissertations and co-ordinated with additional departmental language support from the University’s English Language Teaching Centre.

Katie is a University Teacher in Public Health at the School of Health and Related Research (ScHARR).

Deborah is a tutor at the English Language Teaching Centre and has been departmental language support tutor in ScHARR since 2010.

How can institutions provide effective support for student research writers?

Peter Luther, Dean of the Faculty of Law and Management
Pavel Reich, School of Philosophy and Art History
Edward Tsang, School of Computer Science and Engineering
Ann-Christine Frandsen, Essex Business School
Maxwell Stevenson, Learning and Development
Wendy Archer, International Academy and University Skills Centre

To answer this question, panellists will share their experiences as PhD students, supervisors, curriculum developers or EAP lecturers. The speakers are all from different departments of the University of Essex.

The panel discussion with its focus on sharing good practice aims to provide a useful and practical ending to the day. A time limit will be specified for each speaker so that members of the audience can also make their contribution.