

Frame 1: The EAP Teacher Knowledge Base: Current Affordances and Future Challenges

During the last three decades, there has been rapid growth in the numbers of *English for Academic Purposes* (or EAP) courses in many countries around the world. These are courses that prepare students for future English-medium academic study, or support students already in English-medium university courses. The theme of this conference – *Teaching and Researching EAP in the Diverse Contexts of a Changing Era: Opportunities and Challenges* – acknowledges this worldwide growth of EAP, but it also acknowledges the two closely-related dimensions of EAP, those of *teaching* and *research*. Teaching and research in EAP are really two sides of the same coin – two closely-related aspects of the field, since teaching EAP is a research-informed, research-led educational activity. However, one of the challenges facing EAP teachers is how to relate the ever-increasing body of published EAP research to their own teaching; how do we connect all of this new knowledge to our own professional practice in the classroom. This is this challenge that I will discuss today.

As you can see, the title of my presentation is *The EAP Teacher Knowledge Base: Current Affordances and Future Challenges*. The term ‘knowledge base’ comes from computer science. However, here I am using the term to mean the whole, accumulated body of knowledge that relates to the planning and delivery of EAP courses.

My presentation has two aims:

- firstly, to relate the knowledge base to the overall educational goals of EAP; and,
- secondly, to provide a framework or heuristic for EAP teachers to process and incorporate this knowledge base (and especially new research) into their own professional practice.

My presentation has four parts:

Frame 2: Overview

- **In the first part I will provide some context for my talk, by defining EAP, considering its overall educational goal and revisiting some key principles for an EAP curriculum.**
- **In the second part, I will review the contributions of five streams of theory and research that EAP draws upon**
- **In the third part, I will suggest an approach to evaluating new research that aims to inform EAP.**
- **In the final part, I will discuss what I see some future challenges facing the field of EAP.**

[Click!]

So, in the first part, I would like to provide some context or background to my presentation *by considering*:

Frame 3 – Part 1: Background

- **how we define EAP,**
- **the overall educational goal of EAP; and,**
- **principles for shaping an EAP curriculum**

Firstly, I would like to consider how we define EAP. Probably the most famous definition is that of Flowerdew and Peacock (2001); this definition states that EAP is:

Frame 4: A Common Definition of EAP

“the teaching of English with the specific aim of helping learners to study, conduct research or teach in that language” (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001, p. 8)

In this definition, EAP is described in terms of what students aim to do in the future after completing their EAP course, such as study, carrying out research or teaching. However, more recently, I tried to write a definition of EAP that also includes what is actually taught and learned in EAP courses. I felt that a suitable definition should also

refer to the *pedagogic and learning focus* of EAP as well to the post-course outcome activities of its students.

In my view, the pedagogic focus of EAP is on:

Frame 5: The Pedagogic Focus of EAP

- **both academic language and the discursive influences that shape academic language**
- **these discursive influences include:**
 - **general academic and subject-related knowledge and practices**
 - **disciplinary epistemology** - what constitutes knowledge in a specific subject area and how it is proven or validated through the research methods of that particular subject
 - **academic genres as conventionalized forms used for communication (spoken and written)**

Therefore, EAP is concerned with the teaching and learning of language as it is embedded in the practices, discourses and texts of the academic world, a world that EAP students are trying to enter, or which they are already trying to navigate their way through. With this in mind, I tried to come up with a definition of EAP in terms of a goal that focuses on both discourse process as well as language, I proposed that:

Frame 6: Defining EAP

The overall goal of EAP courses . . . is to enable students to develop a complex integration of knowledge and skills in order to communicate and participate effectively in higher education. . . . This knowledge integration is sometimes referred to as *discourse competence*.

(Ding & Bruce, 2017, p. 5)

As I see it, the overall goal of EAP courses is to develop discourse competence in academic English. Discourse competence includes the types of knowledge and skill needed to perform such high-level tasks as writing an extended essay, a thesis, dissertation or writing for publication.

Developing discourse competence in academic English is a challenge both for native speakers and non-native speakers. The nature of this challenge should not be underestimated when even a senior academic like Ken Hyland (2016) states:

Frame 7: The Challenge

“I am a relatively successful academic but do not feel I am privileged in publishing papers by speaking English as a first language, and certainly not when, as routinely happens, I spend eight hours on a Sunday writing two paragraphs”

(Hyland, 2016, p. 10).

This suggests that discourse competence in academic English goes well beyond the requirements of a normal communicative competence in the language. So what is discourse competence and what are the types of knowledge and skill that it includes?

In order to operationalize or unpack discourse competence in a comprehensive way, I use Vijay Bhatia's (2004) concept of *discursive competence*, [CLICK!] which he divides into the three areas of *social competence*, *generic competence* and *textual competence*.

Frame 8: Discursive Competence

Social Competence

an ability to use language more widely to participate effectively in a variety of social and institutional contexts to give expression to one's social identity, in the context of constraining social structures and social processes

Generic Competence

the ability to identify, construct, interpret and successfully exploit a specific repertoire of professional, disciplinary or workplace genres to participate in the daily activities and to achieve the goals of a specific . . .community . .

Textual Competence

Textual competence represents not only an ability to master the linguistic code, but also an ability to use textual, contextual and pragmatic knowledge to construct and interpret . . . texts

(Bhatia, 2004, pp. 144-145).

I am going to talk much more about these three components of discursive competence in the second part of this presentation.

However, before I do that, I would like to consider [CLICK!] . . .

Frame 9: What are the characteristics of an EAP course that develops discursive competence?

In my book *Theory and Concepts of English for Academic Purposes*, I proposed some quite general principles for designing EAP courses.

Because discourse or discursive competence integrates a number of areas of knowledge, I proposed that the curriculum aims and

objectives of EAP courses should be governed by a principle of

holism. [CLICK!] To support this principle, I proposed (p. 59) that an

EAP syllabus should have:

- **a holistic rather than an atomistic approach to framing objectives**, *such as would be found in a genre-based syllabus*
- **it should be an analytic syllabus organised around larger units of language that are deconstructed and reconstructed in systematic ways** *for example, a syllabus unit on explanation writing will begin with a whole text and a focus on its meaning and organization before dealing with the types of syntax and grammar that it uses*
- **a focus on procedural as well as declarative knowledge** *for example, procedural knowledge includes how the text is organised, declarative knowledge includes its linguistic components*
- **a focus on both top-down and bottom-up processing** *Top-down is beginning with the whole text, its comprehension, and organisation. Bottom-up is extracting and practising its grammar and syntax. Both processes are necessary to prepare students to create new examples of the same type of writing.*

I have mentioned these four course design principles now, but I intend to discuss them in more detail in Part 3 of this presentation.

EAP is complex and multi-faceted. Teachers' knowledge and expertise must, therefore, be at a level to cope with the complexity of developing students' discursive competence. To achieve this goal, EAP draws upon different streams of theory and research **[CLICK!]**

Frame 10:

Part 2 –Five Research Streams: Their Contributions to the Knowledge Base of EAP:

In the second part of my presentation, I will review briefly five important streams of theory and research that currently inform the knowledge base of EAP. The five streams are:

Frame 11: Five Streams of Theory/Research

- **academic literacies**
- **critical EAP**
- **genre studies**
- **corpus linguistics**
- **systemic functional linguistics**

I will structure my review around the three parts of Bhatia's discursive competence model. I will consider how these research streams contribute to developing each of the three competences: social, generic and textual.

[CLICK!] The first area of Bhatia's discursive competence model is social competence, which we saw before is:

Frame 12: Social Competence

EAP students need to develop:

“an ability to use language more widely to participate effectively in a variety of social and institutional contexts to give expression to one's social identity, in the context of constraining social structures and social processes”

Social competence is the ability to understand and participate in a specialist context, such as within an academic subject community.

For example, **for** a student studying engineering, social competence involves learning the **knowledge** and concepts that relate to engineering, as well as its specialist vocabulary and the spoken and written genres used to communicate within the discipline. It also

means understanding how and when things are done in their subject community and why things are done in a certain way.

Here I will briefly consider two of the research streams: *Academic Literacies* and *Critical EAP*. I will discuss what each contributes to the EAP knowledge base for teaching social competence. Following this, I will also suggest some areas of social competence knowledge that these two research streams do not deal with.

Frame 13: Academic Literacies

In the area of social competence, the first research stream is Academic literacies. These researchers are concerned with literacy issues faced by novice or second language readers and writers in academic contexts.

- The first point here is that these researchers see literacy practices as socially-situated; this means that reading and writing takes place within a subject context to achieve certain purposes, subject to the constraints of that context.

- The second point is that AcLits researchers are concerned with identifying and challenging the institutional power relations and gatekeeping practices that second language students or researchers face. For example, these could be the problems that students face in getting their written assignments accepted by university teaching staff, or the problems that L2 researchers face in achieving publication in academic journals. The book by Lillis and Curry (2010) investigates the problems faced by L2 researchers attempting to publish in English and the strategies that they use to get published.
- So, we see that academic literacies research raises teacher awareness of the challenges faced by L2 writers when trying to have their work accepted by an academic discourse community.

Frame 14: Critical EAP

Critical EAP is another research stream that addresses the area of social competence. Its leading advocate, the American researcher Sarah Benesch, proposes that EAP teachers should carry out a *rights analysis* for their students.

Rights analysis, Benesch claims, is a “framework for understanding and responding to the power relations” that students will encounter in academic courses (p. 108). She says that EAP teachers should analyse the power relations and authority structures of a subject course where second language students are studying. The EAP teachers should then train the students to question and negotiate both the content and method of delivery of their subject course.

Following such an approach, the classroom is seen as:

- a site of negotiation or even struggle,
- where students are involved in shaping what takes place by their active participation and even resistance.

In effect *both of these research streams* are concerned with aspects of social competence. Academic literacies focuses on issues surrounding the creation and reception of academic texts, such as students getting their assignments and coursework accepted in English-medium universities. On the other hand, Critical EAP is more concerned with what happens within classes and courses. It encourages EAP students to be more active, to critique and possibly resist the power or authority structures of the classroom, potentially leading to a struggle with their professors about the constitution and delivery of their courses.

Frame 15: Social Competence Gaps: Macro-Level Teacher Knowledge

However, there are some gaps. Here I would also like to suggest three areas of teacher knowledge relating to social competence that are not covered by these two research streams:

- The first is knowledge of the theoretical foundations of disciplinary learning and research – this involves EAP teachers' understanding of epistemologies, research methods and how

they differ among disciplines. This knowledge is important because it shapes the writing of different disciplines.

- The second area is understanding how scientific knowledge is disseminated and challenged

This is more practical knowledge about *the actual processes* that the researcher must follow to achieve publication. Teacher awareness of these processes is important for guiding and preparing advanced students, but it is also important for their own development as an academic researcher seeking to achieve publication.

- The third area is teacher knowledge of the wider economic and political influences that shape universities and the field of EAP itself. This involves the EAP teacher understanding their own subject in terms of where it is located within the university, its primary function or role and, especially the optimal conditions that support it doing its work well. For example, in English-speaking countries, a recent trend that many of us in EAP are concerned about has been the private outsourcing of EAP; this where Western universities sell their English language centres or

EAP units to private companies; these companies then organise the recruitment of students and hire the teachers and control the delivery the courses. This privatization of EAP in western countries has affected the duration of courses, resulted in the commodification of course content and required teachers to take on heavier teaching workloads (that is, teach for more hours per week). These working conditions limit teacher's ability to undertake scholarship and research, something that is essential for the EAP practitioner.

To sum up, in this area of social competence, the existing research streams focus on student needs to navigate the processes and requirements that relate to academic courses, but I have also argued here that EAP teachers need still broader knowledge of the larger contextual issues and processes that frame and influence their own subject and their professional practice.

The second area in Bhatia's discursive competence model is generic competence, which he describes as:

Frame 16: Generic Competence

EAP students need to develop:

“ the ability to identify, construct, interpret and successfully exploit a specific repertoire of professional, disciplinary or workplace genres to participate in the daily activities and to achieve the goals of a specific . . . community”

It is generally agreed among EAP teachers that we are not just teaching grammar and vocabulary at sentence level to our students. They need more than that. We are teaching them how to process and create the genres, that is, categories of texts that they need to communicate in academic contexts. To develop students' generic competence, EAP teachers need to have a good understanding of approaches to genre analysis. This knowledge is necessary for teaching academic writing.

The two approaches to genre used in EAP are the *English for Specific Purposes (ESP)* approach, based on John Swales work, and the approach to genre influenced by *Systemic Functional Linguistics*.

Frame 17: Operationalization of Genre Knowledge: ESP and SFL

- In the **ESP approach to genre**
 - genres as categories of texts classified in terms of their communicative purposes
 - organization of texts described in terms of moves and sub-moves (steps);
 - moves and steps are often related to linguistic features
 - ethnographic knowledge, such as the author's roles, thinking and purpose, part of genre knowledge

- **SFL-influenced approach to genre**
 - genres – staged, goal-oriented activity within a culture
 - staging or organization of a genre – variously called schematic structure, functional stages, stages and phases
 - involve conventionalized configurations of meaning register (FTM) – systematically influence language choices.

Both of these approaches focus on important elements of genre knowledge. However, here I would like to review them in terms five areas of knowledge that I see as important for developing generic competence:

Frame 18: Operationalising Genre: Potential areas of Knowledge

The first area is:

- **Context – the context within which a text occurs**

Most of the earlier genre studies focused mainly on texts and provide little information about context. However, more recent ESP studies have also included some detailed ethnographic description of context. This is recommended by Swales in his 1998 book and Bhatia in his 2004 book; both propose including ethnographic investigations of genres to provide richer descriptions of context.

- **the epistemology of the discipline of the text**

Epistemology refers to what constitutes knowledge in a particular discipline and the methods used for proving or validating knowledge in that subject. Academic literacies researchers claim that the epistemology of a subject discipline is a major influence on its writing. However, in most genre research studies, the epistemology of the subject discipline receive little or no attention. An exception is Vijay Bhatia's work on legal genres, where legal epistemology is included as part of genre knowledge.

The third area is:

- **stance in writing, such as reflected in the use of metadiscourse**

Metadiscourse devices are the linguistic features that writers use to communicate with their audiences. These have not traditionally been included as part of genre knowledge although I have tried to include them in some of my genre studies. However, this is changing and a European conference in 2017 on the use of metadiscourse in different genres acknowledged this important area of genre knowledge.

- **content staging (such as ‘moves/steps’ or ‘schematic structures’)**

– many ESP genre studies focus on moves analysis, based on John Swales’ work. Move analyses are useful for relatively short, conventionalized or formulaic texts, such as conference abstracts, RA introductions, but they are less useful for the analyses of larger genres, which have a freer organizational structure, such as extended university essays.

- **use of text types (segments of text that fulfil a general rhetorical purpose, such as argue, explain, recount)**

Text types tend to be ignored in ESP approaches to genre. In SFL they are acknowledged and related to the use of linguistic elements. I see these as important building blocks of academic writing and I have proposed that they be taught systematically in lower-level EAP courses, such as Foundation Studies programmes.

It is important that we remember that the field of genre studies is still developing and, that, we as EAP teachers need to be actively trying to understand and teach the genres that our students need. To identify this knowledge, we can draw on existing theories and research, such as the ESP and SFL approaches. But we also need to be sure that these existing genre theories work for us. Here I am suggesting that sometimes they may need to be adapted or extended into some of these other areas to suit our local genre investigations.

The third area of discursive competence in Bhatia's model is:

Frame 19: Textual Competence.

[Textual competence] represents not only an ability to master the linguistic code, but also an ability to use textual, contextual and pragmatic knowledge to construct and interpret . . . texts (pp. 144-145).

So this suggests that when we teach linguistic knowledge we need to make these connections between context and text.

In relation to textual competence, I would like to review briefly the two remaining research streams that EAP draws upon: corpus linguistics and systemic functional linguistics.

Frame 20: Textual Competence – Corpus Linguistics

Corpus linguistics is not a theory of language as such, but refers to analytical methods whereby large samples of naturally-occurring language (corpora) are subjected to computer-mediated analysis. The area of vocabulary is an an important area of linguistic knowledge that can be uncovered by corpus studies. For example:

- Word frequency studies have identified the essential academic vocabulary in the form of wordlists, such as Coxhead's *Academic Wordlist* (2000), and Gardner and Davies' *Academic Vocabulary List* (2014)..
- As well as vocabulary knowledge, corpus methods have been used to provide other important linguistic information, such as word clusters and structures certain types of text.

Frame 21: Textual Competence: Systemic Functional Linguistics

The other research stream that informs textual competence is systemic Functional Linguistics. Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) refers to the theoretical approach to linguistics developed by Michael Halliday. In SFL, the meaning-making in a particular social situation are analysed in relation to 'register', which comprises three types of knowledge – field, tenor and mode: field is what is happening in the situation; tenor concerns the participants in the situation and mode is the role of language in the situation. The meanings in these three areas are then linked to particular linguistic features.

SFL research provides fine-grained analyses of the use of linguistic features in particular social or disciplinary contexts. Examples of this type of analysis include:

- Halliday's diachronic research on scientific texts (1990/2002, pp. 169-173), in which he found a predominance of nominalisations and causal relations.
- Woodward-Kron's (2008) study of how technicality is expressed in student writing, which showed the use of nominal groups and non-defining relative clauses

In relation to developing textual competence, corpus and SFL studies offer fine-grained analyses and insights into the occurrence and particular uses of linguistic features. However, the issue often for the EAP teacher is applying the quite general, micro-level findings of some of these research studies back into the specific contexts and genres that they are teaching. As Bhatia says, such findings need to be integrated with contextual and pragmatic knowledge. Studies that combine genre and corpus methods go some way towards solving this problem.

Frame 22: Summary

- **EAP has a large and diverse knowledge base**
- **EAP teachers need to be familiar with this knowledge base**
- **However, EAP teachers also need to be evaluating this knowledge base critically**
- **teachers' own evaluations can lead to new research, new contributions**

It is important that we are familiar with this knowledge base, but that we are also evaluating it. When this evaluative process is ongoing, it can lead to new angles of enquiry and new approaches to solving many of the problems and challenges that we face when we are teaching EAP.

In this next section, I wish to address the question:

Frame 23: Part 3

How can teachers evaluate and make use of the EAP knowledge base?

In Part 3, I am proposing an evaluative heuristic or a framework for evaluating new research or other new contributions to the EAP knowledge base. The framework uses key elements from the two previous parts of this presentation: the overall goal of EAP; EAP syllabus principles; and the extensive EAP knowledge base, which I have just been describing. In particular, the concepts from Part 1 that it draws upon are:

- the educational goal of EAP is to develop students' discursive competence, and
- the four principles for an EAP syllabus that supports the development of discourse competence

So when we are reading and evaluating existing or new piece of EAP research, I suggest that there are two fundamental questions that we should ask.

The first question is:

Frame 24:

Question 1

In what way does this research study contribute to the goal of developing discursive competence (*including its three components of social, generic and textual competences*)?

To illustrate this point, in the next frame, I will examine the research articles published in a recent issue of the Journal of English for Academic Purposes. And in looking at these articles, I propose that the first step is to ask the question; which area of discursive competence does each article address?

[CLICK!]

As you will see this issue of the journal has seven articles, and when we look at them, you can see that each relates to one of the three competences.

Frame 25:

Journal of English For Academic Purposes, Volume 30, 2017

1. Barnes (2017)
washback effect of iBT preparation on communicative language teaching
social competence
(not an EAP focus)
2. Jou (2017)
survey of students' views of open-ended grammar tasks in Swales and Feak
(students wanted more prescription)
textual competence
3. Mitchell and Pessoa (2017)
use of (SFL-based) genre-based instruction to teach argument writing
generic competence
4. Bychkovska and Lee (2017)
Lexical bundles in L1/L2 writing - need to integrate lexical bundles identified in the MICUSP (corpus research) textual competence
5. Hynninen and Kuteeva (2017)
negotiating standards of L2 writing required for publication
(academic literacies study) social competence (high level)
6. Coxhead, Dang and Mukai (2017)
vocabulary needed for spoken participation in university tutorials and laboratories
(corpus research) textual competence
7. Wingrove (2017)
Are TED talks suitable for academic listening?
Corpus study of vocabulary in TED talks compared with Lecture Discourse corpus
textual competence
(not an EAP focus)

This type of quick consideration helps you to locate the research within the broad areas that relate to Bhatia's discursive competence model. In doing this, you can also see that some of the articles are of interest to researchers or materials writers while others are more directly connected to teaching and learning in the classroom.

However, if our focus is mainly on teaching and learning issues and on our classroom-related practice, we can then move to the second question, which is:

Frame 26

Question 2.

Do the findings of the research support an EAP course based on the principles of:

- **holistic objectives**
- **an analytic syllabus organised around larger units of language**
- **combining both procedural and declarative knowledge**
- **combining both top-down and bottom-up processing**

I applied this heuristic to the same issue of the Journal of English for Academic Purposes and the following were my findings.

[continue reading after this PowerPoint frame.]

Frame 27: Support Curriculum Principles

1. **Barnes (2007)* – washback effect of iBT preparation course on CLT - not a strong EAP focus**
2. **Jou (2017)* – students’ views on open-ended tasks in textbooks – mainly relevant to textbook designers (possible for teachers developing tasks)**
3. **Mitchell and Pessoa (2017) - use of genre-based pedagogy to teach argument writing (generic competence)**

4. Bychkovska and Lee (2017)* – teaching ‘lexical bundles’ in first year composition – advocates sample student texts from the MICUSP and BAWE corpus (not permitted by copyright)
5. Hynninen and Kuteeva (2017)* - critical literacies study – negotiating the right standard of writing for publication with reviewers and editors - social competence for an ERP course
6. Coxhead, Dang and Mukai (2017) – vocabulary used in speaking in university seminars and tutorials (textual competence) – advocate using example texts from publicly-available corpora.
7. Wingrove (2017)* TED talks for academic listening – not an EAP focus, don’t have the right vocabulary anyway

Here I found that I found that three articles in particular (Numbers 3, 4 and 6) relate more closely to the course design principles.

- *Number 3* (Mitchell and Pessoa) reports a study of university students’ essay writing and how it changed using genre-based instruction introduced through a series of workshops, Specifically, it focused on developing argument in essays, which was something their students found particularly difficult.

Article Number 4 (Bychkovska and Lee) identifies some useful vocabulary structures for EAP, relating to textual competence. They propose introducing the students to these features as they occur in texts, such as in texts in the MICUSP Corpus (*Michigan Corpus of Upper-Level Student Papers*);

Article Number 6, Coxhead, Dang and Mukai investigated the vocabulary needed for interactions in small group activities, such as labs and tutorials in university contexts, and compared their findings with what is taught in textbooks.

- Article Number 2 by Jou may be relevant to materials developers or textbook writers. Their findings were that their students disliked the open-ended tasks in Swales and Feak's book. They wanted more prescriptive rules relating to these language features (such as reporting verbs). However, the open-ended tasks in Swales and Feak focus on different nuances of meaning (such as with reporting verbs); for me, these tasks suggest that strict prescriptive rules are not possible with these types of structure.
- Articles Numbers 1 and 7 did not have an EAP focus. No 1. is concerned with communicative skills in general language proficiency development (and how this inhibited by TEOFL preparation) and No. 7, through its findings, found that TED talks don't have the types of academic language needed for academic listening tasks.

To summarise, this brief heuristic provides a quick way of tackling the constant body of new research studies and information that are aimed at the already, busy EAP teacher and it provides a way of

somehow evaluating and filtering this large amount of new literature that is published regularly.

Frame 28: Part 4: Current Affordances and Future Challenges of the EAP Knowledge Base: Some Final Thoughts

So to conclude, I would like to return to the topic of my talk – the current affordances and future challenges of the knowledge base of EAP. Here I will summarise some of my thoughts about the current affordances of the EAP knowledge base and how this knowledge base may be related back to classroom practice. Following that, I will end by presenting some ideas on future challenges facing EAP.

Frame 29:

EAP Knowledge Base: Current Affordances

- **EAP now has a body of research that addresses the social, generic and textual areas of discourse competence**
- **EAP teachers can:**
 - **become familiar with past and current research**
 - **incorporate this accumulated knowledge in their professional practice.**

Frame 30: The Knowledge Base: Implications for Pedagogy

In using this knowledge base and making it relevant to our students, we need to be doing two things.

- First, we, as teachers, still need to be doing needs analysis. We need to be working systematically to understand the current and future academic and language needs of our students. And, then;
- Secondly, based on what we learn from the needs analysis we need to implement pedagogy that develops the social, the generic and the textual dimensions of discursive competence.

This means that, as EAP teachers, we need to be active in investigating the needs of our students, and then actively using the EAP knowledge base to inform and shape our pedagogy – what we teach and how we teach. EAP is a research-informed and research-lead educational practice; this knowledge base is at the heart of what we do when teaching EAP.

So what does this process mean for the many new textbook series that have been produced by the major publishers for EAP. Typically they

are organised as a series linked to the common European Framework Levels – B1, B2, C1 So, where do these textbooks fit into this process?

Here I would like to say three things:

Frame 31: EAP Knowledge Base: Implications for Textbooks

Textbooks are an important resource, but they are not a substitute for:

- **EAP needs analysis**
- **EAP syllabus planning**
- **accessing the EAP knowledge base to inform these processes**

So what I *am* saying here is that textbooks should be used carefully and selectively. Decisions made about what should be used and what should not be used from textbooks need to be based on the points listed in this frame, based on:

- on our knowledge of our students' needs,
- our own syllabus planning,
- accessing the knowledge base of EAP.

We can't just say that a particular class is currently at Lower B2 level in their language proficiency, therefore, we need to teach them using an Upper B2 level textbook from an EAP series, and then assume that by working through the textbook we will meet the needs of our students. B1, B2 and C1 are European descriptions of levels of *language proficiency*, but they are not descriptions of *discourse competence in academic English*. I **am not saying** here that we shouldn't use the new EAP textbook series that have been emerging from the major publishers. What I **am** saying though is that they should be used selectively by the EAP teacher, but ultimately, **how** they are used should be the result of teachers' decisions based on their own academic knowledge and expertise. Teacher knowledge, teacher expertise, teacher scholarship and research should be at the heart of what we do in EAP. The textbook is not a substitute for the needs analysis, the syllabus and the critical evaluative work that teachers do.

Frame 32: EAP Knowledge Base: Future Challenges

To conclude, I would like to discuss what I see as three future challenges that we need to address in relation to the EAP knowledge base. The first is:

- **developing and maintaining teachers' EAP teachers' knowledge**

This involves the two areas of initial teacher education for teachers preparing to enter EAP and ongoing teacher development for practising teachers. Teachers at all stages, new and experienced need to be actively engaged with this knowledge base. Also because EAP is an academic activity, teachers not only need to be familiar with the research literature of the field, but, as I have emphasized today, they need to be encouraged to evaluate critically what is there, identify what is not there and to undertake scholarship and research themselves. This idea of EAP teachers undertaking scholarship and research leads to my second point. This is the need for:

- **further extending and refining the knowledge base of EAP.**

The best people to extend and refine the knowledge base of EAP are those teaching EAP. Teacher practitioner research should be constantly flowing into this knowledge base. As I see it there is a danger that existing journals accept and publish research that is based on theories and approaches that their editorial boards are familiar with, or on topics and issues that they decide are current. This situation can result in the focus of the field becoming static and in overlooking important areas of enquiry or fresh theoretical and research approaches.

My solution: I think that we need more journals in the field of EAP to broaden the focus of what gets published. For example, almost all EAP research is about curriculum (what is taught and learned) – and this is good. But other issues tend to be neglected. For example issues that could be further researched are: EAP teacher education and teacher development, student needs and trajectories and EAP explorations of disciplinarity; these are all potential areas that would benefit from further

investigation. A further area that is not addressed in the literature is the commercialization of EAP and its academic effects. The recent book that I co-wrote with Alex Ding is an attempt to address this issue.

- **reconsidering EAP and its knowledge based in the changing geopolitical situation**

A final issue that we need to think about is the role of EAP in the changing world situation that we face at present. As the theme of this conference acknowledges, we are teaching EAP at a time of great geopolitical change, a time when the centres of world power are shifting, as are the roles and international positioning of some English-speaking countries. With the rapid growth of English-medium, postgraduate courses in EFL countries, it is my opinion that we need to be thinking in terms of new centres of EAP teacher education, new journals and new researcher groupings that bring together and support EAP in these contexts. For example, I would estimate that the largest numbers of EAP students are in the Asia Pacific region. So, given this situation, perhaps it is time to consider further the

structures that support EAP in this part of the world – our region.

In this regard, I wish to acknowledge the contribution that the organisers of this conference – the China EAP Association is making. Your activities and the conferences that you organise are playing an important role because of the focus that they place on EAP in this part of the world. May you continue their efforts to strengthen and support English for Academic Purposes in our Asia Pacific region.

Thank you to the Association for inviting me to your conference. And thank you for listening to my thoughts on EAP.

These are my references.

[Click for the references Frame 33!]

[Click for the 'Thank you' Frame 34!]

Frame 33: References

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