



# **Building Networks and Embedding EAP**

## **Conceptualising Status and Withstanding Upheaval**

Dave Rush  
University of Essex

Overview of provision at Essex

Impact of restructure – and ongoing instability

What we've learnt:

- “Skills” for all
- Building networks
- Conceptualising status

In-sessional academic skills and EAP – all departments, all levels

Use CEM model as our starting point

3 broad strands of provision:

- “embedded” teaching
- Academic English Support (ie. EAP)
- “Central” services – 1:1s and workshops

## 2019 restructure – merged with Employability and Careers teams

- All tutors moved to “annualised” contracts
- Workload model imposed – no time for scholarship, minimal prep time
- Status of tutors deliberately undermined

Before restructure, “gold standard”=

- For embedded, credit module or module strand, multiple assessment and feedback opp's
- For EAP – dept specific, highly scaffolded, multiple assessments mapped against dept requirements

## After restructure:

- All credit modules cut
- In-house English language test scrapped
- Scope of embedded teaching limited
- No marking or assessment allowed
- 1:1 service cut

All this against backdrop of:

- Huge expansion in student numbers
- Falling entry requirements
- Decision making increasingly centralised –  
“USG”

	<b>18/19</b>	<b>19/20</b>	<b>20/21</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>
Embedded	1618	1536	1097	1044	1114
AES	960	926	641	739	911
Central	464	209	431	728	974
Total	3042	2671	2169	2511	2999



# Skills for Success – Overview Graph



More of a “support service” than an academic department?

And yet – in many ways situation is improved.

Why?

- Primary remit = to support ALL students
- Skills network approach
- Changing perceptions of our identity

- Not deficit model – or “remedial”
- Emphasis on ALL, and not on international
- Changes in students – both international and non
- Idea that home students need EAP/skills support not a new one
- NOT suggesting no EAL support

- Not holding on to “territory” but welcoming all efforts to support students with “skills”
- E.g., all workshops listed as “academic skills”, whether us, Library, IT, SWIS, int. services, SU
- Includes academics and PS staff from depts

- Helps all individuals and teams involved
- Looks better to SMT
- Helpful to staff and students – easier to signpost and to find support
- Students don't care who is delivering
- Helps to withstand upheaval?

- Cross-disciplinary perspective; experts in analysing conventions, expectations
- Lecturers increasingly aware of need – and that they cannot do this
- Can be an “academic field of study” and a “support service” – need to emphasise teaching expertise and nature of the skills classroom

- “Identity” – for the institution; the students; the academic community...and for ourselves
- EAP/skills teaching as “catalyst” (bell hooks)
- Contextualisation is key, but also engagement with context – “ignorant schoolmaster”
- Not transmission, but *doing*

- An “academic field of study” but not an academic department?
- Both inside and outside – a complement, not an add on
- At the heart of academia – concerned always with the *doing*, with *what is happening*



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