



We're all in this together! :

Collaboration between EAP and subject specialists to design assessment literacy seminars.

Alison Leslie, a.s.leslie@leeds.ac.uk

Dr Alex Chelegeer, a.chelegeer@leeds.ac.uk



Context:

- Deliver TPG module *Researching Inequality in Media* in the School of Sociology and Social Policy.
- Large international cohort, predominantly Chinese, with diverse assessment practices and experiences.
- Module convenor identified need to support students to understand assessment requirements and approached EAP specialist to assist in designing and co-delivering an assessment seminar in last week of semester (pre submission deadline).
- EAP specialist and seminar leader (subject specialist) co-designed and delivered materials.



Purposes of the essay assessment:

- Examine students' mastery of the key theories and debates in social science regarding inequality in media.
- Analyse and evaluate students' understanding of the strengths and limitations of various conceptual frameworks, along with their critical thinking skills.
- Ensure the use of social methodological approaches to research media representations, their production, reproduction, and relationships to social inequalities.
- Encourage critical reflections on the definitions and forms of inequality, considering their social contexts and influences on reception.



Challenges and tensions:

1. How to support students to understand assessment requirements:
 - balance between subject content and academic skills - how embedded should academic skills be?
 - timing of assessment literacy interventions - stand-alone session at end of semester or staged development throughout semester?
 - teaching to the test or writing with academic integrity – product or process?



Challenges and tensions:

2. How to design materials to support students to understand assessment requirements:
 - writing needs of students - 'Western logic' of writing v.s. developing writing as a social practice and building student agency as writer beyond assessment purposes.
 - marking needs of subject specialists - prescriptive guidance so easy to mark.
 - level of scaffolding e.g. use of exemplars – risk of plagiarism, too prescriptive or modelling 'good' and 'bad' writing?



Strategy:

- Two exemplars --- good (high 60s) and acceptable (low 50s) --- anonymized and made available for students to access.
- EAP specialist use of exemplar – to explore use of language, structure and argumentation (EAP prescribed model of argument + evidence).
- Subject specialist use of exemplar – to explore criticality, use of sources and evidence based on cultural and disciplinary understanding, (emphasising focus on evidence rather than persuasion which is dominant Chinese model of argumentation).



Teaching activities: use of interactive technology

Vevox polling

- Concept check purposes of a module assessment and how to demonstrate this.
- Gauge concerns and level of confidence.

Padlet

- Follow up Q&A on assessment (anonymous).
- Monitored by subject specialist for 2 weeks following the session.



How will you demonstrate the module learning outcomes in your assignment?

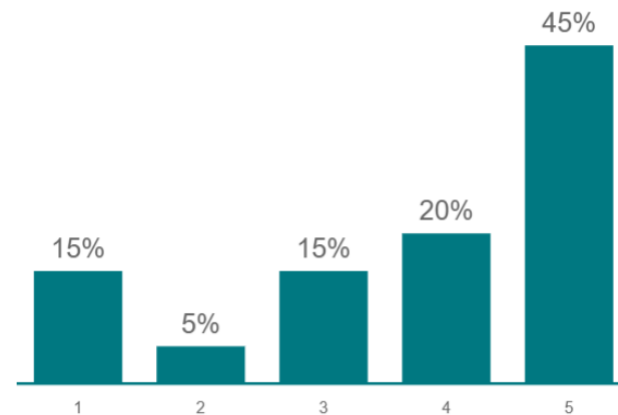
find examples
using theory
theory
inequality
observation
use the reference
case study
thinking
citing references
good structure
understand the world
correlation
presentation
argument
discuss with example
choose a topic
become better
review

3. How confident do you feel now about writing your assignment?

20 responses

Average response:

★★★★☆



SHOW RESULTS

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Teaching activities: use of exemplars 1

- Sub-section 1 Referencing
 - EAP: whether exemplars have properly formatted references (in-text citations, reference list, and common mistakes to avoid).
 - Subject specialist: how references impact markers recognition of the article's quality (relevance and credibility).
- Sub-section 2 Structuring
 - EAP: where exemplars have integrated theories and examples, with particular attention to paragraph structure.
 - Subject specialist: how a marker recognizes the overall structure and different writing styles (e.g. use of subheadings).

Using the reading list and other sources

EAP **activity**

Look at the reference list in both example essays.

- To what extent have they included key texts from the reading list?
- Do the other texts they have chosen look relevant to the topic?
- Are they all appropriate to use in an academic essay?

Scan read the essays.

- Is it clear where they have used sources?
- Have the sources been cited accurately?

Structuring a clear response to the essay Q

Skim read the essays.

EAP
activity

- Where have they included theories and examples?
- How have they used these to structure their essay?



Teaching activities: use of exemplars 2

- Sub-section 3 Criticality:
 - EAP specialist: evaluated certain sentences and their lines of reasoning.
 - Subject specialist: re-emphasized evidence-based arguments, with additional writing samples that contain common mistakes.

Compare writing examples

Subject activity

China is the world's most populous country and the world's second-largest economy, with a population of 1.4 billion and a land area of 9,600,000km². China is in a period of rapid urbanization, with a large number of people moving from the countryside to the cities, and this urbanization process has indirectly led to a housing boom, and even to the creation of housing groups to inflate property prices, especially in the major mainstream cities, where many grassroots people are troubled by the fact that they cannot afford to buy a house and the rapidly rising property prices are putting enormous pressure on the people and affecting their quality of life.

In a remarkably short period China has experienced the process of commercialization of urban housing. Since the initiation of economic reforms in 1978 various new policies have been designed to privatize and reform the public-sector-dominated housing system in China (Wang & Murie, 1996). In 1983, private property ownership rights (including real estate property) were written into the Constitution drafted by the State Council, although land is still controlled by the state (Wang & Xu, 1984). In 1988, the Ten Year Reform Strategy was initiated by the government to allow urban residents to buy and sell their houses, and to restructure rents in the public sector (Liu, 1989). The key transformation of urban housing commercialization was carried out in the 1990s. The official ending of the allocation of welfare housing in 1998 marked the establishment of market-oriented urban housing system in China (Wang, 2001).

Critical thinking

Subject activity

- Is not the same as criticism!
- Is about interpreting evidence, data, and arguments provided by the authors you read and identifying their assumptions and reasoning processes.
- Is about making reflections on the evidence, data, arguments and assumptions provided by the authors and making sense of their significance to your research/assignment.
- Is about synthesising your thoughts and the thoughts of differing authors
- Is about the capacity to incorporate new evidence, describe their necessary contextual details, and interpret your understanding of their significance
- Is about not relying on any single source of information
- Is about the ability to develop well-reasoned arguments in your writing



Emerging insights:

- Western model of writing v.s. non-Western models: decolonising the Sociology and academic writing curricula.
- Student agency and role of authority in evidence (what sources are authoritative and why evidence is important in building a persuasive argument).



Questions and comments?

- How do you balance subject and skills content in your materials design?
- To what extent should we accommodate non-Western models of writing? And how?



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