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Evaluating In-session Support: The Student Perspective

Caroline Campbell and Geoffrey Nsanja will present findings from two projects at a northern Russell Group university, exploring student perspectives on the value of In-Sessional English for Academic Purposes (ISEAP). The study suggests that ISEAP promotes "liberating literacy" by providing scaffolding and meta-knowledge for disciplinary participation, advocating for a "whole person" pedagogical approach to educating multilingual scholars.

Meet the speakers

Further details

**24th June
1-2 pm (UK time)**

[Zoom link](#)



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Caroline Campbell is Acting In-session Lead for the School of Design, 2025-26, and Co-Module Lead Language for Business (ELU3023) at the University of Leeds Language Centre. She has worked with colleagues in the School of Design for several years and has shaped the support for two of their MA programmes.



Geoffrey Nsanja is a lecturer in EAP providing in-session support to students in the School of Performance and Cultural Industries. He was also part of a pioneering work that set up in-session provision in the School of Mechanical Engineering in 2020/21 academic year.



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In-sessional EAP (ISEAP) continues to become an important subfield of EAP as it constitutes an 'evolving field of teaching and learning in higher education' (Tibbets and Chapman, 2023). Such increased importance has attracted scrutiny from neo-liberalist agendas which call for accountability regarding what is happening in this burgeoning field (see Storch and Tapper, 2009). Despite such scrutiny, ISEAP seems to still be operating on a 'relatively thin research base' (Pearson, 2020) as the field still lacks a coherent narrative which sheds light on how its practices contribute to student success.

Understanding the impact ISEAP has on teaching and learning in HE therefore represents one way through which we can begin to fathom how these sessions contribute to student success. In this talk, we will report the findings of two scholarship projects which sought to investigate student perspectives on the value of ISEAP at a Russell Group university in the north. Driven by the need to rehumanise assessment of impact (Hulme and Evans, 2025), we will report how our use of (narrative) interviews enabled us to pay attention to the nuances of student voices towards understanding something of the HE context such voices indexed. Although the data we will report on were generated with student participants from the School of Design and School of Education, the findings share some interesting parallels. For instance, most students highlighted the role ISEAP plays in helping them to form socio-academic networks (Leki, 2007) and how these sessions also helped them to practice the performance of their academic identities by rehearsing their academic literacy practices in low-stakes, friendly environments. Our findings strongly suggest that ISEAP sessions seem to model for HE that achieving 'liberating literacy' (Gee, 2008) is possible as they provide both scaffolding leading to mastery of academic practices as well as provide the 'meta-knowledge' needed for participation in the literacy practices of the disciplines. Such findings have important ramifications on curriculum development and how HE institutions can meaningfully educate multilingual scholars by taking a 'whole person' approach to pedagogy (cf., Pelias, 2004).



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References

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Pearson, W. S. (2020). The effectiveness of pre-sessional EAP programmes in UK higher education: A review of the evidence. *Review of education*, 8(2), 420-447.

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Storch, N. and Tapper, J. (2009). The impact of an EAP course on postgraduate writing. *Journal of English for Academic purposes*, 8, 207-223.

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