

Getting even more specific in ESAP teaching: collaborating with research groups leads within BSc Chemistry and Physics research projects

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Our aims

- To share our overlapping remit within two academic schools in the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences.
- To explain a literacy/ language need we both encountered through our time working in the schools and our proposed approach to address this need.
- To share the evaluation of the approach/ collaboration and the challenges we faced instigating this approach in the School of Physics and Astronomy.
- We invite you to advise on what we should do next! Re-prototype or abandon!

Institutional Positioning

- [Learning Development Team](#) based in the library, a central professional service function
- Provides co-curricular and embedded opportunities for taught students to develop their academic and digital literacies
- Learning Advisors aligned to academic Schools with full coverage across the university
- Activity includes teaching, programme or module design, pedagogical research and educational development depending on context
- The Language Centre is based in the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies.
- We have an insessional programme which uses a secondment model and faculties and schools request our involvement. We are similarly based in most schools in the university now.
- The insessional programme is built on embedding discourse competence and genre knowledge with pedagogies to support L2 learners or learners new to UK HE.



Theoretical Approaches

Embedded provision offered by the Learning Development Team is informed by an Academic Literacies approach which:

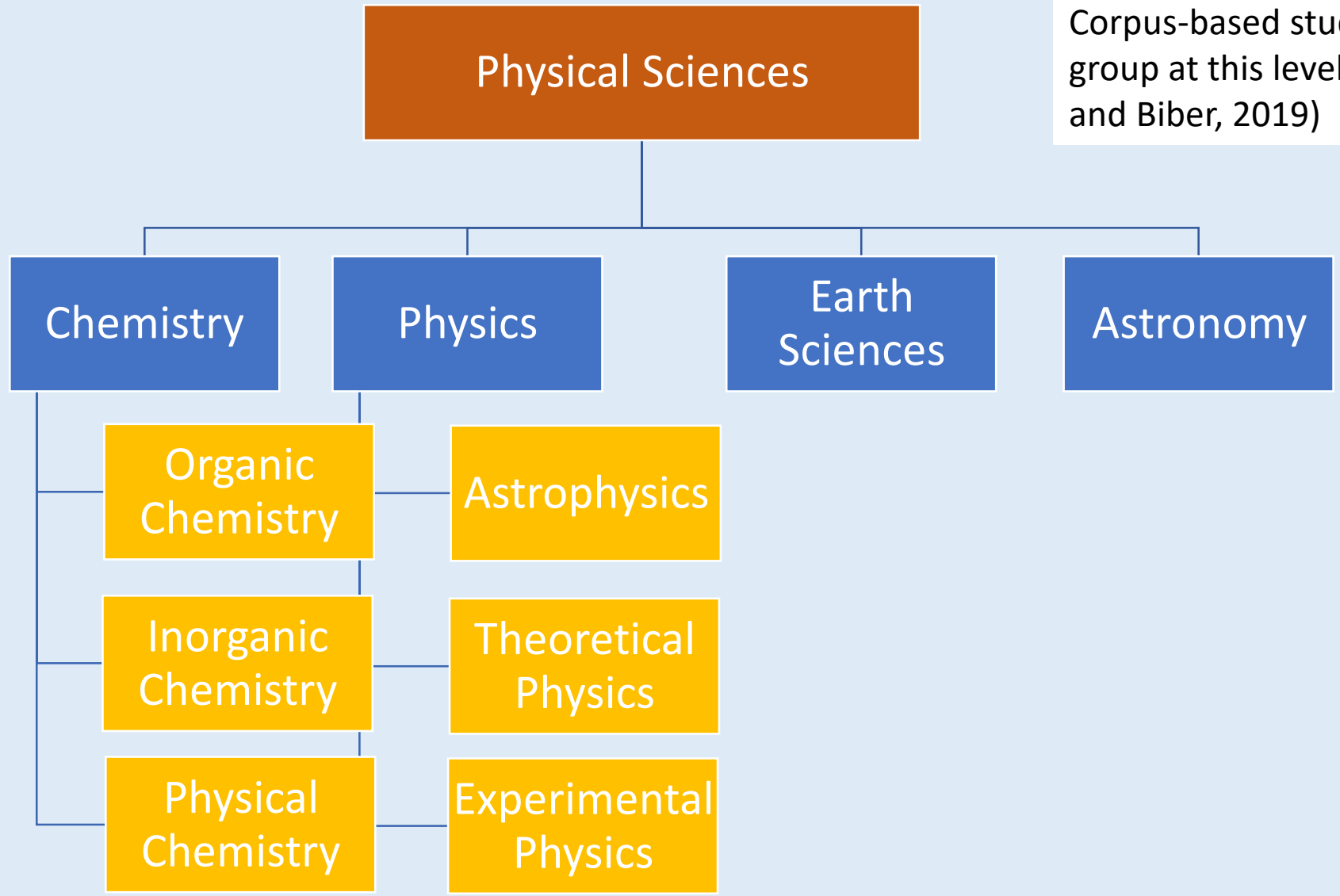


- challenges deficit-based understandings of student reading and writing
- is committed to developing student literacies within the disciplines
- seeks to bridge the 'gaps between academic staff expectations and student interpretations' (Lea and Street, 1998, p.158)

English for Specific Purposes explore texts as genres with patterns of structure and typical linguistic features and review how the writer (actor) chooses language to suit a particular communicative purpose, audience and appeal of the discourse community (Flowerdew, 2019).

However, at the core is a demystification of practices and exemplars/ text explorations are integral to the integral to the pedagogy of each approach (McGrath and Kaufhold, 2016).

Disciplinarity



Corpus-based studies tend to group at this level (Gardner, Nesi and Biber, 2019)

Limitations of previous approaches

Whole cohort sessions on final-year project modules:



- Timetabled and promoted by module leads, positive student feedback and generally good level of engagement
- Need for extend time for student questions exposes limit of general input and need for further development at sub-disciplinary level

[Physics educational research group](#) requested 2 – 3 workshops on the differences in the social genre of the research report within pedagogical research.

Physics Education Research Group



The Physics Education Research Group is an integral part of the School of Physics and Astronomy at Leeds. Our research looks at the ways in which students learn physics and develop as physicists in the 21st Century. Results of this research allow developments in curriculum, delivery and assessment to enhance the student experience. Our projects encompass the 'life-cycle' of student experience, from outreach and transition to university, through engagement, active learning and effective assessment, to embedding employability to support students in their onward journey.

Evidence of difference among sub-disciplines

The data and conventions can vary in the sub-disciplines. For example, method conventions in biochemistry and other branches of chemistry.

The sub-discipline may be interdisciplinary in nature and therefore presumed knowledge is different and this is reflected in rhetorical functions/ cognitive genres (Bruce, 2013).

Differences in knowledge creation can affect:

- a) Subject/ theme focus within paragraphs or cognitive genres
- b) Interactional metadiscourse features (Hyland, 2008).

The approach

Research Group	Disciplinary/Discourse Focus
Pedagogy and Scholarship of Chemistry	Education
Functional Materials and Molecular Assemblies (FMMA)	Interdisciplinary
Sustainable and Digital Chemistry (SDC)	Engineering
Chemistry for Biology and Health (CBH)	Biochemistry/ Organic/ materials
Atmospheric, planetary and theoretical Chemistry	Physics/Physical

Research Group	Disciplinary/Discourse Focus
Astrophysics	
Condensed matter	Experimental
Molecular and nanoscale physics	Experimental/ interdisciplinary/ applied links
Soft matter	Experimental
Theoretical physics	
Physics Education Research Group	

The approach

[Academic communication in the sub disciplines of physics.docx](#)

Outcomes

- Logistics – rushed because not on radar – potentially due to us leading the demand.
- Unusual practice in terms of trying to connect at research group level as opposed to module level – lack of alignment.
- Identity differences – practice over written report.
- Collaborators put in place late so texts and co-production of sessions was hard to achieve.
- The case that it was extra seemed to come through the whole process.

Next steps

- Scholarship work on how feedback is training the students in discourse competence within the sub-discipline and how much they are expecting for the communication to align to this standard. Should more of our work become more consultancy than teaching practices?
- Continually try to overcome deficit narratives! But how? What evidence would support this?

Conclusion and ongoing thoughts

It doesn't feel like a success – not sure it had any impact beyond the physics education research group. Still felt like an inequitable experience.

The need was understood but was secondary to other demands that meant more to the school. Need versus demand.

Positioning ourselves in more consulting roles seems to be beneficial but how to move into that area when we are seen predominantly as student-facing 'skills' and 'language' fixers.

Do we keep with this initiative or accept the fail? Will it mostly be the case of us being the invitees of effective collaborations and not the instigators?

We welcome any questions and advice!



References

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