

'So, you teach English?' Some thoughts on how we are positioned by others and how we position ourselves

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How are we positioned by others; how do we position ourselves?

- EAP Identity
 - Personal
 - Professional (discipline)
 - Institutional
- how are we positioned by others?
- Is this a reflection of how we position ourselves?
- What **impact** does this have on professional development?
- What **impact** does this have on access to opportunity/ career development?



How are we positioned by others; how do we position ourselves?

Others: Wider University

- ‘So, you teach English... you can correct their spelling?’
- ‘what does your department do?’
- ‘Pre-sessional... what’s that?’
- Language teachers: spelling/ grammar
- Support staff

Discipline

- Scholarship,
- BALEAP competencies
- conferences,
- job roles

Department

- Changing name/ repositioning
- Job ads/descriptions: Language experts (obvious)
- Inclusivity, EDI, assessment, academic literacies, pastoral care, material development, differentiation, understanding and accommodating needs, providing high value feedback, discourse analysis, genre analysis...
- widening role?

Ourselves

- Is how we position ourselves aligned with wider HE, our discipline, or our departments?
- More than language experts?
- What is the impact of this?:
 - identity, development, opportunity, values, expectation, education, experience...

What skills are common of an EAP tutor that are not always reflected in wider university?

*Ooh — now that's a sharp and interesting question! You're tapping into something that often goes underappreciated: EAP tutors develop some highly specialized skills that are **not always common** (or even consciously valued) across the wider university teaching landscape:*

- *Language awareness at a meta level*
- *Feedback literacy (advanced level)*
- *Intercultural mediation*
- *Genre and academic literacy expertise*
- *Language informed malpractice guidance*
- *Student centred teaching*
- *Pedagogical flexibility*
- *Scaffolding learner autonomy*

Do/ are EAP teachers usually positioned as experts in these areas?

Excellent question — and a really important one, because the answer gets at the heart of some of the tensions around EAP in higher education.

The short version is:

👉 EAP teachers *have* deep expertise in these areas — but are not always *positioned or recognized as* experts within their institutions.

💡 **In summary:**

✓ EAP tutors are experts in genre, feedback, language, and intercultural academic skills.

✗ But often under-recognized as such within university hierarchies, especially where EAP is structurally placed as "support" rather than "academic provision."

What spaces of expertise do we occupy? How?

How many non-EAP/language focused conferences attended?

How many non-EAP/language focused workshops attended (internal/external)

How many non-EAP/language focused courses completed?

How many non-EAP/language focused conversations (with non EAP/language tutors) in wider institution?

How many visible contributions made outside of dept?

How many workshops/sessions etc... delivered outside of dept?

A few questions for thought...

- do you position yourself as an expert in any of the areas mentioned?
- do you occupy any spaces of expertise?
- does this influence your identity?
- does this influence your development?
- does this influence how you are perceived by others?
- does this influence opportunity/career progression?

Should we be occupying more spaces of expertise? Do we need to?

Any thoughts or questions?

Please add any comments, thoughts, suggestions or questions you have with regards to how we are positioned by others, by ourselves, and what impact this might have.

<https://forms.office.com/e/NtgKsyNhzP>



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