

Academic Skills for MA – Developing a student-driven, subject specific, EAP support programme for PG students.

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**BALEAP 2017 “ADDRESSING THE STATE
OF THE UNION: WORKING TOGETHER =
LEARNING TOGETHER”**

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Outline

- Background
- Action Research
- Academic Skills Programme
- Issues
- Student Feedback
- Future Developments

Background

- Coventry University's innovative approach to including the students' voice in their course design and quality review process (Orsini –Jones et al., 2015)
- Student feedback from this process
- Development of a new student driven, subject specific *Academic Skills for MA* support programme
- International PG level students in the School of Humanities.

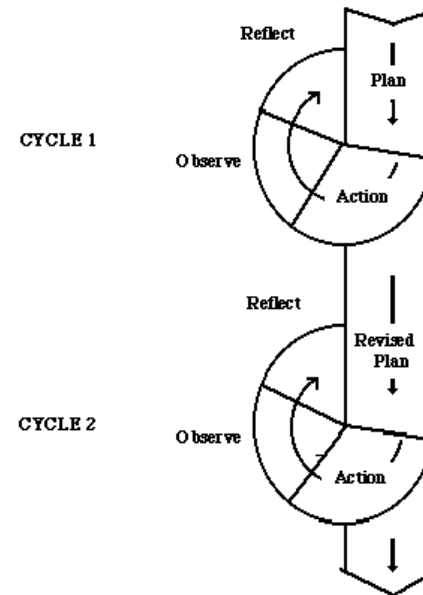
- Drawing on a SoTL (Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) approach, the aim is to critically explore what students' perceptions of their EAP needs are in order to improve the courses that the students are taking (Hutchings, Huber, and Ciccone, 2011, p.xix).
- The initial *Academic Skills for MA* support sessions were developed with the students from the MA in English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics
- The programme aims to build links between students, EAP staff, subject specialists and researchers.

Project Aims

This student driven programme aims to support international students in their transition to MA level study within a new academic culture by building links between students, EAP lecturers, subject specialists and researchers.

Action Research Cycle

- Reconnaissance
- Planning
- Acting
- Observing
- Reflecting
- Re-planning
(and cycle starts again)

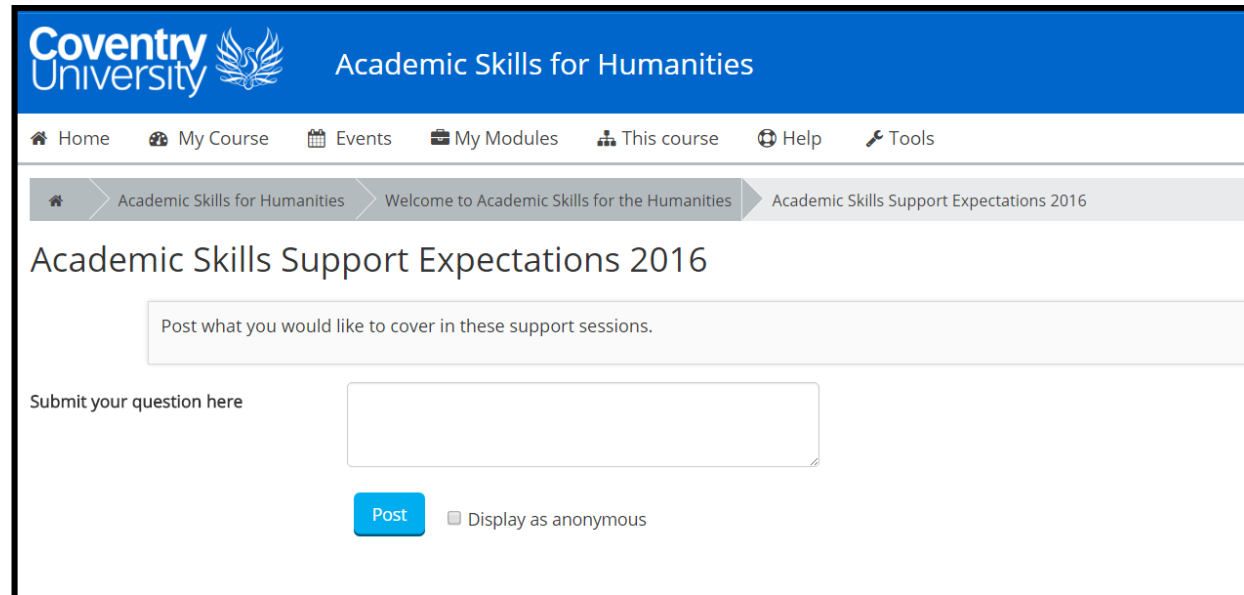


Kemmis and McTaggart
1988:14 and 2005.

Action Research Problem

- Students identified areas of concern

VLE -
Moodle



The screenshot shows the Coventry University Moodle interface for the 'Academic Skills for Humanities' course. The header is blue with the university logo and course title. Below the header is a navigation bar with links: Home, My Course, Events, My Modules, This course, Help, and Tools. A breadcrumb trail shows the path: Home > Academic Skills for Humanities > Welcome to Academic Skills for the Humanities > Academic Skills Support Expectations 2016. The main content area is titled 'Academic Skills Support Expectations 2016' and contains a text box for posting questions. Below the text box is a 'Post' button and a checkbox for 'Display as anonymous'.

Coventry University Academic Skills for Humanities

Home My Course Events My Modules This course Help Tools

Academic Skills for Humanities Welcome to Academic Skills for the Humanities Academic Skills Support Expectations 2016

Academic Skills Support Expectations 2016

Post what you would like to cover in these support sessions.

Submit your question here

Post ☐ Display as anonymous

Students' Areas of Concern

- *got confused how to cite and quote and put it into a text or sentence on my essay properly, as well on the list of references.*
- *organizing arguments on writing, how to use a critical, analytic , and evaluative approach rather than a more descriptive approach. referencing and avoiding plagiarism.*
- *want to learn in a broader perspective research strategies on how to approach an essay question in order to present your arguments in a critical and presentable way.*

Students' Areas of Concern

- *I want to learn how to write critically and present my argument in an academic way required at the masters level.*
- *Avoid plagiarism. Referencing.*
- *Read materials to get the appropriate information?*
- *How to study effectively in class and at home, because the study environment in the UK is very different from that in my home country.*
- *I want to know how to deduct opinion from others and make it logical in academic writing.*

The Academic Skills Programme

- Optional or Mandatory? - on their timetables
- Diagnostic
- 1 hour a week
- Student centred – Subject specific
- Technology Enhanced

Technology Enhanced

- Materials designed to be used:
 - in the face to face sessions
 - and online in the CUMoodle.
- International PG students often approach their studies with varying levels of digital literacy.
- Help to develop the students' digital literacy skills.

The Academic Skills Programme

ADMINISTRATION

Messages 1

Study Support ▾ FAH Links ▾ Staff Links ▾ Useful Links ▾ University ▾ Zoe Gazeley-Eke ▾

Coventry University Academic Skills for the School of Humanities

Home My Course Events My Modules This course Help Tools

Turn editing off Hide blocks Standard view

Academic Skills for Humanities

Welcome to Academic Skills for t

WELCOME!

Change image move out of grid

What is plagiarism?

Change image

How do I reference?

Change image

Paraphrasing and Summarising

Change image

Identifying Arguments

Change image

Critical Thinking 1

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Critical Reading 1

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SQ3R

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Concise Critical Notes

Critical Writing 1

Critical Writing 2

International Relations Journal

International Relations

Volume 31 Number 1 March 2017

Editors' introduction: Rethinking International Relations – again


Distinguishing a minimalist role for grand theorizing

The Academic Skills Programme

Course: Academic Skills for MA ELTAL - Google Chrome
https://cumoodle.coventry.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=29098


What is Plagiarism?

[Activity 1: What is plagiarism?](#)


 What is plagiarism?

Discuss with your partner and post to the forum.


[Activity 2: Defining plagiarism.](#)

 Defining plagiarism.

[Activity 3: Key Words](#)


 Key word Match

[Activity 4: Why do students plagiarise and what's wrong with it?](#)

 Activity 4:


Why do students plagiarise and what's wrong with it?


[Activity 5: Am I plagiarising?](#)

 Activity 5: Am I plagiarising?

[Activity 6: Serious consequences of plagiarism.](#)

Click on the stories below and discuss the different implications of plagiarism.

 Europe

 USA

The Academic Skills Programme

Defining plagiarism - Google Chrome
https://cumoodle.coventry.ac.uk/mod/quiz/attempt.php?attempt=266408

ACADEMIC SKILLS FOR MIA LLTAL / What is Plagiarism? / Defining plagiarism? / Preview

Question 1

Incomplete answer

Marked out of 1.00

Flag question

Edit question

Read the definition of plagiarism and complete the sentences with the missing words from the box.

'Plagiarism is the use of the work of without acknowledgement of your of information or . This includes:

- using words more or less as they have been used in articles, , television programmes, books or else
- using other people's ideas or without saying whose ideas they are
- what you read or hear without stating where it comes from.'

(2013:177)

theories

source

exactly

paraphrasing

inspiration

others

anywhere

lectures

Cottrell

Please put an answer in each box.

Quiz navigation

1

Finish attempt ...

Start a new preview

Teacher Links

View a teacher links help video

Useful Links

- Enrol in other cohorts of this module
- View notes
- Participants

Feedback

Moodle Feedback

Expansion

2015/2016

- MA English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics

2016/2017

- MA International Relations
- MA Diplomacy, Law, Global change
- MA Terrorism, International Crime, and Global security

Subject Specific

Rationale

- Enhance student engagement
- Academic discourse varies enormously and so a discipline specific approach aims to help the students to progress within their field (Hyland 2004).

Reality

- Easy with ELT
- HUM sessions:
 - Students brought articles
 - AE strategies
eg, articles with no references
Footnotes
- More input from subject specialists needed.

2 Different Issues

EAP – Academic Skills

MA ELT AL

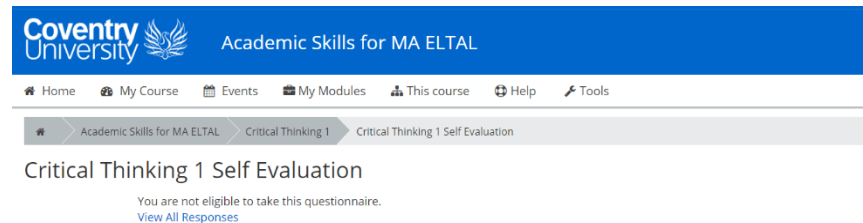
- More EAP
- Need support with English level.
- UG was not in English

MA HUM

- More Academic Skills
- Need support with moving to a different Academic Culture
- UG usually in English

Student Reflections





- Students identified Critical Thinking as a problem area
- Critical Thinking Self Reflection (Cottrell 2011)



The Academic Skills Programme

Critical Thinking






I understand how to structure an argument.

Response	Average	Total
4 = strongly agree	 20%	2
3 = agree	 40%	4
2 = sort of agree	 40%	4
Total	 100%	10/10

The Academic Skills Programme

Critical Thinking






I can tell descriptive writing from analytical writing.

Response	Average	Total
4 = strongly agree	 10%	1
3 = agree	 40%	4
2 = sort of agree	 20%	2
1 = disagree	 30%	3
Total	 100%	10/10

The Academic Skills Programme

Critical Thinking

I can spot inconsistencies in an argument easily.

Response	Average	Total
4 = strongly agree	 10%	1
3 = agree	 30%	3
2 = sort of agree	 20%	2
1 = disagree	 40%	4
Total	 100%	10/10

Student Feedback



Student Feedback



Future Developments

- Logistics:
 - Sept starters + Jan starters x 2
 - Teaching hours
 - Timetable fit
- Technology enhanced:
 - Not all computer rooms
 - Time to develop
 - Accessibility issues

Future Developments

- Subject Specific:
 - More input from subject lecturers
 - Students bring materials
- Course Directors
 - Verbal feedback is supportive
 - Measurements to examine if the way EAP support has been integrated into the curriculum has had an impact

Conclusions

- Students can become the driving force behind developing their EAP and academic skills.
- Students want this support
- Course Directors want this support
- Can the Faculty provide it?
 - Solution EAP lecturer in every School?

References

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