

## BALEAP Accreditation Scheme event

# EAP Disciplinarity + Specificity?

2<sup>nd</sup> May 2020 at Manchester University

**How do we deal with disciplinarity and/or specificity (are they one and the same?) on EAP courses whether they be Pre-sessional courses, In-sessional Language Development courses or other pathway courses? Is too much or too little attention paid to this or is it purely determined by practical external factors like context, time, staffing and workload?**

“The choice then is not simply between a narrow ESAP or generic EGAP approach to framing and teaching EAP but, more broadly, situating praxis within the critical discourse in and beyond EAP that provokes deeper discussions about the purposes and practices of EAP. These rather binary and absolute options regarding the ideological orientations and theoretical commitments of EAP have, historically, mirrored dichotomous debates over the relative merits of ESAP and EGAP. However, there is a sense now that ESAP and EGAP is less about binary choices and more about situating options and choices on a spectrum (Hyland, 2016): ‘the choice between one or other side [ESAP or EGAP] depend[ing] upon practical circumstances more than ideological positioning’ (Flowerdew, 2016: 8).”

Ding, A. & Bodin-Galvez, J. 2019. Interdisciplinary EAP: Moving Beyond Aporetic English for General Academic Purposes. *The Language Scholar*.

<https://languagescholar.leeds.ac.uk/interdisciplinary-eap-moving-beyond-aporetic-english-for-general-academic-purposes/>

### ***Situating Pre-sessional Academic Skills***

**Nina McDermott - King’s College London**

Nina McDermott, Executive Director of King’s Foundations at King’s College London, will give a short talk followed by a Q&A on the approach King’s is taking to situating Pre-sessional academic skills development within the target discipline. King’s currently offers combined and on campus Pre-sessionals and is rolling out Faculty focused discipline specific Pre-sessionals across the university, which are co-created with the target Faculty. She will give an overview of the overall rationale and approach, summarising the opportunities, challenges and progress to date, including how this informs an approach to unlocking potential, as opposed to a deficit language/skills approach.

### ***Disciplinary in Pre-sessional: Navigating the Maze***

**Diana Scott & Louise Greener – Durham University**

Large pre-sessionals face the perennial three-way challenge of what they are required to do by UKVI, versus what they would like to do from a theoretically and experientially-informed standpoint, versus what they can do effectively given their local circumstances. The thorny sub-question is, of course, whether to TEGAP or TESAP, with the latter arguably providing the key to our value and status within the institution. For many years, we had a well-developed compromise at Durham that favoured majority disciplines only, pleased both teachers and students to some extent, but left us with discomfoting questions regarding what constitutes valid ESAP. Issues of scale made our approach increasingly unfeasible and prompted a welcome overhaul of our approach to discipline-integration in 2019, yet the results presented new issues as well as mixed reactions from students and staff. Our current desired solutions are risky in depending on various facets of institutional commitment which we are unsure of securing. By sharing with you the detail of our ongoing efforts, we hope to delineate the Pre-sessional TESAP conundrum in some depth, and invite the audience to consider, once more, what is a pre-sessional for?

### ***Prioritizing a Transnational and Interdisciplinary Praxis***

**Sara Ewing – Goldsmiths, University of London**

This session situates the curricula of UK Higher Education in historical, political and social conditions that are tied to colonial practices of difference and hierarchy. It focuses on identifying the spaces in EAP and Academic Skills programmes for transnational scholarship, and considers how practitioners can adapt their curricula and pedagogy to ensure it represents and includes all students. With the interdisciplinary reach of EAP and Academic Skills, this approach can influence the choices and practices of subject lecturers and others involved with module and programme design and assessment. This session is based on the principle that all of us who participate in this system are implicated in its relations of power, and thus have a responsibility to promote strategies for our students to access and engage with non-White, non-Western and non-heteronormative ideas. Prioritizing a transnational and interdisciplinary praxis enables an ongoing interrogation of what are assumed to be the most credible and legitimate foundations for constructing knowledge, and how these assumptions become embedded in the development of curricula and assessment. As such, this session encourages discussions focused on the importance of making ethical choices within all areas of academia.

### ***A Long and Winding Road***

**Fiona Aish – Target English; Conrad Heyns & Helen Hickey – Goldsmiths, University of London; Helen McAllister – University of the Arts London**

This talk will focus on the development of a Pre-session course over a 10-year period through the eyes of the three consecutive Heads of Programme who were at the helm during the time.

Given that the University of the Arts London focusses chiefly on Art and Design courses there has always been a central curriculum focus in terms of specificity, but even within the boundaries of this remit there was a tension between trying to be discipline specific and at the same time working within known language limitations and operational parameters.

This talk will chart the concerns, changes, challenges and accomplishments that were encountered along the way.

### ***Rethinking truisms. An argument for EGAP***

**Ruth Fordham – University of Manchester**

For decades many in the EAP community have levelled criticism at an EGAP approach, championing a more specific one. They have argued the merits of an ESAP approach and even suggested its superiority. This is in spite of largely only having anecdotal evidence to support its success and often without too much attention being paid to the breath of EAP and the applicability of one or both of the approaches to the students' needs and capabilities. Having experience of teaching on and running specific Pre-session programmes, at Faculty, School and Discipline level, alongside a general programme, I will talk about our past experiences and where discussions and reflections of these have led us to currently.