



University of
Kent

BALEAP PIM Online: 2020 Visions: Looking back and looking ahead.

International Programmes Department, University of Kent, Friday, 6th November, 2020 10.45-4.25pm GMT

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PROGRAMME DETAILS

Keynote 1: 11-11:40

Ms Olwyn Alexander, Senior Fellow of BALEAP

Rethinking EAP teaching: course design for quality learning online

The lockdown due to Covid 19 in March 2020 and the need to move suddenly to online teaching introduced a number of challenges to effective delivery of Pre-sessional English (PSE) programmes. Universities have been toying with the idea of online teaching for decades but some are further advanced than others, e.g. The Open University L185 EAP Online (2005) Coventry PSE Online (2018) delivered through FutureLearn. With only a matter of weeks or days to prepare, some institutions simply moved their campus-based materials online without considering the impact of this on teachers or the quality of student learning. In this plenary, I will introduce theories of course design for teaching online, which influenced the approach I implemented for the Heriot-Watt PSE Online. I will reflect on some of the constraints and challenges I encountered, especially in relation to teacher and student attitudes to online delivery. When teachers were able to engage with the change from teacher-led to materials led delivery, the move online enabled a more authentic academic experience for students and encouraged student autonomy. For teachers who could not envisage student learning happening anywhere but face-to-face in a classroom, the experience was less satisfactory, e.g. in this comment from the feedback survey: *'Teachers should be used more effectively than as biological answer keys'*. This comment points to the need for careful induction to explain the principles and not simply the tools for online delivery.

Keynote 2: 13.20 – 14.00

Dr Alex Ding, Associate Professor, School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds

Reflecting on Emerging Socio-political issues for the Profession

In this plenary I would like to explore some of the key socio-political issues for practitioners that have emerged during the pandemic. A heightened focus on socio-political concerns seems counter-intuitive as much professional activity and collegiality have been orientated towards very pressing and pragmatic, pedagogical and technical questions as remote teaching has been enforced. Yet, parallel to these questions, deeper concerns have been voiced around precarity, race, decolonising EAP, inclusivity, and the purposes, position, and power of EAP in HE. The emergence of these concerns may signal an ephemeral phase in EAP history or signal significant changes in the profession. If the latter is to take place and gain widespread endorsement in the profession, then these issues need to be critically debated. The purpose of this plenary is to outline these issues and raise questions for debate.



PRESENTATIONS

Presentation Stream 1: 11:50 – 12:50

Adjusting to the New Reality: The Sudden Shift to Online Education for a Pre-sessional Course (Pechua Kucha/Lightning)

James Lamont, Language and Study Skills Tutor, University of York

Summer 2020 may well be the year that online education at universities became mainstream. For many teachers, this year was also the first time for them to teach online. Teaching online involves some different skills and techniques to teaching in a classroom (Compton 2009; Hampel and Stickler 2005). I aimed to explore how teachers experienced the change to online teaching, and how they have adjusted their teaching style and techniques to meet this situation.

A questionnaire and focus group were used to gather data, with eight teachers from the University of York's International Pathways College participating in the focus group discussions. The results of the survey and discussion yielded three main findings. Firstly, while there were some technical issues with online provision, these were mitigated somewhat through teamwork and support, minimising the disruption to classes. Secondly, teachers experimented and changed established habits, in particular with instructions and lesson planning, in order to adapt to the online environment. Finally, teachers reported missing the physical classroom, but were impressed by the rapport and bonding among students.

This talk will be based on my article: "How International Pathways College Teachers are Responding to the Challenge of Teaching Online" due to be published in York Forum magazine.

The CLIE Pre-sessional: How we adapted our Pre-sessional programme for online delivery and what we have learnt

Fiona Wallace, Head of Pre-sessional, CLIE, UCL

Last summer like many Pre-sessional programmes we had a very limited time to convert our Pre-sessional programme for online delivery. This meant we were in the unenviable position at the end of the summer of being evaluated by students and teachers alike as though we had had months of preparation, but in the enviable position of having a very valuable online model from which to build on.

Both the flipped learning approach and course structure we adopted using small group seminars, daily student led study groups, weekly group tutorials and some one-to-one tutorials was very successful and is a model which we are now in the process of refining based on feedback.

It was rewarding to see how well students adapted to and enjoyed the autonomy the course structure allowed them and how productive they were working in student led study groups. Overall, they engaged in the e-learning skills they needed to succeed.

However, feedback highlights the need for learner training in e-learning skills and attributes including participating effectively in online seminars, engaging in discussion boards, peer review and self-reflection, and further developing our materials to make explicit the development of these skills and the relationship between asynchronous and synchronous tasks to better support students and teachers. This would also provide scope for a more dynamic assessment suite.

The CLIE Pre-sessional will be fully online again next summer and this presentation/talk will cover how we intend to build on what we have learnt.



Creating a buzz around academic skills development

Alison Leslie, EAP Lecturer, University of Leeds and Denise de Pauw, EAP Lecturer, University of Leeds

Like many of our EAP community, we were tasked to adapt our pre-session course to online delivery this summer in response to the COVID19 pandemic. Although this was seen as emergency adaptation to remote teaching rather than a course designed to be online, we had the benefit of time and previous experience of online delivery to carefully consider how to use the digital platforms available to maximise student learning and a sense of community. One of the innovations we introduced was discussion channels for each of the academic skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) through the use of Teams and Flipgrid. This presentation aims to reflect on how these discussion channels were one of the main successes of the course as they helped students to reflect on their skills development, develop their discussion skills, feel a sense of academic community and engage more critically with the theoretical content. In light of some of the literature on building discussions online, we will also share our thoughts on how and why we plan to include this form of asynchronous learning in future delivery of the course, even though this will potentially be a return to face-to-face learning.

Presentation Stream 2: 11:50 – 12:50

Live, Interrupted: Balancing Synchronous and Asynchronous English Language Teaching in Malaysia (Pechua Kucha/Lightning)

Mohd Ridhwan Abdullah, EAP Lecturer and Assoc. Prof. Bruce Howell, Head of Department, Foundation, Study and Language Institute, University of Reading, Malaysia

This short talk shares good practice based on direct experience in the context of teaching young Malaysians.

A UK 'branch campus' in Malaysia has to bridge expectations of both the UK institution and the local cultural landscape. The onset of 'lockdown' in March 2020 meant needing an immediate switch to online teaching, with an audience of UoRM's undergraduate or foundation students. Perceived expectations that 'live teaching is more valuable' initially led to synchronous live sessions as a default. Internal debate, experience and new institutional policy led to a more sophisticated approach, featuring aspects of flipped learning, adaptations specific to teaching each language skill, and realisations of opportunities to encourage student independence.

Three important aspects of our learning experience will be shared, with practical examples:

1. **Planning** – How to maintain student engagement and effective learning when using asynchronous methods as part of intensive teaching;
2. **Delivery** – The importance of what is on the screen at any one moment, and best use of tools such as cameras and online whiteboards;
3. **Collegial support** – Teaching staff need to help each other with teaching tips (etc.) to manage in such circumstances. This is vital when isolation is equally an issue for teachers as for students.



Leading a remote teaching team: reflections from an online Pre-sessional Course and implications for the future

Sarah Mattin, EAP Lecturer, ISLI, University of Reading

In this presentation, I will reflect on the experience of leading an online Pre-sessional Course with a focus on the teacher experience. This will provide a context for considering the future of remote course leadership for EAP practitioners.

For those of us who lead teams, our focus this year has inevitably been very much on managing change as colleagues adapt rapidly to new ways of working. However, when the dust settles and a more stable 'new normal' emerges, it seems likely that there will have been a lasting shift towards more flexible patterns of working. What does this mean for those of us whose roles include management and leadership responsibilities? In particular, how can we foster practitioner well-being in a remote teaching context?

The importance of occupational wellbeing is now widely acknowledged. Most large organisations have a wealth of wellbeing policies and resources which have been rapidly updated to address the current changes in many people's working lives as they transition to online working. However, institutional advice about promoting employee wellbeing tends to be necessarily generic and therefore careful scrutiny of our specific contexts is needed to identify where stressors may arise and how these can be managed. In this presentation, the Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007) will be used as a framework to identify potential stressors ('Demands') and buffers against job strain ('Resources') that might occur in the online EAP teaching context and to consider the longer term implications of this for team leaders.

The 'affordances' for PhD candidates of synchronous and asynchronous tools to establish communities of practice at two Italian University Doctoral schools

Robert Coates, EAP Lecturer, Milan University

Prestigious Italian universities such as Milan and Bocconi have well-established doctoral training programmes. I was asked to run EAP courses in both institutions concentrating on the needs to enable these PhD candidates to publish early in their research careers. With the arrival of COVID 19 this course moved online. I would like to document some of the positive outcome of this move with possible indications for future development.

What emerged from post-course feedback was that on-line delivery was actually preferred. Whereas in-class seminars were appreciated, they were also considered far removed from the reality of their experience and the inter-disciplinary spread of topics was too wide for candidates working in highly specialised fields.

However, the ability to work separately and then peer feeding back written genre on platforms such as Learn and Collaborate gave the candidates a much more realistic approach to their learning needs. The close and continuous integration of both synchronous and non-synchronous sessions created a shared identity for candidates who faced the same challenges. It also created a shared academic space both with the EAP practitioner and their own supervisors who found the on-line 'drop-in' option considerably more convenient than face-to-face classes.

Finally, the on-line option also made collaboration between international students and experts from the wider publishing community, both practical and easy. Both courses shared a final Collaborate webinar, linking the course objectives to the wider aims of the 'Publish or Perish' expectations of this highly competitive academic sector.



Presentation Stream 3: 14:05 – 14:55

Academic Language Learner Autonomy in EAP writing

Dr Stergiani Kostopoulou, Senior Teaching Fellow, Applied Language Centre University College Dublin

Despite its importance, learner autonomy has not received the attention it deserves in EAP writing instruction - neither as a theoretical construct that needs to be conceptualized in a universally accepted way nor as a teaching aim which needs to be achieved in the writing classroom.

To address this need, this paper puts forward the concept of academic language learner autonomy (ALLA) and proposes three classroom strategies through which it can be operationalised in the EAP writing classroom: i) assessment partnerships manifested in peer assessment and self-assessment activities which are scaffolded by and combined with teacher assessment, ii) sustainable feedback practices which 'support and inform the student on the current task, whilst also developing the ability to self-regulate performance on future tasks' (Carless et al., 2011: 397), and iii) corpus consultation literacy, which involves educating students to exploit language corpora as research and reference tools for peer review and self-editing of student writing.

It is explained how the above three strategies promote active learner involvement, reflection on the process and product of learning, and authentic and purposeful target language use; which are the theoretical underpinnings of language learner autonomy (Little, 1995; 2007; Little et al., 2017). The above three strategies are discussed in the context of an academic English writing module for EAP students at an Irish university and can be applied in any other EAP writing programme internationally with similar pedagogical needs.

E-being in e-Leeds: tech-driven simulations of an Anglophone socio-cultural environment for Covid-19-era EAP delivery

Deak Kirkham, EAP Lecturer, University of Leeds

The Covid-19 pandemic ushered in immediate and far-reaching changes to in- and pre-sessional EAP delivery. Among many significant shifts of practice, the loss to learners of a quotidian, socio-cultural experience of the Anglophone target-language host culture - and with it the linguistic, personal, interpersonal and academic benefits that this brings - was keenly felt by student cohorts. As this dimension of second language study is widely recognised to be significant (Corbett 2003, Kinginger 2009), the urgent question therefore arises: how can EAP providers simulate the Anglophone socio-cultural interactional context for the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic?

Three practical suggestions are given for the e-simulation of the lost benefits of a quotidian Anglophone context. Eminently practical and highly applicable, the suggestions arise out of the presenter's reflections on his experience of delivering on two Covid-era pre-sessional courses, one as tutor, one as co-lead. Tech-led with a clear co-working/group focus, two of the three suggestions can form part of a (modified) EAP delivery and are relatively easy to prepare and roll out, the third requiring more set-up but still speaking to the identified needs.

Critically, all three suggestions are underpinned by the Covid-19-era-independent contention that EAP delivery is optimal when a complementary English for Quotidian Purposes (EQP) component runs parallel to the academic skills and academic language input of a typical EAP delivery (Kirkham 2019). Attendees should expect minimal abstract theory and maximum practical applicability albeit with challenges to the *status quo* in EAP curriculum design and delivery.



Presentation Stream 4: 14:05 – 14:55

An In-sessional response to the 'new normal'

Dr Jeni Driscoll, EAP Tutor and Interim In-sessional English Co-Director, English Language Centre, University of Liverpool

This presentation will examine a response to the 'new normal' taken the In-sessional team at the University of Liverpool. It will review the decisions, rationales and processes which enabled to a coherent package of additional support to be put in place and sustained throughout the summer of 2020. It will also explore how our experience of this period has informed plans for In-sessional support in the coming academic year. Whilst the In-sessional provision as a whole will be considered, this presentation will focus specifically on the three key areas. Firstly, how the move to online learning has informed ISE pedagogy (and vice versa). This will be examined more closely with specific reference to working with Post-graduate Research students. Secondly, insights on PGR writing practices will be shared and strategies for how these practices can be supported in 'the new normal'. Finally, consideration will be given to how changes in the changing profile of PGR students accessing In-sessional English during this period has led to a re-evaluation of what the learner wants and needs. The challenges and questions for tutors and students, as well as the responses will be explored in order to establish key lessons learned from the experience.

Reimagining assessment on a pre-sessional course

Ania Rolinska, English Language Tutor & Lecturer, Glasgow School of Art

The pandemic has brought many challenges to EAP teaching, one of them being having to convert an intensive pre-sessional programme to online delivery at short notice. However, it has also allowed to reassess the course content, teaching methods and assessment and created opportunities for experimentation with more creative formats. The Glasgow School of Art Pre-sessional English Course for the Creative Disciplines had relied on exams in the past to assess the students' listening and reading skills. While this method provided the teaching and administrative staff with a picture of the students' competencies, it did not feel sufficiently authentic and fit for purpose whereby the purpose is understood as readiness for later academic study in practice-based disciplines. Since the exams were challenging to implement online for the course management and teaching team, the decision was taken to try out portfolio assessment instead. This has proved to be an instructive experiment, showing potential for making the assessment aligned more constructively with the course learning outcomes and teaching activities. The presentation explores that potential based on the feedback from the teachers and students, reporting on the practicalities, perceived advantages, challenges and possible ways forward.



WORKSHOPS:

Workshop Stream 1: 15:05 – 16.20

World Café Discussion: Visions of social responsibility in EAP

The BALEAP Social Justice SIG (extended session)

This EAP for Social Justice SIG workshop will adopt the format of a World Café where EAP practitioners and researchers are invited to discuss an overarching question: *What would EAP look like if social responsibility were placed at its core?* This exploration will be supported by sub-questions focused around pedagogy/curriculum/research, and explored through practitioner/researcher/student perspectives.

These questions will give participants the opportunity to respond to and develop themes explored in Alex Ding's plenary talk (e.g. precarity, race, inclusivity, decolonising EAP), if they wish to do so, but, equally, they may wish to bring other relevant themes to the discussion. Participants will be encouraged to look ahead and share their own visions and practical ideas for how social responsibility might become central to EAP.

In recognition of the importance of translating ideas into action in the field of social justice work, we aim to record and anonymise participants' ideas to then share with the EAP community through our [website](#) after the event. We also intend to study the insights gained from these discussions to gauge the areas of social responsibility in EAP which participants feel warrant most attention going forward; this will inform and facilitate the creation of working groups over the next few months to take action in these areas and to bring these visions for the future closer to the present reality.

Workshop Stream 2: 15:05 – 16.20

Mentoring Effectively Online

Siobhan Cronin, Pre-sessional Tutor, University of Kent

As EAP courses are likely to continue online or blended for the foreseeable, students greatly benefit from personalised, focused tutor-feedback and guidance, both synchronously and asynchronously. Effective e-mentoring can equip and empower learners to take charge of their own learning as well as promoting reflection, interdependence and self/peer-assessment.

This workshop will discuss and explore the following:

- 1) What do learners want and need now?
- 2) Tools that have worked and why while mentoring EAP pre-sessional students online with Kent University in summer 2020:
- 3) Mentoring Techniques that have worked and why
- 4) Mentoring Scenarios and groupwork

Using Socrative for Assessment in EAP

Kinga Maior, University of Glasgow

Due to growing demand in Higher Education based on our students' preferences and expectations of integrating technology seamlessly into their studies with a view to succeed in their career accomplishments (Dahlstrom, 2012), blended learning has received significant attention in the past decade. This workshop will focus on *Socrative*, one of the most popular online platforms used at tertiary level (Wash, 2014). Previous research indicates that *Socrative* is preferred by most students with regards to formative and summative assessment (Lim, 2017) and engagement with learning (Kaya and Balta, 2016).



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Therefore, in order to encourage its application in the EAP classroom, I would like to invite the workshop participants to take a 5-6 minute online test on *citations*, Harvard Referencing, see <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/library/subjecthelp/referencing/harvardreferencing/referringtosourcescitingwithinthetext/>. Then, we will follow with a critical evaluation of the platform. The workshop will conclude with a discussion of the benefits and challenges of *Socrative's* suitability for enhancing both formative and summative assessment (e.g. writing/listening tests). Your individual feedback will be shared live on Padlet as we progress through the workshop (see https://padlet.com/kinga_maior/SocrativePIM2020). This Padlet will be publicly available 24/7 during and after the BALEAP PIM. It is hoped that the workshop's collated findings can contribute to the positive integration of technology for assessment in EAP.