

# Academic Language Learner Autonomy in EAP writing

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**BALEAP PIM**

**2020 Visions: Looking back and looking ahead**



The global forum for  
EAP professionals

## Overview

- The need to rethink student autonomy in EAP writing
- Introducing the concept of **Academic Language Learner Autonomy (ALLA)**
- **Theoretical principles of ALLA:**
  - a) learner involvement, responsibility and agency
  - b) critical reflection (on the process and product of learning)
  - c) authentic use of language (as the medium of task performance, thought, communication, metacognition & metalinguistic reflection)
- **Classroom Strategies which promote ALLA:**
  - a) Peer and self-review of writing
  - b) Feedback and assessment literacy
  - c) Corpus consultation literacy



## **Learner Autonomy as the ultimate goal of EAP teaching**

The aim of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) practice is to ‘ensure continued learning beyond the lifespan and location of EAP instruction’ (Alexander, Argent and Spencer, 2008: 271).

The aim of EAP practice is to ‘enable independence’ or nurture ‘instruction-independent students’ (deChazal, 2014).

EAP writing instruction aims to develop autonomous and ‘strategic writers who will be equipped to manage their own learning and writing processes beyond their language/writing class’ (Ferris, 2018: 89).

## 7. Student Autonomy

ALLA in EAP writing

An EAP teacher will understand the importance of student autonomy in academic contexts and will employ tasks, processes and interactions that require students to work effectively in groups or independently as appropriate.



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Knowledge & understanding of –	Ability to –	Possible indicators –
the principles of student autonomy	make the link between autonomy and academic study explicit to students	demonstrate the promotion of student choice/ active engagement/ reflection/ students taking responsibility in syllabus/tasks/lesson plans/ materials
the use of new technologies to support autonomous learning	stage the sequence of learning activities from guided to facilitated to autonomous	require students to plan, draft and present larger summative tasks
how to support student autonomy through group activities and individual tutoring	foster student autonomy through group activities as well as one-to-one tutorials	require students to show how they took responsibility for

## Why we need to rethink student autonomy in EAP writing

It is only recently that second language (L2) writing has become 'less about what exactly L2 writing teachers should do for their students and more about how to facilitate learner autonomy' (Belcher, 2013: 438).

→ Need for **a student-centred approach to teaching & researching academic writing**

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→ Need for **a student-centred approach to teaching & researching academic writing**

The emphasis has been mainly on students' ability to independently manage the academic writing process but not their language learning.

→ Need to emphasize autonomy in terms of **language development** (cf. Little, 2007; Little et al., 2017)

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→ Need to emphasize autonomy in terms of **language development** (cf. Little, 2007; Little et al., 2017)

Even when the importance of student control over language use is acknowledged, there appears to be a lack of clarity about how to meet this challenge.

→ Need to identify **classroom strategies and instructional activities** which can help students develop as successful autonomous academic writers.

## Language Learner Autonomy in second language education

**Language learner autonomy** is defined as ‘students’ capacity to manage the growth of their *target language proficiency* in addition to regulating the *process of their own learning*’ (Little, 2007: 26, emphasis added).



**Academic Language Learner Autonomy (ALLA) in EAP writing  
(Kostopoulou, 2020)**

## Academic Language Learner Autonomy (ALLA) in EAP writing (Kostopoulou, 2020)

ALLA can be understood as student writers' ability to:

- manage the **processes involved in academic writing**  
(i.e. understanding assignment requirements, idea/content generation, critical engagement with sources, planning, drafting, asking for feedback from others, revising acting on feedback, editing, proofreading)

## Academic Language Learner Autonomy (ALLA) in EAP writing (Kostopoulou, 2020)

ALLA can be understood as student writers' ability to:

- manage the **processes involved in academic writing**
- research the **written academic discourse of their chosen discipline** and shape their texts according to **genre and rhetorical expectations**  
(understand the target audience, articulate a purpose for writing, analyse structure, rhetorical moves and form-function correlations)

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- research the **written academic discourse of their chosen discipline** and shape their texts according to **genre and rhetorical expectations**
- address their **academic language needs** and take control of their **linguistic development**

(use vocabulary, lexical patterns, rhetorical grammar effectively, self-correct language errors and self-edit writing, identify error patterns and areas for further linguistic development and use strategies to address these)

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- develop their **metacognitive** and **metalinguistic awareness** to further improve their academic writing and language skills

## Academic Language Learner Autonomy (ALLA) in EAP writing (Kostopoulou, 2020)

ALLA can be understood as student writers' ability to:

- develop their **metacognitive** and **metalinguistic awareness** to further improve their academic writing and language skills

'**Metacognitive** knowledge includes all facts learners acquire about their own cognitive processes as they are applied and used to gain knowledge and acquire skills in varied situations' (Wenden, 1998: 34) (e.g. planning learning, self-monitoring, self-evaluation, self-reinforcement, etc.)

**Metalinguistic** awareness: "the ability to focus attention on language as an object in itself or to think abstractly about language and, consequently, to play with or manipulate language" (Jessner, 2006: 42).

## Academic Language Learner Autonomy (ALLA) in EAP writing (Kostopoulou, 2020)

ALLA involves student writers' ability to:

- manage the **processes involved in academic writing**
- research the **written academic discourse of their chosen discipline** and shape their texts according to **genre and rhetorical expectations**
- address their **academic language needs** and take control of their **linguistic development**
- develop their **metacognitive** and **metalinguistic awareness** to further improve their academic writing and language skills

ALLA develops experientially and NOT in strict isolation from others! It is both an individual and a social construct – independence is built through inter-dependence (Little, 2001) - writing is a social (and not a solitary) activity (Murray, 2005), in line with social constructivist/interactionist theories of learning

## Preconditions for ALLA

ALLA can be operationalised through:

- a) active learner participation, responsibility and agency**
- b) critical reflection (on the content and process of learning)**
- c) meaningful and appropriate target language use**

(cf. Little, 2007; Little et al., 2017)

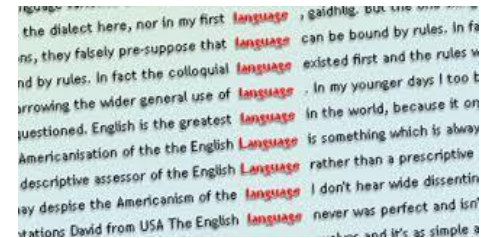
- d) writing, feedback and assessment partnerships**



## Fostering ALLA in the EAP writing classroom

Integration of 3 interacting and mutually-supportive strategies:

- a) Peer and self-review of writing
- b) Feedback and assessment literacy
- c) Corpus consultation literacy





## UCD Pre-Master's Pathway Programme

### LANG10620 Academic Reading and Writing II

- Compulsory credit-bearing module
- 6 contact hours per week (but a lot of autonomous learning activities!)
- Chinese students from mixed disciplines (EGAP but subject-specific research topics)



#### Assessment:

- Attendance/Participation: 10%
- **ePortfolio of Academic Research Writing: 50%**
- Mid-Term Reading and Writing Exam: 10%
- Final Reading and Writing Exam: 30%





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- Compulsory credit-bearing module
- 6 contact hours per week (including learning activities!)
- Chinese students from research projects (at subject-specific research topics)

Annotated Bibliography  
Research Project  
Reflective Essay  
(incl. Action Plan)

#### Assessment:

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## ePortfolio contents - Part 1

**Mid-term  
Annotated Bibliography  
(1000 words)**

**[Weeks 1-6]**

- **Topic (brief summary & rationale) and research questions**
- **1st Draft of Annotated Bibliography (AB)**
- **1st Draft with peer feedback**
- **2nd Draft (revised in response to peer feedback)**
- **Tutor feedback on 2nd Draft**
- **Revised final version of AB (submitted for grading)**

## ePortfolio contents - Part 2

Final Research Project  
(2500 words)

[Weeks 7-12]

- **Research Plan (Topic & Research Questions) & Draft outline** (including references)
- **Tutor feedback** on Research plan & Draft outline
- **Revised Outline**
- **1st Drafts of each section** (i.e. abstract, introduction, body, conclusion)
- **Peer feedback on each section (from 2 reviewers)**
- **Revised drafts** of each section (with a self-editing history demonstrating clear evidence of revisions made for improvement in response to peer feedback)
- **A complete 1st Draft**
- **Tutor feedback** on 1st Draft
- **1:1 Tutorial** focusing on Revised Draft
- **Final version of RP (submitted for grading)**

## ePortfolio contents - Part 3

### Reflective Essay & Action Plan (500 words)

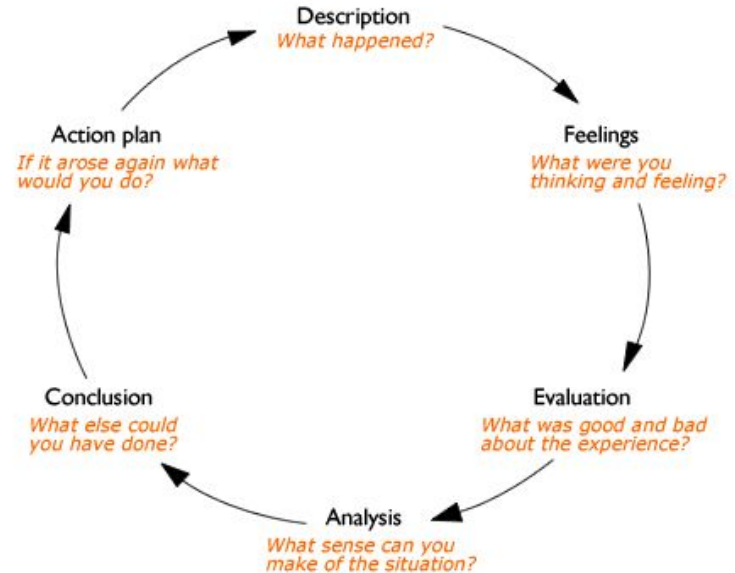
[Week 12]

Aim: To demonstrate an awareness of what they have learned and the strategies and goals they have formed relating to their future studies.

We do not learn from  
experience... we learn  
from reflecting on  
experience.

- John Dewey

### Reflective Cycle (Gibbs, 1988)



# ALLA in EAP writing

## Brightspace ePortfolio Tool



Stergiani Kostopoulou



Help ▾ My Brightspace ▾ Assessment Summary Explore

ePortfolio > Explore > Literature Review\_Ziying Guo

Literature Review\_Ziying Guo ▾

Ziying Guo | 15 April 6:24 PM | 18 items

🔍 [View all items shared by this user](#)

Items in Collection

Search For...



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	Item Details	Last Modified ▾
	<a href="#">Ziying Guo_Final essay 1st draft.docx</a> ▾ Open File: Ziying Guo_Final essay 1st ... [DOCX 24.82 KB]	15 April 2019 6:24 PM
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	<a href="#">Ziying Guo_Conclusion_1st Draft.docx</a> ▾	08 April 2019 1:04 AM

# ***A roadmap of your academic research writing journey***

UCD Applied Language Centre

Pre-Master's Programme 2018/2019

English for Academic Writing

## **Planning and Writing your Research Project**

The table below shows your academic research writing journey, focusing on both the **process**, i.e. the different stages involved in producing your written assignments, and the **products**, i.e. the artefacts produced at different stages (e.g. annotated bibliography, outlines, drafts, final literature review, etc.). Please use this to set deadlines with the members of your writing group in order to achieve the different milestones.

	<b>Task</b>	<b>Skills Needed</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
1.	Select a research topic and develop a focus.	thinking academically	Subject.	Week 1
2.	Think about what you know about the subject. Write it down in some way.	brainstorming	Diagrams, <a href="#">mindmaps</a> or notes.	Week 1
3.	Go to the library and find relevant journal articles or books.	library/research skills	List of relevant sources.	Week 2
4.	Study your source material.	reading skills: skimming and scanning	List of materials studied.	Weeks 2 & 3
5.	Make notes on these books and articles. Record full details of the materials you use.	reading in detail selecting & note-taking paraphrasing/summarising	Note-taking and note-making...	Weeks 2 & 3
6.	Compile an Annotated Bibliography	summarise and critically evaluate sources and justify their relevance to your topic	Annotated Bibliography (Summary & 5 Bibliographical entries)	Submission: <b>Monday 25th February (1pm)</b>
7.	Narrow your topic/Develop a focus Organise your Literature Review with a <a href="#">mindmap</a>	critical reading planning	Mindmap Draft outline	Week 6



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Pre-Master's Programme 2018/2019

English for Academic Writing

## Planning and Writing your Research Project

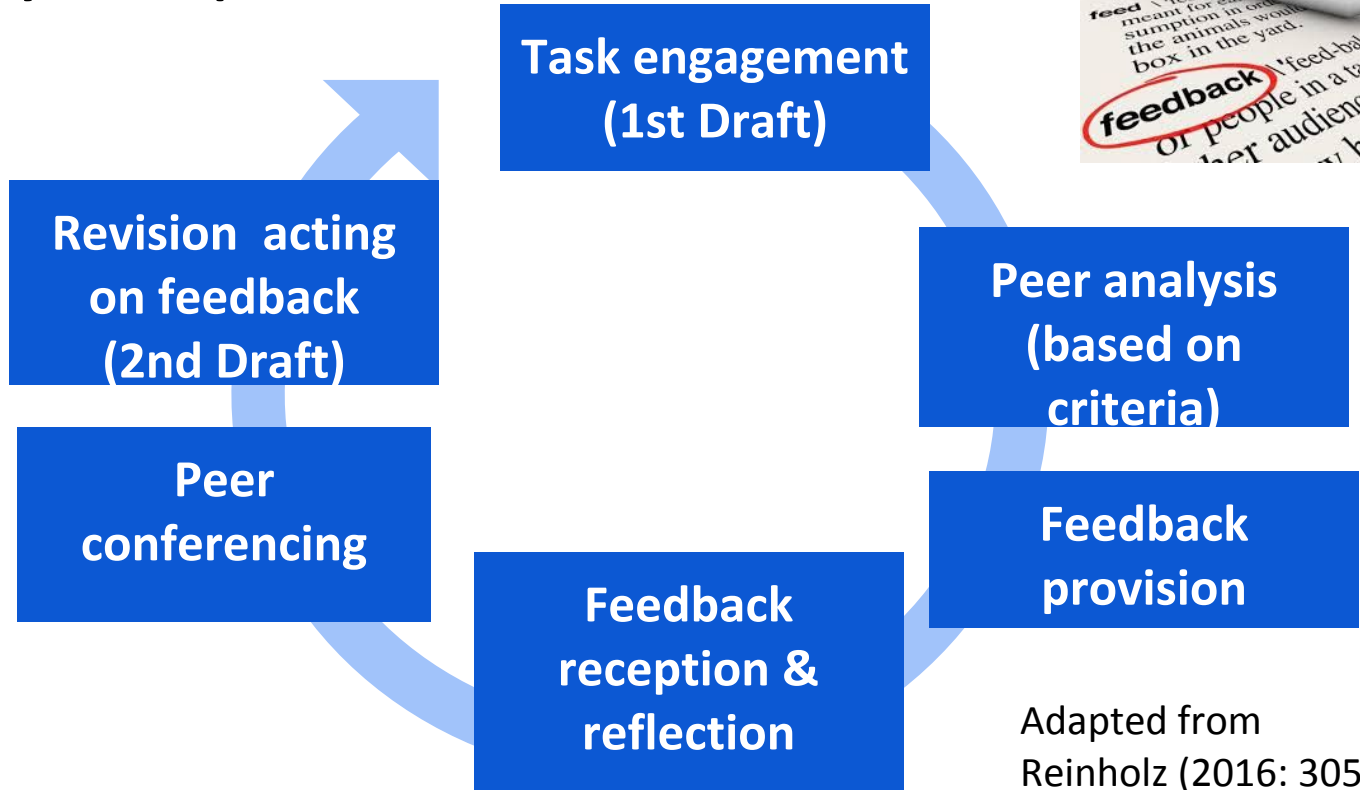
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3.	Go to the library and find relevant journal articles or books.	library/research skills	List of relevant sources.	Week 2
4.	Study your source material.	reading skills: skimming and scanning	List of materials studied.	Weeks 2 & 3
5.	Make notes on these books and articles. Record full details of the materials you use.	reading in detail selecting & note-taking paraphrasing/summarising	Note-taking and note-making.	Weeks 2 & 3
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## Writing groups



## Iterative cycles of peer review



Adapted from  
Reinholz (2016: 305)

PEER REVIEW OF INTRODUCTION

Author's Name:

Title of Assignment:

Reviewer's Name:

**Peer review instruction: Please use the following checklist to evaluate your classmate's introduction. Write YES or NO to indicate whether the author has achieved each objective and provide constructive feedback comments explaining what changes/improvements can be made (if necessary).**

1. Gives background information and context moving from the general to the particular
2. Provides a rationale for researching and writing the text (i.e. explain why the topic is important, interesting, etc.)
3. Defines any key terms necessary to the understanding of the text
4. Presents relevant and convincing evidence from other studies
5. Cites sources appropriately using the Harvard Referencing System
6. States the overall purpose and aims of the text
7. Gives a clear stance (thesis statement)
8. States how the whole text is organised (give an outline) in the final paragraph

## Checklists for Peer Review

Closed-ended Qs:

**Assessment criteria - analytic rubric mediated through checklists**

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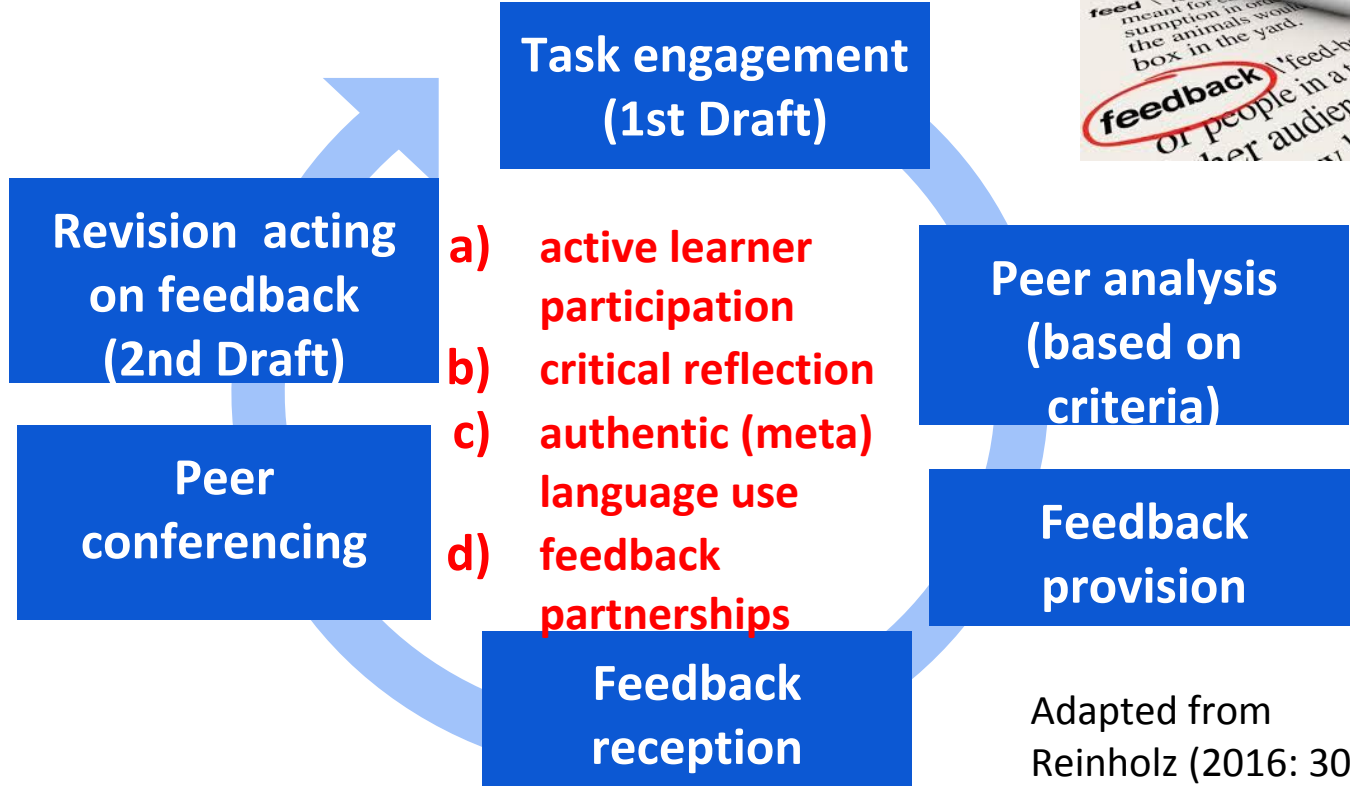
Closed-ended Qs:

**Assessment criteria - analytic rubric mediated through checklists**

Open-ended Qs:

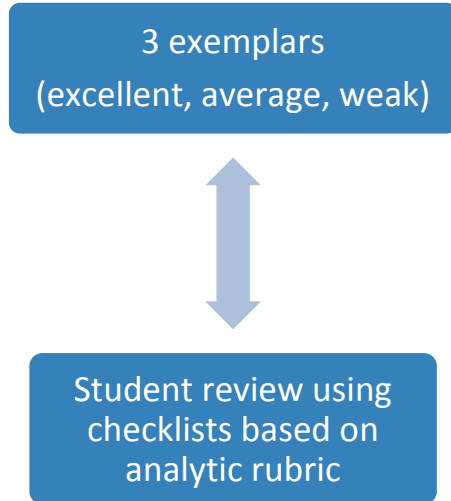
- **What do you like the most about this Introduction?**
- **What can be improved?**  
**(Please make concrete suggestions for improvement).**
- **What have you learned from viewing this Introduction that can help you to improve your own draft Introduction?**

## Iterative cycles of peer review



## Analysing exemplars to promote feedback and assessment literacy

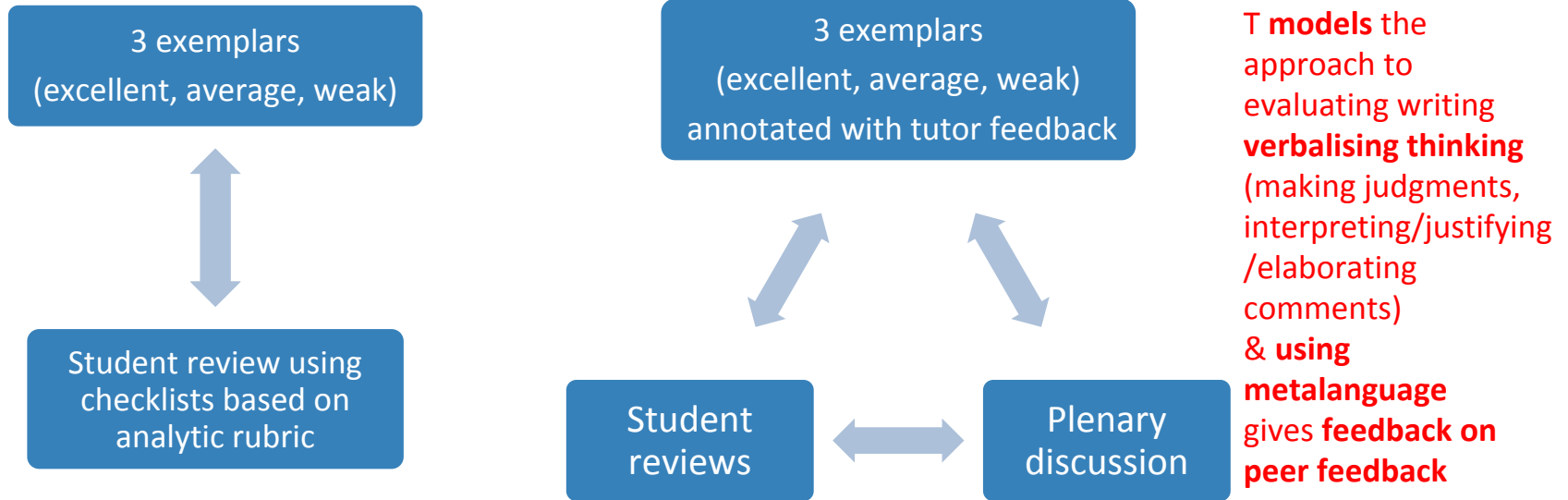
[cf. *From teacher transmission of information to student feedback literacy* (Carless, 2020)]



**Aim:** To ‘recognize different levels of quality in works of the types they are expected to produce’ (complex appraisal; Sadler, 2010), internalise assessment criteria, improve student-generated feedback, develop (meta)cognitive & (meta)linguistic skills.

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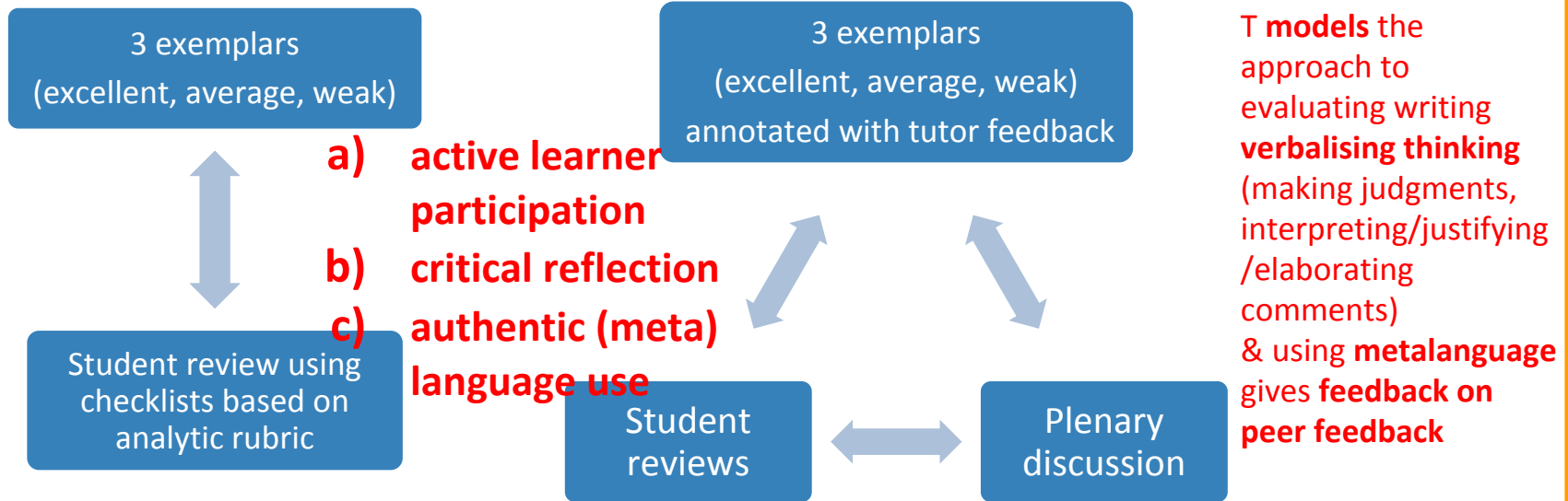
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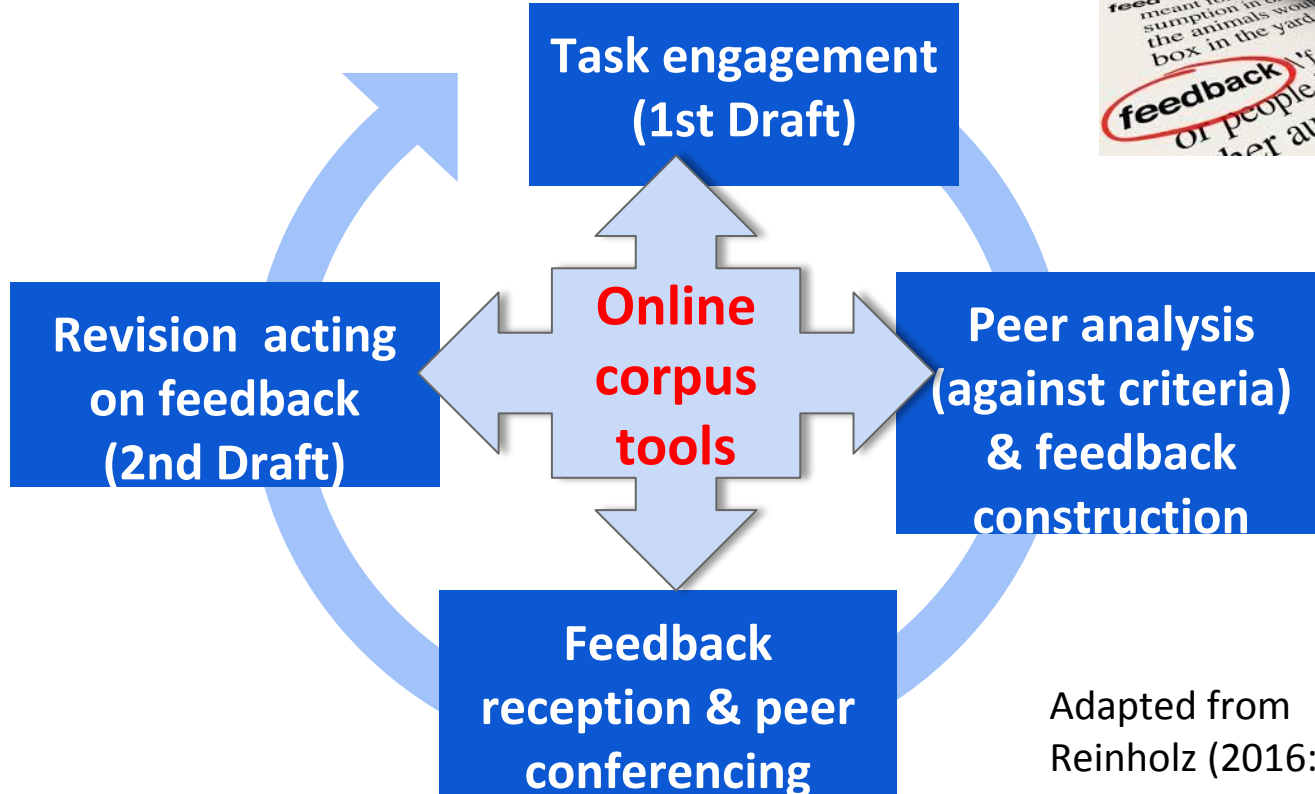
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## Iterative cycles of peer review

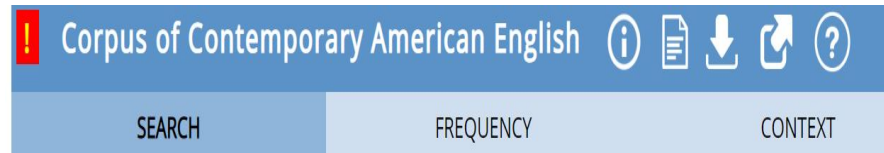


Adapted from  
Reinholz (2016: 305)

## Training workshops



**BAWE QUICKLINKS**  
(Nesi, Vincent, and Quinn)



## Corpus-assisted academic writing

Students are taught how to access corpus data and perform online corpus queries for the purposes of:

**'pattern hunting'** aimed at 'getting ideas on what to write about and how to express it' and

**'pattern defining'** aimed at 'finding models for a specific target pattern in terms of words and structure'

(Kennedy and Miceli, 2010: 32)

**Peer/self-correction of language errors** (misused lexical items/ill-formed collocations) in their own texts acting on **error-coded teacher feedback**.

(cf. Boulton, 2010; Charles, 2007; Cobb, 1999; Flowerdew, 2005; O'Sullivan, 2007; Yoon, 2008, 2011)

# Interacting with corpus data provided by the writing tutor

# BAWE QUICKLINKS (Nesi, Vincent, and Quinn)

**CONCORDANCE** British Academic Written English Corpus (BAWE) Not logged in Log in

>

>

>

<input type="checkbox"/>	Details	Left context	KWIC ↓	Right context
1	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Essay</i>	of violence on television. </s><s> Secondly,	<b>research demonstrates that</b>	aggressive images in the media and on televi
2	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Essay</i>	nted in the same display. </s><s> Traditional	<b>research found that</b>	when participants were presented with a cue
3	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Research report</i>	wealth of research on the topic. </s><s> This	<b>research has demonstrated that</b>	the simple number of people that are present
4	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Essay</i>	response period. </s><s> Despite this, some	<b>research has proposed that</b>	imitation is merely an innate releasing mecha
5	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Essay</i>	ly until about 18-24 months. </s><s> Recent	<b>research has shown that</b>	a baby's knowledge of objects is more sophis
6	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Essay</i>	02) deals with problems at present; however	<b>research has shown that</b>	methods of prejudice reduction can be succe:
7	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Essay</i>	re history of Anabaptism. </s><s> Yet recent	<b>research has shown that</b>	Anabaptism can be seen as a culmination of f
8	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Essay</i>	s> BverfGE, 47, 255, 263 </s><s> However,	<b>research has shown that</b>	the staatsanwalt carry out investigations ther
9	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Critique</i>	obesity levels is negligible. </s><s> Recent	<b>research has shown that</b>	even consumers that are likely to switch to lo
10	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Essay</i>	/ users store and retrieve language and their	<b>research has suggested that</b>	users store language not just as single items
11	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Essay</i>	atches ages nine and ten. </s><s> Thus, the	<b>research indicates that</b>	the understanding of the different elements of
12	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Essay</i>	fter results in the pupils. </s><s> The above	<b>research indicates that</b>	children can attend to things a concept at a til

e.g.  
**description/**  
**explanation**  
**evidence/support**  
**disagreement**  
**describing aims**  
**referring to visuals**  
**problems/issues**  
**hedging**

<https://bawequicklinks.coventry.domains/encyclopedia/tag/evidence-support/>

## Interrogating a corpus

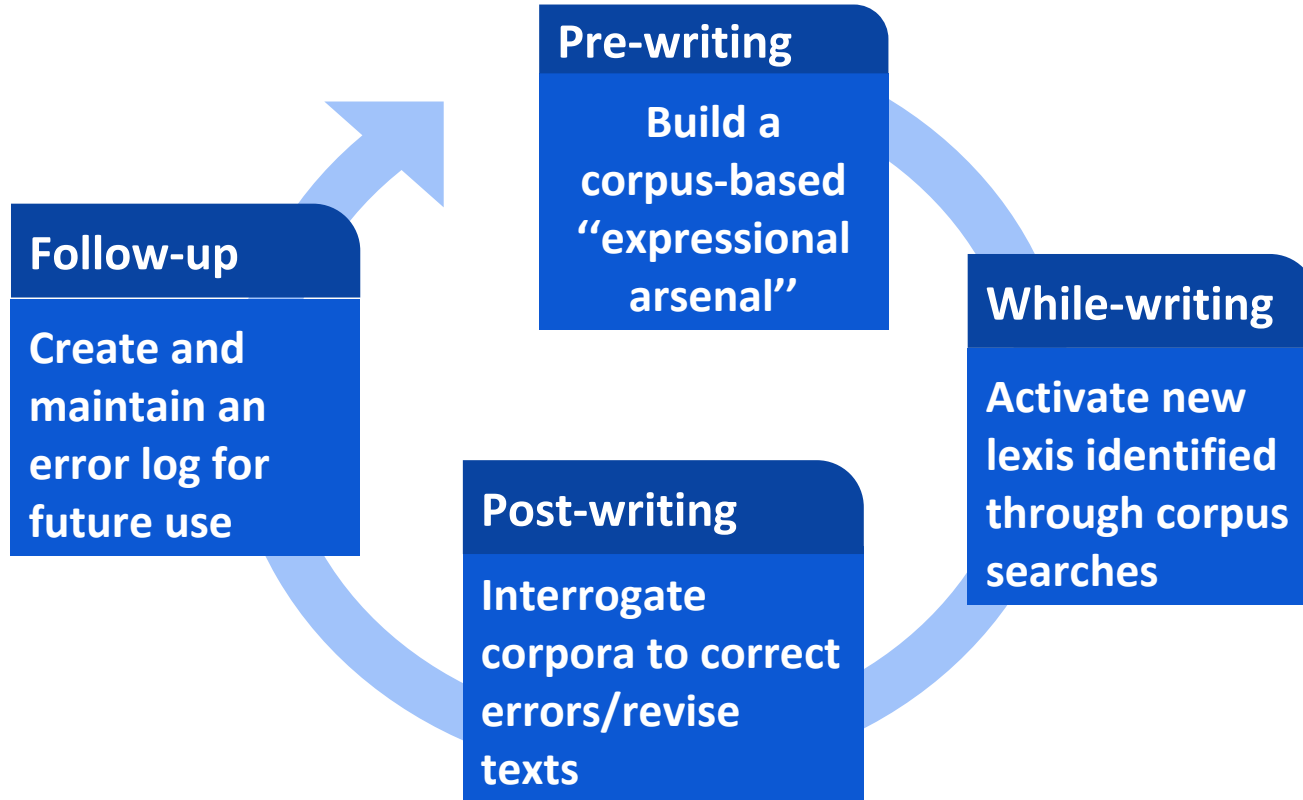
To **self-correct errors and revise writing** in the light of error-coded teacher feedback

### In pairs:

1. Formulate a question
2. Devise a research strategy
3. Observe the data and focus on the relevant ones
4. Draw conclusions
5. Correct the errors & write correct reformulations
6. Report back to the class

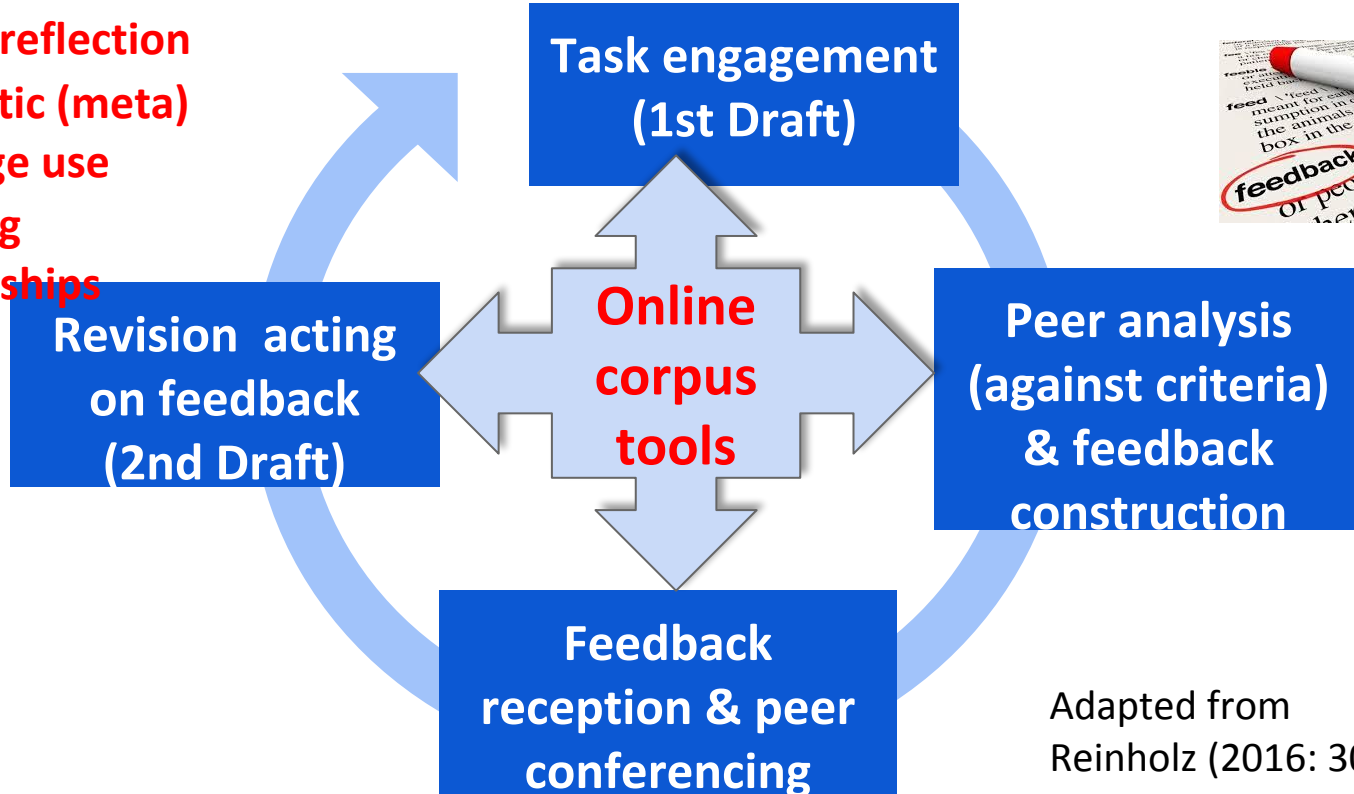
Students **verbalise their thinking process using the target language** and the teacher provides **scaffolding** and acts as a **mediator** between learners and corpus data and/or the corpus.

## Corpus-assisted academic writing



## Cycles of Peer Review & corpus-assisted writing

- a) Active learner participation
- b) Critical reflection
- c) Authentic (meta) language use
- d) Learning partnerships



Adapted from  
Reinholz (2016: 305)

## ALLA through a learner-centred approach to writing, feedback & assessment

- Students take ownership of the **academic writing process** and their **individual language development**
- They become **agents for feedback and assessment** and develop the ability **critically-evaluate** written academic work, as the focus shifts from teacher feedback to **student-generated feedback**
- **Critical reflection** forms an integral part of their experience (reflection on academic writing as a product/process, reflection on language use/learning)
- **Intensive authentic use of the target language** when writing, interacting with corpus data and metalinguistic proficiency when working in pairs and verbalizing their thinking process, - 'collaborative metatalk', i.e. '[the] use [of] language to reflect on language use' (Swain, 1998: 68).



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**Thank you!**

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