Academic Language Learner Autonomy in EAP writing

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BALEAP PIM
2020 Visions: Looking back and looking ahead
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

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.

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

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

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● 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 in EAP writing

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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- Mid-Term Reading and Writing Exam: 10%
- Final Reading and Writing Exam: 30%

Additional assignments:
- Annotated Bibliography
- Research Project
- Reflective Essay (incl. Action Plan)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ePortfolio contents - Part 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mid-term</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1000 words)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Weeks 1-6]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Topic (brief summary &amp; rationale) and research questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1st Draft of Annotated Bibliography (AB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1st Draft with <strong>peer feedback</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 2nd Draft (revised in response to peer feedback)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Tutor feedback</strong> on 2nd Draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Revised final version of AB (submitted for grading)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Research Project (2500 words)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Weeks 7-12]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 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)

ALLA in EAP writing
Reflective Essay & Action Plan (500 words)

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

[Week 12]

Reflective Cycle (Gibbs, 1988)

Description
What happened?

Feelings
What were you thinking and feeling?

Evaluation
What was good and bad about the experience?

Analysis
What sense can you make of the situation?

Conclusion
What else could you have done?

Action plan
If it arose again what would you do?
## ALLA in EAP writing

### Brightspace ePortfolio Tool

**Literature Review Ziying Guo**

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

- View all items shared by this user

**Items in Collection**

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<td>15 April 2019 6:24 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ziyeng Guo_Abstract_Peer reviewB.docx</td>
<td>08 April 2019 1:06 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ziyeng Guo_Conclusion_Peer reviewB.docx</td>
<td>08 April 2019 1:04 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ziyeng Guo_Conclusion_2st Draft.docx</td>
<td>08 April 2019 1:04 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ziyeng Guo_Conclusion_1st Draft.docx</td>
<td>08 April 2019 1:04 AM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A roadmap of your academic research writing journey

Planning and Writing your Research Project

The table below shows you 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.

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

**Writing groups**

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<th>Product</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select a research topic and develop a focus.</td>
<td>thinking academically</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Week 1</td>
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</tr>
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<td>List of relevant sources</td>
<td>Week 2</td>
</tr>
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<td>critical reading planning</td>
<td>Mindmap Draft outline</td>
<td>Week 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Iterative cycles of peer review

- Task engagement (1st Draft)
- Peer analysis (based on criteria)
- Feedback provision
- Feedback reception & reflection
- Revision acting on feedback (2nd Draft)
- Peer conferencing

Adapted from Reinholz (2016: 305)

ALLA in EAP writing
Checklists for Peer Review

Closed-ended Qs:
Assessment criteria - analytic rubric mediated through checklists

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

**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 reviewing this Introduction that can help you to improve your own draft Introduction?
**Iterative cycles of peer review**

- **Task engagement (1st Draft)**
  - a) active learner participation
  - b) critical reflection
  - c) authentic (meta) language use
  - d) feedback partnerships

- **Revision acting on feedback (2nd Draft)**

- **Peer conferencing**

- **Peer analysis (based on criteria)**

- **Feedback reception**

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Adapted from Reinholz (2016: 305)
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.

3 exemplars
(excellent, average, weak)

Student review using checklists based on analytic rubric
Analysing exemplars to promote feedback and assessment literacy

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

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- 3 exemplars (excellent, average, weak)
- Student review using checklists based on analytic rubric
- 3 exemplars (excellent, average, weak) annotated with tutor feedback
- Plenary discussion
- T models the approach to evaluating writing verbalising thinking (making judgments, interpreting/justifying/elaborating comments) & using metalanguage gives feedback on peer feedback
- Student reviews

ALLA in EAP writing
Analysing exemplars to promote feedback and assessment literacy

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

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- Plenary discussion

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- b) critical reflection
- c) authentic (meta)language use
Iterative cycles of peer review

Task engagement (1st Draft)

Revision acting on feedback (2nd Draft)

Online corpus tools

Peer analysis (against criteria) & feedback construction

Feedback reception & peer conferencing

Adapted from Reinholz (2016: 305)
Training workshops

Corpus of Contemporary American English

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.

Interacting with corpus data provided by the writing tutor

Concordance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Left context</th>
<th>KWIC</th>
<th>Right context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>of violence on television. &lt;$/$&gt; Secondly.</td>
<td>research demonstrates that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>existed in the same display. &lt;$/$&gt; Traditional</td>
<td>research found that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Research report</td>
<td>wealth of research on the topic. &lt;$/$&gt; This</td>
<td>research has demonstrated that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>response period. &lt;$/$&gt; Despite this, some</td>
<td>research has proposed that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>ly until about 18-24 months. &lt;$/$&gt; Recent</td>
<td>research has shown that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>02) deals with problems at present; however</td>
<td>research has shown that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>the history of Anabaptism. &lt;$/$&gt; Yet recent</td>
<td>research has shown that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>s&gt; BverfGE, 47, 255, 263 &lt;$/$&gt; However,</td>
<td>research has shown that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Critique</td>
<td>obesity levels is negligible. &lt;$/$&gt; Recent</td>
<td>research has shown that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>/ users store and retrieve language and their</td>
<td>research has suggested that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>vocabularies nine and ten. &lt;$/$&gt; Thus, the</td>
<td>research indicates that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>litter results in the pupils. &lt;$/$&gt; The above</td>
<td>research indicates that</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

BAWE QUICKLINKS
(Nesi, Vincent, and Quinn)
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

**Pre-writing**
Build a corpus-based “expressional arsenal”

**While-writing**
Activate new lexis identified through corpus searches

**Post-writing**
Interrogate corpora to correct errors/revise texts

**Follow-up**
Create and maintain an error log for future use
Cycles of Peer Review & corpus-assisted writing

Task engagement (1st Draft)

Online corpus tools

Feedback reception & peer conferencing

Revision acting on feedback (2nd Draft)

Peer analysis (against criteria) & feedback construction

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).
References
References
Kostopoulou, S. (2020, accepted pending revisions). Fostering academic language learner autonomy in EAP writing through assessment partnerships, sustainable feedback, and corpus consultation literacy. *TEANGA, the Journal of the Irish Association for Applied Linguistics Vol. 27*.
Thank you!

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