With the increase in students joining academic English-language courses, the teaching of English for Academic Purposes is a rapidly expanding profession. There are, however, few specialist handbooks for the practising teacher in this field.

_EAP Essentials: a teacher’s guide to principles and practice_ is grounded in the authors’ extensive practical experience in the EAP classroom. It bridges the gap between the theory and practice of EAP teaching, by distilling the insights from recent research into ideas that can be applied in teaching and materials development.

_EAP Essentials_ builds confidence through a range of practical tasks and by providing case studies of real teachers and students. This enables the teacher to reflect on best practice and identify ways to develop their own teaching skills.

_EAP Essentials_ offers original and practical ideas appropriate to a wide variety of contexts. The accompanying free CD also provides a large number of well-tried materials that can be copied for use within the classroom.

The book contains ten chapters, each one underpinned by up-to-date research, and backed up with a list of recommended further reading.

Olwyn Alexander, Sue Argent and Jenifer Spencer have taught EAP in further and higher education for many years. They are currently based at Heriot-Watt University where they teach EAP to students on applied science, engineering and management degrees, as well as running a short professional development course for EAP teachers. They have also collaborated in writing two distance-learning courses for EAP students.
Acknowledgements

The principles and practices in this book have attached themselves to us over three lifetimes of teaching. Although we reference many as originating from books, journals and conferences, adopting them as indispensable parts of our thinking is largely the result of seeing them at work in teachers and students we have known. For this, we owe a great debt of gratitude to staff, students and colleagues in:

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British Association of Lecturers of EAP

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Institute for Applied Language Studies, University of Edinburgh

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Papua New Guinea Institute (now University) of Technology, Lae, Papua New Guinea

Scottish Association for the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language

Stevenson College of Further Education, Edinburgh

University of Nottingham Ningbo Campus, Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, China

York Associates Business Trainer Training, York

Dedication

To our students, who have taught us so much
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To the reader

This book is for teachers of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), who prepare students for study at university or college through the medium of English. EAP is taught worldwide in a variety of contexts, by teachers from a wide range of backgrounds (many of whom are non-native English speakers) and is very different from other kinds of English teaching. Making the transition to EAP teaching is not straightforward, and teachers need a thorough induction and on-going support if they are to teach effectively in university contexts. This book aims to provide both.

In the UK, EAP has expanded considerably with the internationalization of universities. Most further and higher education institutions have well-established teaching centres and the field now has its own institution, the British Association for Lecturers of EAP (BALEAP), with an active research base and a dedicated journal. However, there are very few teacher training courses specifically for EAP and as yet no recognized EAP teaching qualification. Most teachers have learned the craft from working alongside experienced EAP teachers, and through collaboration with subject lecturers. The gap in training is beginning to be addressed, for example, by the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, whose revised syllabus for the Diploma in ELT now includes an EAP option, and by BALEAP, which has specified a set of competencies desirable for effective EAP teaching. These include knowledge of the norms and practices of universities and the ability to help students to acquire the language and skills necessary to function in a higher education context. Several institutions now incorporate an EAP module in taught masters courses, and others offer short professional development courses in EAP.

Since 2002, we have regularly run a short EAP teacher development course at Heriot-Watt University for teachers who work with students preparing for or already following university courses. Our course aims to build teachers’ confidence by helping them to recognize good EAP practice and to reflect on how they can adopt it in their own context. This book has been developed as a result of conversations with the many participants who have attended our course. It is intended to provide a framework for teachers to reflect on adaptations in methodology and content which may be required to meet the needs of EAP students and to feel confident about using these new approaches.

Although there is now a great deal of research in language description, language learning and language pedagogy, it is difficult for teachers to keep up to date with the many and varied research strands. There is also often a considerable time lag before principles derived from this research begin to inform practice, particularly in published teaching materials. Participants on our teacher training course sometimes report feeling daunted – at times overwhelmed – when faced with a confusing array of course books, following different approaches.
Our aim in this book is to bridge the gap between theory and classroom practice in EAP. Our principles derive from an extensive review of current literature, but they have also been tested in our classrooms in order to find out what works. We translate these principles into practical approaches and, in the accompanying CD, into actual classroom materials which exemplify these approaches.

Reflection is an important aspect of teaching because it encourages teachers to consider the effects which their beliefs about teaching have on their students. We provide awareness-raising tasks, frequently based on authentic case studies, which are designed to help you to reflect on a variety of classroom situations. You become the observer of typical problematic teaching situations, and reflect on the ways in which these could be addressed. Those case studies which deal with situations when teaching goes wrong or fail to address students' needs are often based on our own experiences and classroom difficulties over many years of development as EAP teachers.

Some of the tasks are simple, practical and brief, for example, sorting or prioritizing items. There are also tasks involving more open-ended reflection on your own experience or classroom practices. Some tasks may seem very easy while others are more challenging. However, you should never feel that you are being tested. The purpose of the tasks and case studies is to encourage thought and analysis, and often there is no single correct answer. Each task has a suggested answer either in the form of a commentary in the running text, or indicated in a later part of the chapter. You might find it helpful to look briefly at a task and then study the commentary before trying the task for yourself. Our intention is for the book to provide the same kind of support and guidance that you might gain from working alongside an experienced EAP teacher.

We expect the book to be read in a variety of ways by readers with different purposes. You can read it carefully from beginning to end to raise your awareness of current principles and practice in EAP teaching and learning, or you can dip into it for guidance on specific aspects. The chapters are free standing so that if you want to explore one particular theme, you can go straight to the relevant chapter. You can gain an impression of the contents of each chapter by reading the aims at the beginning and the conclusion at the end. You can find a sense of the approach that each chapter takes by skimming through the tasks and case studies. You can, of course, choose not to do the tasks and simply read the text. However, we believe that, for teachers as well as students, being told something is not as effective as being shown something. The tasks, case studies and classroom materials show you good practice in a way that comes close to working with an experienced colleague or teacher trainer. If you want to study a theme in greater depth, you can find a list of recommended reading at the end of each chapter. References to specific sources cited in the text and cross-references to relevant material in the other chapters are listed in the notes and bibliography at the end of the book.
Many of the chapters follow a similar format. There is an orientation to each aspect of EAP, usually through student and teacher comments. This is followed by an exploration of what happens in a university context and an indication of how you can support students in your classroom.

**Chapter 1: The context of EAP** explores what is meant by academic purposes and examines the expectations of the stakeholders in EAP: the academics who will interact with students, the students themselves, and the teachers. Many of the themes that will be developed later in the book are introduced here.

**Chapter 2: Text analysis** shows you how to analyse texts so that you can read and make sense of them even if you do not understand all the content. The ideas in this chapter are important for understanding the key terms and the approach used in the rest of the book. The chapter is a tutorial with exercises to work through to clarify the concepts being presented.

**Chapter 3: Course design** uses insights gained from text analysis and from understanding the context of EAP to introduce principles for course design, taking into account the constraints of a context and the needs of students in their target courses. It also considers the implementation of a syllabus through appropriate methodology, including computer-mediated learning.

**Chapter 4: Reading, 5: Vocabulary and 6: Writing** show how these are strongly integrated in the academic context, and build on the concepts introduced in Chapter 2. These chapters outline the skills and strategies required by academic readers and writers and suggest how these can be developed in the EAP classroom.

**Chapter 7: Listening and speaking** considers the skills of listening and speaking and shows how these are different in academic and ELT contexts. In particular, it deals with the notion of authenticity, and also looks at possible cultural barriers to oral participation.

**Chapter 8: Critical thinking and 9: Student autonomy** examine two important requirements for academic success: the ability to think critically and function autonomously. The chapters outline what these abilities involve in an academic context and show how they can be brought into the EAP classroom at all levels.

**Chapter 10: Assessment** attempts to clarify key concepts in this challenging area so that you can evaluate the suitability of tests and exams for your students and grade their work consistently.

Finally, it is important for readers to go beyond this book and beyond further reading in developing their professional practice, particularly in collaboration with other teachers, by attending workshops and conferences, by team teaching, and by sharing ideas with colleagues. We wish you all success and enjoyment in your continuing professional development as EAP teachers.
Chapter 1: The context of EAP

This chapter will examine:

- academic purposes and expectations
- the implications of these for EAP students and teachers

You will have the opportunity to:

- reflect on your expectations as an EAP teacher
- reflect on EAP students’ needs
- relate these needs to the contents of the book

The first question general English teachers new to EAP are likely to ask is:

- How different is this kind of teaching from what I already do?

In a sense, there is no such thing as general English language teaching (ELT). Every English language teacher is operating in a specific situation and has to understand as much as possible about the context in which teaching and learning are taking place. Frequently, what is taught is dictated by one of a wide variety of examinations of general English proficiency, which may be international or local. Often, the aims of students have less to do with passing exams and more to do with broadly improving levels of language ability. In EAP, however, the teaching and learning context is highly specific. The following task is designed to help you to think about the key features of EAP which make it distinct.

Task 1

Check your understanding of the key features of EAP.

- Cover the right-hand column in Table 1 below.
- Try to identify what features differentiate EAP from general English, and check each suggestion.
Table 1: The differences between general English language teaching (ELT) and EAP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>General English Language Teaching</th>
<th>English for Academic Purposes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 What drives the syllabus?</td>
<td>Level driven: the main focus is what a student can and cannot do now.</td>
<td>Goal driven: the main focus is where a student has to get to, often in relation to a specific academic course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Time available</td>
<td>Relatively flexible: a student may opt in and out of ELT at various points in adult life with different motivations.</td>
<td>Not flexible: time is strictly limited and an EAP course is probably a ‘one-off’ endeavour for a student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 What is at stake for the student?</td>
<td>For most students, the outcome is a sense of personal achievement or certification of the language level attained, not necessarily involving high stakes.</td>
<td>For almost all students, the only relevant outcome is entry to or successful completion of university study. Failure is costly in time, money and career prospects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

People

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4 Student motivation</th>
<th>Motives are varied and general. Students often learn general English out of interest in the language and associated cultures or a wish to become part of a global community.</th>
<th>Motives are specific. A high proportion of EAP students learn English as a means to entering a course at an English-medium university or in order to access a particular academic community.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Teachers</td>
<td>Attracts predominantly graduates in the humanities, e.g., English (usually literature), linguistics or European languages.</td>
<td>Attracts a significant number of graduates in evidence-based academic disciplines, such as science, social science, business studies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chapter 1: The context of EAP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teacher–student roles</th>
<th>Unequal: teachers are seen as language experts and students as language novices.</th>
<th>Teachers and students are more equal: both are learning about the academic community.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>Language content (grammar and vocabulary)</strong></td>
<td>Potentially, the totality of the English language is possible content. Usually, students need to be equipped for a wide range of communicative situations.</td>
<td>Content is limited to academic discourse, e.g., emphasis on academic style: academic vocabulary and associated grammar and discourse features.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td>Speaking and listening are usually given more importance than reading and writing. Exams or students may determine the weighting given.</td>
<td>The main emphasis is on reading and writing. Some EAP students have a specific need, such as academic reading or writing for publication.</td>
<td>Texts and tasks are often chosen for self-expression and are usually short and quickly covered; personal response and creativity are valued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td>Language-skill balance</td>
<td></td>
<td>Text choice is based on academic genres: students learn about audience, purpose and organization as well as rhetorical functions and information structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td>Materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td>Text choice</td>
<td>Texts are often chosen from entertaining, easily accessible genres. Traditionally, there has been an emphasis on sentence grammar, with topic driving text choice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*EAP Essentials C01.indd 4*
Chapter 1: The context of EAP

11 Text exploitation
Variety and pace of activities are important in delivery, leading to a tendency to move quickly from text to text to maintain interest, each text having a different topic and learning focus.

Texts require more time for full exploitation. Each text may have a range of learning focuses. Texts may be linked thematically.

12 Other skills content
There is little emphasis on study skills, or these focus on language learning only. Cognitive skills are not explicitly included.

Study skills are emphasized and made explicit, particularly learner independence and cognitive skills, especially critical thinking.

A later section of this chapter, *The distinctive features of teaching and learning in EAP*, discusses the contents of Table 1 more fully.

The process of adjustment from general English to EAP teaching can involve some major shifts in approach. However, this does not mean abandoning good teaching practice. When the important differences between general English and EAP are over-emphasized, teachers sometimes begin to feel insecure and leave their most valuable skills at the EAP classroom door. EAP and other kinds of English teaching share an underlying core of methodology: all require teachers to have a sound grasp of how to promote language learning and manage all aspects of the classroom. However, a teacher wishing to adapt to the EAP context first has to explore that context in detail.

**Academic discourse communities and academic expectations: joining the tribe**

The internationalization of higher education has brought students from all over the world into English-medium universities, but this is not a new phenomenon. The original concept of a university was not an educational facility for local young people but a focal point where groups of international scholars sought permission to settle from the city authorities. As early as the 12th century, students from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds crossed the Alps or sailed across the Mediterranean to study Italian thinking on law, the Greek philosophy of Aristotle or to gain access to translations of the great Arabic writers on science, medicine and mathematics. Similarly, scholars journeyed
across Asia to share philosophical and religious ideas. In recent decades, modern university campuses have become more aligned to this original concept.

Greek, Latin and Arabic have all been academic lingua francas in their time. More recently, a variety of languages, including German, French and Russian, have fulfilled that role in different disciplines. At present, domination by English-speaking academic discourse communities means that thousands of international scholars are studying, researching and teaching in English-medium universities. They are today’s travelling scholars and they include EAP students, who use English as the lingua franca for their academic purposes.

An academic discourse community is a group of academic practitioners (teachers, researchers and students) who share a particular discourse or way of representing, thinking and talking about the world. The members of each academic community share a culture which may differ considerably from the cultures of other academic communities. For example, the Engineering and History departments in a university are very different in terms of the way they pursue and communicate knowledge and the way their members acquire status and interact with the real world. The differences are driven by what is being studied and have profound effects on how the communities operate. However, these are human communities with all the characteristics that the word human implies, including rituals and taboos. It may seem surprising to think of anything labelled academic as susceptible to such beliefs, but they are an inevitable feature of all human groups. Becher used the metaphor of the tribe in his study of academic discourse communities to highlight their important social features, for example, their customs, language and hierarchical structure.4

New recruits to the tribe need to go through a period of induction (or even initiation) before they can become experts. They have to learn the specific culture of the tribe – its particular tasks, values, assumptions, history and aspirations – and its language. As well as highlighting this specificity, the metaphor of a tribe also puts into perspective the essentially relative values of academic discourse communities: there is nothing intrinsically better about one community than another – for example, engineers compared with historians, or the English-speaking academic community as a whole compared with that of any other language community; they are simply different.
Chapter 1: The context of EAP

Teaching and learning at university

Whether the territory is engineering or economics, estate management or ecology, teaching and learning in different academic disciplines share many features. The main methods of teaching and learning at university have been summarized by Laurillard:

- **acquisition** – lectures and reading
- **practice** – exercises and problems
- **discussion** – tutorials and seminars
- **discovery** – fieldtrips and practicals

**Task 2**

- To what extent do you think that EAP teachers need to prepare students for these methods of teaching and learning?
- To what extent do EAP teachers use these methods themselves?

EAP teachers try to prepare students as fully as possible to benefit from the methods of teaching and learning they will meet at university. A major part of this preparation is the acquisition of the academic language that will be used in the lectures, reading materials, discussions and seminars in Laurillard’s list. In addition, students need to develop attitudes, approaches and strategies that make the best use of the teaching and learning they will encounter. Rather than simply telling students about these aspects of academic study, teachers need to ensure that students experience them. This means that EAP teachers should themselves adopt methods aligned with those used at university. EAP is best taught through discussion and discovery, using a problem-solving approach, practical tasks and fieldtrips into academic territory, for example, to analyse features of authentic texts and to research authentic practices. The EAP classroom is a context for research. Both teachers and students in EAP are learning about the target academic community and this requires the teacher–student roles to be more equal than in most general English classes. EAP teachers bring to the classroom linguistic expertise and knowledge of teaching methodology. Students may bring expertise in their subject disciplines, which teachers need to call on to exploit authentic academic texts effectively. The dialogue between them is an important focus of teaching and learning.

In many academic courses at university, it is quite common for professional bodies to have input into the course design and assessment procedures so that students are adequately prepared for the world of work following their studies. Where this happens, the courses are aligned with professional practice and may contain elements that are special to the particular community of practice. However,
many elements are common to a wide range of university courses, including undergraduate programmes. Table 2 below outlines the input, skills required and assessment methods for a typical taught masters course.

Table 2: Outline of a typical taught masters course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input into course</th>
<th>Skills required during course</th>
<th>Assessment methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lectures</td>
<td>group working</td>
<td>critical essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading</td>
<td>problem solving</td>
<td>critical reading report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group work</td>
<td>search methods</td>
<td>examination essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>case studies</td>
<td>computer skills</td>
<td>case study essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>presentations</td>
<td>critical reading</td>
<td>business report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discussions</td>
<td>critical analysis</td>
<td>presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>role play</td>
<td>synthesis</td>
<td>site visit report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tutorial groups</td>
<td>evaluation</td>
<td>dissertation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>computer labs</td>
<td>conceptualization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-assessment</td>
<td>application</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reflective assessments</td>
<td>interdisciplinary understanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peer assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guest lecture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>problem-based learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>site visits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>online discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>virtual learning environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These elements would need to be clarified in much more detail to be included in an EAP course but the table gives a flavour of the range of activities and skills involved.

**Task 3**

- Which elements shown in Table 2 might be particularly difficult to introduce or simulate in an EAP course?
- What important aspects of university study do not appear to be represented here but also need to be included in an EAP course?

The answer to the first question in Task 3 depends to a large extent on the teaching situation and the constraints on the EAP course. Understanding of the masters course at the level of detail required by EAP teachers might not be feasible, especially for those working outside a university. An EAP course taught
on a university site with good resources and good relationships with other departments could probably introduce or simulate almost all these elements in authentic detail. However, EAP teachers who cannot access such detail can still broadly simulate a university approach. Group work, role play, presentations and discussions are fairly standard in any English language class. EAP teachers can add to these the use of authentic lectures and reading texts as input and require written and spoken outputs broadly in line with academic courses. Case studies and problem solving activities are rich resources for both language and academic skills. Promoting autonomy through self, peer and reflective assessment can also be an important feature of EAP practice, together with search methods in academic reading and critical approaches in a range of course elements. The following chapters explore these possibilities in detail. Some elements may well differ from one academic discipline or level of study to another, for example, a business report for an undergraduate Business Studies course may not be the same as one for a postgraduate course in Civil Engineering. However, generally all elements should be considered for inclusion in an EAP course, if only at a rudimentary level. Even site visits are possible, for example, to a university open day or a university website.

At the same time as helping students to become familiar with the methods of university study and to acquire appropriate skills and approaches, it is essential to remember that an EAP course is first and foremost a language course. The most important component in an EAP course is academic English, particularly the strategies to continue learning it beyond the duration of the EAP course.

**The hidden curriculum**

Because academic discourse communities are like tribes with territories, not all their expectations of newcomers are as explicit as those in Table 2. Sharpling talks of discourse communities within universities as involving ‘a game of “insiders, outsiders and power relations”, in which a cultural mismatch can frequently occur, sometimes with severe consequences’. A major aim of EAP practice is to help non-native English speakers to become academic ‘insiders’. Inevitably, EAP practitioners are involved in the power relations of the game and may need to take a critical stance in relation to how their students are affected. A later section of the chapter will return to this issue. At the very least, they need to be aware of the potential effects of the hidden curriculum on students.

Some of the rules of the game, i.e., the academic expectations, are well known and common to all the academic communities – for example, the need to publish research. Some rules are practised completely unconsciously. This applies especially
to conventions to do with relationships in the academic hierarchy. Other rules may be obscure, contradictory or even disputed within academic communities.

In English-medium academic institutions, expectations about status and access to experts are particularly well hidden. For example, the head of a university department might be dressed exactly like the students, but he is nevertheless accustomed to his status being acknowledged through subtly deferential ways of approaching him, choice of language and other aspects of behaviour. International students may expect faculty deans and professors to dress smartly, according to their status, so as to be immediately recognizable. Such students may be shocked to find these members of staff seem indistinguishable from everyone else in a UK university. Student expectations about how to approach these important people can lead to serious difficulties. The English-speaking academic community likes to think of itself as egalitarian and inclusive, particularly towards students, but in reality it can appear hostile, hierarchical and exclusive to students who do not know the appropriate conventions and procedures. Relaxed and friendly lecturers who emphasize their availability can be taken at their word and find that students phone, e-mail or turn up at their offices more frequently than they would wish. In fact, teachers in China and in the Middle East are likely to be more accessible to students outside the classroom than is usual in the UK.

Some expectations are rarely articulated in clear, unambiguous language by academics. For example, it is not obvious what exactly lecturers mean by autonomy, critical thinking or even academic English, yet they use these terms to describe the requirements of university study. When there are differences between academics about which rules to apply, the EAP game becomes particularly difficult. In some UK university departments, non-native English speakers are encouraged to have their written texts proofread by a native English speaker before submission; in others, this practice is strictly forbidden. Rules about correct referencing vary a great deal not only between disciplines but also between departments in the same discipline at different universities.

**Student expectations**

The rules of the academic community apply not only to students whose purpose is entry to undergraduate and postgraduate courses in English-medium universities, but increasingly to a wider group, including academics wishing to publish papers in English-medium journals and high school children trying to achieve English-medium academic qualifications. Such students need to know exactly what is meant when told, for example, to use academic language, to be more critical, to think independently and not to plagiarize. They need to know what is expected in terms of oral and written communication, how they should
behave and how they will be assessed in order to be accepted into or make progress within the community. They are among the ‘outsiders’ mentioned earlier and if their expectations are not aligned with those of the particular academic tribe they wish to join, then there can be major difficulties for them.\textsuperscript{14}

EAP students may be used to a completely different set of rules about referring to the work of others. In their high school, they may have learned to quote verbatim from the works of great academics without necessarily naming them.\textsuperscript{15} To paraphrase a great writer might be seen as a transgression.\textsuperscript{16} The Chinese academic expectation is that the reader as well as the writer is responsible for filling in the background knowledge and understanding the implications of academic texts.\textsuperscript{17} This contrasts strongly with the directness and explicitness with which English academic texts are usually written. One student explained this to me by saying that if the model answer I had written for the class were translated into Chinese, it would be suitable for nine-year-old readers.

Cultures vary tremendously in terms of how to approach other people when you need something from them. Students often have to approach academic staff in order to get information, support or advice and, in doing so, can encounter a minefield of potential cultural clashes, as the following authentic case study shows.

\section*{Task 4}
Read the case study and suggest what went wrong in the encounter.

\begin{itemize}
  \item What would you advise the student to do?
\end{itemize}

\subsection*{Case study A: Accessing academic staff}
A postgraduate student found herself struggling to follow lectures and produce coursework in her first term of an engineering course at a UK university. She knew that her problem was English and discussed the issue with her supervisor in the first term exam week. He suggested she enrol on the next EAP course and gave her the name of the tutor who ran it. She went straight to the tutor’s office, where she found the tutor surrounded by piles of exam scripts. She began the discussion as follows:

\begin{itemize}
  \item I am a student from [country]. I would like to tell you about my situation so that you can give me some advice.
\end{itemize}
She was dismayed to find the tutor rather dismissive and abrupt. She came away from the encounter not really clear what the tutor had said or what to do next.
In the UK, particularly at busy times, e.g., during exams, academic staff can be very stressed, so this student picked the worst time for an unannounced approach. The harassed tutor interpreted the student’s opening sentence very literally as a request for what could turn out to be a lengthy tutorial and advice session. The student was not sure, as she explained later, what the procedure was for joining the course and thought she might have to ‘pass’ a lengthy interview or series of interviews. In fact, she simply needed to find out more about the course and then complete an application form. When I suggested a better opening sentence would have been:

- I would like to join next term’s EAP class. Could you give me some details, and an application form, please?

she was shocked at the brevity and directness of my suggestion, even more so when I suggested she made the request by e-mail. Her expectations about politeness and respectful behaviour, as well as procedure, were completely misaligned with the context in which she was trying to operate.

Native speakers of English can experience a similar mismatch in expectations when they move from high school to university or from one academic discipline to another. One EAP teacher colleague thought she had to buy all the books on the first booklist she was given and spent her entire first year undergraduate book allowance in the first week of term. Another was deeply shocked to find her first essay in a masters module had been given a low mark for being too ‘undergraduate’, with no feedback to explain what was wrong.18

**Task 5**

Think back to when you went to university to begin your degree studies.

- What cultural mismatches did you experience in changing from an outsider to an insider?

In a new academic context, the rules or expectations that EAP students bring from their previous educational experiences can operate at different levels, from how academic staff dress to how to incorporate the ideas of others in their own writing. Here is a constructed case study of some imaginary students who have just begun undergraduate courses in a UK university. Although none of the students is real, their perceptions and reactions are authentic and drawn from the experiences of a range of international students.19
Task 6

Read the case study and try to predict any problems these students are likely to face as their courses proceed.

- Think of their expectations of study generally, of language use, and of assessment methods.

Case study B:
Early in the first semester of year one of a degree, four international students are e-mailing their friends to report on the experience of studying in the UK. Here are some extracts.

Student 1
I’m really enjoying my course, the lecturers are not strict like our high school teachers were and we don’t have to work as hard as we did at school – only a few classes a week. I have lots of spare time. We don’t have any exams until January. I have some long essays to write (they are the same as term papers) but not until December, which is several weeks away. There’s a week at the end of the semester with no classes so I’ve booked a cheap ticket home.

Student 2
There’s a long list of books that I have to read – I don’t know how I’m going to read them all. After two weeks, I’m still reading the first book on the list. I don’t really understand it – but it’s by my professor and he’s very famous, so I don’t really expect to understand.

I did one short essay this week. It was about a topic we did in school so it was quite easy. I was very disappointed with my grade but I can see my tutor about this. She wrote on it that she wanted a critical essay. She is very friendly and I’m sure when I explain how hard I worked, she will improve my grade. I have been going to her office every day to find her but she is never there, even though I leave notes saying I’m looking for her.

Student 3
The lectures are very difficult. They’re about one hour long and I can’t catch what the lecturers say. But there are only five every week so I’ve decided that I can miss them and use the time to get the information I need from the books on the book list. I can ask the lecturers about the lecture topics because they said we could go to them for help if we need to.

As well as lectures, we have to go to tutorials. There are about ten students and a lecturer in each tutorial. Some of the other students talk
The other students are OK but they don’t speak to me much. They seem to spend a lot of time chatting in the coffee bar. Many of them are not English, and they don’t understand me when I speak so mostly I go around with two friends from home who have just started, like me. This week I am supposed to start a group project which means working with some other students. They had a meeting but I didn’t go. I think I’ll just do it by myself.

In some countries, students expect to work extremely hard in high school, but to be able to relax and ‘coast’ at university. Student 1 is severely underestimating the amount of work he has to do outside lectures, particularly the sustained and independent effort expected in writing the long essays. He should have begun working on these already. The week with no classes will not be an extension to the holiday as he assumes. It may well be a reading or study week prior to exams or a week in which to write up a group project. In the latter case, his absence will be interpreted as laziness. It will affect his classmates and possibly their grades as well as his own. He will not be popular if he just disappears.

Student 2 seems to have no strategies for purposeful reading, for example, assessing the usefulness of a book for a particular piece of coursework. His slowness suggests that he is reading page by page from the beginning instead of surveying the book first and reading selectively. He also probably expects to read the material only once. He is not very worried by his failure to make sense of it because this confirms his perception of himself as a non-expert. Many students have learned to revere the experts in their field but have no grasp of how to bridge the gulf in knowledge that separates them from the level of expertise embodied in the set books and other texts. His disappointment over his first submitted piece of work should have alerted him to the fact that the assessment criteria being used to assess his writing are not what he expected: the English he learned to write in school is no longer appropriate. Perhaps this will be clarified when he eventually has a meeting with his tutor. The student’s relationship with his tutor is based on a number of misunderstandings. He thinks that grades can be negotiated upwards, but this is very unlikely. The tutor may say ‘no’ but in a friendly way that he thinks invites persistence – until the tutor becomes angry and frustrated. He thinks she can devote as much time to him as his high school teachers may have done but she has very little time outside her teaching duties. She will have many administrative and other tasks as well as pressure to publish her own research. He needs to use her office hours or appointment system.
Student 3 has the idea that lectures are simply regurgitations of what is already in books. This is a widespread misunderstanding among students. Lectures have many purposes, including highlighting what is important in the subject, giving a framework for study, showing how material from sources such as textbooks fits into this, and explaining difficult aspects of the subject with relevant examples. It is essential that student 3 attend his lectures. Fortunately, he has realized the importance of tutorials (in some universities, these are called seminars) for clarifying lectures, but if he misses the lectures he will fall behind.

Student 4 is failing to interact with the other students on his course. Their coffee bar chats might be reviews of the lecture they have just attended or they might be informal study group meetings, both of which would benefit his understanding of the subject enormously, as well as giving him an opportunity to develop his language skills. His communication difficulties with other international students in part result from his own language skills, not just theirs. While his preference for the company of his compatriots is understandable, it will not help him to become a truly international academic or professional practitioner with good communication skills for a global context. He is in danger of becoming an ‘academic tourist’, someone who never truly integrates with the academic community he is studying in.

To put some of these difficulties into perspective, here are some authentic comments from UK students which voice similar concerns:

- I wish I had known how much hard work would be involved in my course.
- The level of the work is a lot greater than the level we were studying at school.
- Tutorials make such a difference to my understanding of the coursework. They help to keep me structured and on course.
- I struggled in the first year ... I was only aware of how to write creatively. I had no understanding of how to write critically, yet I felt the university assumed all students were capable of this.
- The necessity to plan ahead is vital. At work I cannot just turn around and demand shifts based around university hours.

Stereotyping international students is dangerous: every student in an EAP class is an individual with individual expectations and individual needs. Moreover, education in many countries is currently undergoing rapid reform, making generalizations about EAP students’ earlier learning experiences inherently unreliable. Even students with the initial misconceptions outlined in Case study B may well learn quickly from their experiences and, with no help from an EAP teacher, emerge among the best students in their final year. International students are well represented in the lists of first-class honours degrees students
in English-medium universities. One reason is that they are very good at adaptive strategies, at observing how the system works and trying to fit in. It is important to keep these strengths in mind and try to harness them when dealing with the many expectations that EAP students are likely to have.

**Teacher expectations**

Both EAP teachers and degree subject lecturers sometimes forget the successful international students when they meet some of the behaviour and perceptions shown by the students in Case study B. In these circumstances, it is easy to make comments such as: *these students tend to learn by rote; they are passive; they just want to copy; they cannot work in groups; they are obsessed with assessment.*

Biggs evaluates such stereotypes of students in the light of a range of studies and finds them to be unhelpful ‘distortions of the real situation’. For example, he contrasts rote learning, often seen by western teachers as mindless repetition, with memorization, an important study strategy. He points out the value of verbatim recall in freeing up cognitive capacity for processing and thinking – mnemonics are an example of this. His view of the students’ preoccupation with assessment is that such a focus is pragmatic on the part of the students and advises us to ‘make sure the method of assessment contains the content you want them to learn’.

The stereotype of the copying or plagiarizing student also fails to stand up to scrutiny. Native English-speaking students too have problems with plagiarism and all students need to be taught how to operate within this particular set of academic rules. It is also not true that international students are passive and will not work in groups. Outside the classroom, in other contexts, these students are active, aware and collaborative. The task of the EAP teacher is to activate these traits in a learning context. Biggs identifies this as the key approach in his model of development in teaching international students.

The stereotypes of international students outlined above are often a reaction by university lecturers to difficulties encountered when first teaching such students. At this stage, teachers may believe that there is only one right way to be academic – our way – and they initially tend to blame the students for not being ‘like us’. This is a deficit view of international students and is based on the false premise that the students’ thought processes are wrong and have to be changed. EAP teachers may sometimes take this view as well. For example, an EAP teacher may feel that the students cannot think critically and that they have to be taught how to do this.
With more experience, teachers may shift their focus away from the students and assume that the students’ culture is causing the problem. For example, they might believe that the students’ culture does not foster critical thinking. They feel they need to know how to teach it to this particular culture. This new perspective identifies their own techniques as inappropriate and at this stage they often report feeling de-skilled.\textsuperscript{32} They may feel there is one right way to teach these students if only it can be found. This is still a deficit view, but of the teacher rather than the student. The exclusive focus on what the teacher does is unhelpful.

Instead of worrying about teaching techniques for specific cultures, teachers need to analyse what students actually do. At a deep level, all people share a common core of learning and thinking processes,\textsuperscript{33} but how they use them is context dependent. For example, everyone knows how to think critically, but will not choose to use this faculty in every context: I might evaluate curtain fabric very critically in a department store, but not in my friend’s house. The importance of context is well illustrated by Hitchcock’s observation of third-year students from China, studying in the UK.\textsuperscript{34} He found that, while these students’ contributions to discussion were reluctant and relatively impoverished in class, their contributions to online discussion were rich, varied and showed considerable depth of analysis and critical reflection.

EAP students naturally use reflective critical thinking in many contexts but do not necessarily express it in the classroom, where they may feel reluctant to challenge group harmony.\textsuperscript{35} The task for the teacher is to discover a context in which students are familiar or comfortable with analysing and thinking critically and to devise ways to bring this thinking, along with the appropriate language, into the academic context. This has to be an inclusive endeavour with teacher and students bringing together their perspectives to illuminate, through dialogue,\textsuperscript{36} the deeper processes of learning that are shared by all, regardless of culture.

This contextual approach is not only essential for student autonomy, through reflecting on learning processes, but is also an important application of critical thinking, through making connections between contexts.\textsuperscript{37} An understanding is required not so much of cultural difference but rather of contextual difference. Hitchcock contrasts the notion of the Chinese student (cultural perspective) with the student from China (contextual perspective). It is important to think of students as retaining their culture but changing their context, for example, in moving from high school to university, and in moving from an undergraduate course to a postgraduate course. To encourage learning beyond formal institutions and throughout life, different aspects of learning need to be consciously activated in new contexts, particularly in changes such as the move from school to university.
Teaching and learning in EAP

Teachers themselves experience context change if they move from general English into EAP teaching. How effective they are will depend on whether they recognize the special features that make EAP different and can meet the challenges these present.

The distinctive features of teaching and learning in EAP

The context in which EAP students will eventually study is the main source of the differences from general English teaching and learning that were summarized in Table 1 at the beginning of the chapter, and it is the most important influence on what happens in an EAP classroom. An EAP course is needs driven rather than level driven. Its main focus is what the student is trying to do in the future – join the tribe – rather than what the student can do now. Often, language level is less important than a student’s maturity and expertise in the subject discipline. The stakes for the student are high and the time is limited. Therefore, every minute of teaching and learning has to count, and the rationale for every activity has to be clear. A teaching approach which is seen as enabling rather than gate-keeping is essential.

The English in EAP is the language of academic discourse and focuses specifically on the vocabulary, grammar and discourse features found in academic communication, both spoken and written. Academic genres are used so that audience, purpose and organization can be examined, together with appropriate rhetorical functions and information structure. These considerations mean that whole-text grammar rather than sentence grammar is the focus of study.

In university courses, information is conveyed and students are assessed mainly through written texts. In consequence, EAP students work predominantly on reading and writing while listening and speaking are restricted to lectures, discussion and seminar skills. EAP texts are inherently long and dense and it is necessary to spend time on each text to exploit it fully. However, the same EAP text will have a range of learning focuses and may be used at different points in a course for different purposes. There is little scope for self-expression, personal response and creative writing. Instead, clarity and objectivity are valued in EAP student writing. This does not mean that academic writing is neutral. Students have to learn how to recognize a writer’s stance or position with respect to the ideas under discussion, and how to make and support their position persuasively in their own writing – always tempered by caution because they understand that their position can be challenged.
In preparing students for university study, EAP teachers have to ensure that students can meet all the requirements of studying in the new context. In EAP, there is explicit development of student autonomy and critical thinking at the same time as the language is learned. The word *purpose* is key in EAP. Language is always acquired for and through an academic purpose, for example, to solve a problem, to reflect on learning or to evaluate ideas.

**Meeting the teaching and learning challenges**

It is important to see the process of adapting to EAP teaching and learning as adding to, rather than changing, a repertoire of expertise so that EAP teachers hold on to sound teaching principles which are useful in all contexts. Good teaching in any context is teaching that works. Teachers trained in a general English teaching tradition have a set of general strategies, but may not know which are appropriate in the EAP context and consequently can feel unconfident and de-skilled.

**Task 7**

- If you are a practising EAP teacher, what have been the main challenges for you?
- If you have not yet taught EAP, what do you think will be your main challenges?

Keep your list by you as you read on. What follows in this book will help you to reflect more deeply on, and possibly resolve, some of these issues.

Research on the challenges that EAP teachers perceive is rare. However, it is clear that practising EAP teachers frequently report lack of confidence in understanding the complex interaction of institution and student expectations, and in meeting their needs. Some of these challenges have already been outlined in this chapter. An earlier section showed the importance of aligning EAP with teaching and learning at university, for example, through case studies, problem solving and a research-based approach to academic language.

Identifying specific knowledge or materials relating to students’ disciplines is often cited as a major problem for teachers, along with incorporating this specific detail into general EAP classes composed of students from a range of different disciplines. Additional areas of concern are time constraints coupled with the need to help students with relatively low levels of language to deal with difficult authentic materials.

Some general English teachers are used to having freedom to be creative in selecting and adapting interesting materials, and they report that authentic
academic materials tend to be dull in comparison. However, students need appropriate materials and these are not intrinsically dull if the topics are related to the area of study that the students wish to follow – perhaps they only seem dull to a teacher with little knowledge or interest in the subject. If the teacher is bored, the lessons will be correspondingly dull and stilted, but the problem is not solved by avoiding relevant academic texts. Authentic materials are essential in EAP and are intrinsically motivating for students. A pre-sessional student completed a project comparing education for accounting in China and the UK and reflected, ‘I had fun doing this project … It brought out the creative side in me and it was the outside of the box thinking that I needed’. His choice of topic would not be interesting for many teachers, but his comments about what he learned show how highly motivating it was for him. Teachers need to make the effort to become more familiar with the students’ subject areas by reading, by talking to lecturers in the relevant departments, and by getting students themselves to talk about their subjects.

One type of course which incorporates authentic materials for language learning is Content Based Instruction (CBI). Two models of CBI are becoming increasingly important in EAP: sheltered and adjunct. The sheltered EAP model simulates an academic course by teaching content as well as language. For example, students on a foundation programme for a degree in International Business and Communications follow a syllabus in which they learn about global issues from authentic texts such as sixth-form course books that are written for native speakers of English about to enter higher education. The students are assessed by exams and coursework tasks that resemble as far as possible the assessment procedures of their target degree courses. This includes assessment of content as well as language. Another example of the sheltered model is a corpus-based syllabus which uses a corpus of first-year reading texts from a Business Studies degree to generate texts, tasks and activities as well as formative assessments and summative exams. The material is thus very closely aligned with the degree course and the students concentrate on the most frequent and useful vocabulary and discourse features they are likely to meet in this context. This syllabus ensures familiarity with the register and, to some extent, content of the target academic course.

In the adjunct EAP model, EAP sessions are timetabled to prepare for or follow up the academic input of the degree course. The language focus, tasks and activities in the EAP classes are based on the academic course, and assessment may be jointly carried out by both subject and language specialists. There may also be team teaching. This model is demanding in terms of materials preparation and liaison time between EAP teachers and subject lecturers. The main limitation of a content-based syllabus is the requirement that all students in the EAP class are studying the same or broadly similar subjects.
Part of the answer to the challenge posed by academic materials also lies in the way that students engage with texts. Because academic texts are principally about communicating ideas, there is plenty of scope for teachers’ communicative creativity when designing tasks for the texts. Problem solving, information gaps, games, competitions and other communicative tasks can fully engage students so that they are absorbed in learning activities. This not only lifts the atmosphere of a lesson but also enhances learning. Sometimes authenticity of task can be allowed to override authenticity of content, as in the *Rich Aunty* classroom materials mentioned earlier, where a non-academic context is used to activate academic stance. Later chapters will present more ways of engaging students, particularly by enabling them to become researchers into language and learning processes.

Some teachers naturally have a more charismatic, entertaining style of teaching than others. Fun and jokes are what make classes pleasant for them and for their students. This style can also be appropriate in an EAP classroom. As long as sound EAP input is delivered, lessons can still be imaginative and enjoyable to teach. The most rewarding aspect of teaching EAP is, however, seeing students becoming increasingly competent at academic tasks.

The inherent difficulty of academic texts is a separate issue. It is related to the reader’s prior knowledge, not only of content but also of other features of the text. Students can develop strategies for working out the message in relevant academic texts, especially when they are, as is often the case with postgraduates, experts in their fields. Lack of language ability in English should never be confused with lack of academic ability. Lack of English should also not be an excuse to remove students from EAP provision, whether by relegation to remedial grammar classes or into lower intermediate general English classes. This is particularly important for students who have already studied English for several years in their school system. These students need to work with grammar and vocabulary in an academic context, using academic (possibly constructed) texts and tasks. They need their English to be developed for and through academic purposes.

Teachers sometimes avoid difficult texts through insecurity. Teachers as well as students find it hard to tolerate incomplete comprehension, yet this happens often to native speakers who are reading an academic text. Students need to experience this without panic and with some attack strategies. Teachers also need to acknowledge that they cannot control or even know everything in the classroom domain. In fact, to do so is to deny opportunities to develop student autonomy. Furthermore, to deny students the opportunity to engage with authentic texts in their subject disciplines is patronizing.

Teachers need to devote sufficient time to a text so students can use it for authentic study purposes. Academic texts are usually intellectually demanding.
and it takes time to work out what they mean. Often the EAP teacher is working with the students as equals in the learning process. Students need to understand whole text structure, how information flows through a text, how cohesion and coherence work, and what functions different parts of the texts have. It is essential to take time and provide support. If necessary, authenticity can be compromised and easier, constructed texts can be used to begin with. As long as students are then exposed to authentic academic texts, easier models can be useful.\textsuperscript{50} Journalistic texts, on the other hand, cannot be substituted in the same way for academic texts. Articles from newspapers and magazines are easy to find and may sometimes be more entertaining than academic writing on a given topic. However, \textit{journalese} is usually more linguistically and culturally demanding than academic writing.\textsuperscript{51} This is an important consideration when choosing texts for the classroom.\textsuperscript{52} Although some degree programmes do require students to read and comment on print media, such texts do not generally provide appropriate models for student academic writing. Subject lecturers prefer to recommend a key journal in the field as a writing style model, for example, \textit{The Harvard Business Review} rather than \textit{The Economist}.\textsuperscript{53} EAP teachers need to find texts which treat an accessible topic in an academic way rather than rely on journalistic treatments of academic topics.\textsuperscript{54}

This chapter has shown that in EAP, much more than in general English, analysis of what a student needs depends on knowing where the student is going, that is, the demands of the target academic community. Here is a case study of a student who has already joined the academic community. How well is she meeting the demands?

\textbf{Task 8}

Read the following authentic case study and accompanying text written by a student.

- Do you think the text fails as a piece of academic writing or are aspects of it acceptable?
- Why? Give examples.
- What do you already do in your EAP teaching that helps students to avoid these difficulties?
Case study C:
An international student is struggling with the economics module in year 2 of a BA in Actuarial Science. She had entered the degree course the previous year with a high grade for mathematics but a relatively poor IELTS score. She was advised to attend the EAP pre-sessional course but decided not to. The economics lecturer has sent some of her failing coursework to the EAP tutor and asked her to help the student. The economics lecturer’s comments are in boxes on the student’s text. Where appropriate, they are linked next to underlined sections in the text which the lecturer is commenting on.

Week 5 Essay Question
Using diagrams, illustrate the Slutsky decomposition of the effect of demand into a substitution and income effect. Hence justify the ‘Law of Demand’ which states, ‘If the demand for a good increases as income increases, then demand for that good will fall as price increases.’

In the first year of Economic course, we been taught a bit of knowledge about demand. This year more details of demand are learned, which decomposed into two changes: a substitution effect and income effect. They are determined by Slutcky. However, the ‘Law of Demand’ also states some sort of relation among income, demand and price. What is the connection of all above? I’m going to talk about it in the essay for this week.

Let’s state a equation first. \[ \Delta X = \Delta X_s + \Delta X_n \], in words this equation says that the total change in demand equals the substitution effect plus the income effect. This equation is called the ‘Slutsky indentiy.’ (Varian, page 143) Therefore, as known, the change of demand due to change of price, when the price of good changes, there are two kind of effects: the substitution effect and the income effect.

First of all, the change in demand so that the change in the rate of exchange between the two goods because of the substation effect. For example, if price of good A become cheaper, people would buy more good A, and less good B. So demand of good A increase. This is the substitution effect. At the same time, if price of good A become cheaper, that is also mean even people hold the same amount of money, but the power of consummation increase in good A, people can buy a lot more good A than before, so that it becomes less demand in good B. That is determined by the income effect, which is the change in demand due to have more purchasing power.

On the other hand, the ‘diagram I’ which more specifics to describe how the two effects change the demand of the goods…
...In conclusion, the Slutsky equation decompost that for a normal good, due to income effect if the demand of good increases when the people's income increases, then the price increases in that good, due to substitution effect, the demand will be reduced. That is also justify the law of demand.

It seems to me that you confuse cause and effect of the income and substitution effect. They are due to the price change! The link between your first part and the ‘law of demand’ is not clear to me.

In an essay such as this, students need to represent ideas in their own words to demonstrate understanding. The student has not fulfilled this task because understanding has not been demonstrated. The lecturer identifies the problem clearly as an inability to express cause–effect relationships. This failure to use key language for explaining cause and effect is a serious problem for study in any discipline. It is quite possible that the student also failed to understand the reading for this essay for the same reason: failure to understand causal relationships through the language used to express them. This is the most significant problem the student has and it is enough to fail the coursework assessment, despite the fact that her essay follows the academic convention of having an introduction and a conclusion.

However, there are other problems. The student is also attempting to write long complex sentences without adequate control of sentence grammar. In the third paragraph, the sentence beginning ‘At the same time ...’ is a good example of this. It is a long single sentence held together by if ... that ... even ... but ... so, with a resulting loss of the message to the reader. In addition, there is a relative pronoun, which, with nothing to refer to and it is also used with no clear reference. It is possible that, at some time, an English teacher has told this student to try to write more complex sentences – embedded clauses are often cited as evidence of a good level of English. However, academic lecturers want clarity and precision rather than ‘long, complex grammatical sentences’. She needs to learn how to write simply and clearly and within her competence.

In addition to cause-and-effect language, the student lacks awareness of many features of academic text. Basic academic lexis is not used correctly: determined by, among, because, substitution, demand of, consumption, power, justify, so that, on the other hand. Less crucial but still important is her poor awareness of appropriate structure and style. She uses very informal vocabulary: a bit of, let's, and a direct question. She also includes inappropriate information following we been taught and over-uses linking devices, first of all, on the other hand, therefore, in conclusion, which could be a washback effect from IELTS exam preparation. Finally, she has not proofread the text – an essential writing skill in academic English.
Any EAP course must enable students to use cause and effect language, and other rhetorical functions. In addition, an EAP course has to teach students a clear understanding of formal style and academic conventions, how to use shorter simpler sentences and build complexity from them, how to study model answers from successful students, and how to proofread their own work.

**Important issues that affect EAP practice**

In addition to helping students to meet all these demands of academic study, EAP teachers have to respond to developments in the field, particularly in relation to the globalization of English-medium education. Currently, there are four contentious issues in the practice of EAP that teachers cannot ignore:

- the rise of English as an international language
- the question of whether general or only specific EAP is possible
- the extent to which EAP is the teaching of study skills
- the issue of critical pedagogy in EAP

Here, we can take only a brief look at the first three of these issues and a slightly longer look at the last. Readers who would like to reflect more deeply are referred to Hyland’s recent book in which he presents thorough and balanced discussions, together with reflective questions and extracts from some of the key sources.

**English as an international language**

It is clear that English is now predominant as an international language in fields as diverse as politics, business, technology and academia. Most conversations in English are between non-native speakers of the language and already many varieties of English can be identified from different parts of the world. Examples are Indian English, Chinese English and Malaysian English. The development of these varieties is a natural process of linguistic evolution and inevitably their grammar and vocabulary are influenced by the home languages. In addition, redundant features of English phonology, grammar and vocabulary are likely to disappear in a process of simplification driven by the overriding need to communicate clearly. Candidates for this process in academic English include:

- the countable/uncountable distinction
- third person singular s in the simple present
- non-native speaker collocation
- simplified question tags

The researches show the algorithm convert the signal they made a study of, discuss about isn’t it

The question of who owns international English and who is responsible for maintaining its standards is hotly debated. EAP teachers are at the battlefront
and have to consider on a daily basis what is correct or acceptable in their students’ output. In doing this, an important principle is to involve the students themselves. The teachers need to share the criteria for acceptable output and the implications of using non-native features in their English, and then decide for themselves what they want to do. EAP teachers need to become aware of the features of international varieties and also of what language usage is not acceptable, what is tolerated, and what is admired in the academic discourse communities.

**General or specific EAP**

Teaching students from different subject disciplines in the same EAP class requires negotiation and compromise. Some of the principles advocated in this book work particularly well when students all share the same subject area in their academic study. However, this is a luxury found mainly on in-sessional courses. Institutional constraints mean that most EAP classes, particularly pre-sessional ones, must be general because they contain a mixture of subject areas or are sorted at best into science and humanities streams. There are ways to accommodate some subject-specific EAP practice in mixed classrooms and these will be highlighted throughout the book. However, there are real advantages in teaching mixed groups. EAP is principally an endeavour in which students acquire the generic tools to research the language and culture of their academic discourse community for themselves and this can be achieved in mixed and subject specific groups. Recognition that it is ultimately the students’ responsibility to deal with subject specificity is a helpful perspective in developing this generic approach.

**The balance of skills and language**

EAP, like language teaching generally, has been prone to fashions. In the past few years, there has been an unfortunate trend towards seeing EAP mainly as study skills. This is reflected in the tendency to divide courses into, for example, writing skills and reading skills. While there is no denying the importance of teaching the skills needed to read and write good academic English, one consequence of this focus has been a neglect of the language of academic purposes. A major reason why teachers often feel de-skilled when they embark on EAP teaching, and why they mistakenly abandon their best communicative practices, is that their course books and syllabuses prioritize skills, with language as an often poorly analysed afterthought. All the chapters in this book seek to restore language to its proper place in EAP.

**Critical EAP**

Critical EAP is an approach that sees a role for teachers and students in challenging the academic practices which disadvantage them in their joint
endeavour of accessing academic discourse communities. It is also known as critical pedagogy and is contrasted with an ‘accommodationist’ stance, in which teachers view their role as uncritically teaching whatever is needed to join the tribe. Benson distinguishes hard and soft critical pedagogy. In the hard version, the aim is to ‘challenge the power structures’ of the academic community. The soft version aims to help students to develop their own identity or voice in their use of Academic English. The hard approach seeks to empower students as agents of change in the disciplines they choose – changing the tribe from within. Commitment to this approach, however, should not involve appropriating the students’ voices, and many students may not feel ready to critique their discourse community until they are more fully integrated into it. The soft approach, developing a voice, is a necessary first step towards empowerment and is essential in EAP. A consequence of this is that EAP teachers have to be ready to face the challenge of critical evaluation by their own students.

Challenging academic practices need not involve an aggressive stance. EAP teachers can use their linguistic expertise in particular to bring about quiet revolutions. Although lecturers who speak English as their first (and often only) language tend to be very aware of the complexities of their own disciplines, they tend to think of the features of their mother tongue as simple and obvious. This means that when lecturers try to explain their expectations about language use, the results can be useless or even counter-productive. For example, a mathematics department gave its students this advice on improving writing.

How should you attempt to improve the quality of your writing? It is important to understand that like learning to drive it is something you have to work at. No doubt an ability to write comes more easily to some than to others, but everyone needs to put some effort into acquiring this skill, and anyone can improve if they do. Of course there are plenty of books on how to write well, but perhaps the most useful thing you can do is to read widely … and learn to observe how others write.

If mathematics and do mathematics are substituted for writing and write in this advice, its pointlessness might become clear even to the department that issued it. A lecturer in another discipline gives much more helpful advice to his students. He begins by asking them to write simply and clearly and avoid long, grammatically complex sentences.

Examinations are a crucial aspect of induction into the tribe, but the language of examination questions can be particularly unclear. An academic department that was concerned about lack of consistency in its exam questions asked an EAP teacher to evaluate past examination papers. Specifically, they wanted an answer to the following question: To what extent is the language of the examination questions consistent, clear and in line with the recommendations of our professional awards body? The EAP teacher compared the recommendations to lecturers’ questions
in first year examination papers and their own model answers. She found the recommendations to be based mainly on native speaker intuitions. Several similarly subjective and rigid lists were found in use by other departments in the university. They were being used uncritically, as if they were a simple prescription for clear examination questions. In the actual examination papers, there was a lack of clarity in the use of some of the words, for example, the word *discuss*. Lecturers reported that using *discuss* in a question indicated the need for an exploration and evaluation of different views or arguments. The word seemed to feel intrinsically academic. However, *discuss* was used in questions that in fact required students simply to explain, describe or even list in their answers. The outcome of the study was a set of guidelines for lecturers when setting examination questions which has been widely adopted throughout the university. Consistency in exam question terminology is important but is difficult to achieve and is not in itself enough. Lecturers need to decide for themselves, question by question, the clearest language to signal what is wanted from a successful exam candidate. A similar approach has been adopted at the University of York, where there is a university policy of clarifying all language in the assessment process through a system of peer review.

### Task 9

- How far do you think an EAP teacher has a role in raising language or assessment issues with other departments or subject lecturers?
- Do you have any examples of such issues that you have raised?

EAP teachers have expertise which subject lecturers generally do not have in identifying and describing authentic language use. They know that what native English speakers think they say and what they actually say can be very different. However, in demonstrating this expertise, some tact is required. When issues are handled sensitively, most subject lecturers appreciate having access to linguistic expertise, particularly when it solves a perceived problem and when it is based on good evidence, such as an empirical study or corpus analysis. All students, not just non-native speakers of English, benefit from the spread of this kind of expertise throughout academic discourse communities – it is an important part of making university education more inclusive.

### Conclusion

The chapter began by exploring the rules of the academic community and the expectations of EAP students attempting to enter it. Rather than cultural problems, misaligned student expectations need to be seen as differences in context. This perspective allows teachers to activate universal learning processes.
to help students to meet the challenges of academic study. Some of the difficulties that teachers report about EAP practice can be attributed to the adjustments that have to be made from teaching in a general English context to teaching in an EAP context. Examining the distinctive features of EAP helps to identify student needs and understand how to meet them without losing the effective approaches shared with general English teaching. The chapter ended with a brief account of the major issues currently impinging on EAP practice. In particular, EAP teachers have an important role in relating to academic communities as language experts. This can help to change practices that disadvantage EAP students. Throughout this chapter, references were made to later chapters which will examine the themes raised here in greater detail. This book identifies and justifies sound methodological principles in EAP – it is a journey to find teaching that works.

Further reading


