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Subject lecturers', EAP tutors', and students' perspectives on the initial implementation of university-wide academic literacy support in an emerging EMI context

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It is now widely acknowledged that academic literacy support for university students is at its best when it is institution-wide, inclusive of all students, and tailored to students' disciplines. While there have been a few examples of whole-of-institution, discipline-specific language and literacy development initiatives in universities in Australia, these are rare internationally and have not been evidenced within newer English medium instruction (EMI) universities. To address this lack, the purpose of this paper is to report on the design and implementation of discipline-specific, university-wide academic literacy provision applied in compulsory EAP modules in one EMI university in Lebanon, as well as the perceptions of the students and teaching staff regarding the new provision. Data collection in this case study included semi-structured interviews with the EAP tutors and discipline specialists, student focus groups, a student questionnaire, and classroom observations. The findings from this study show that the students, EAP tutors, and subject specialists all viewed the approach applied in the newly designed EAP modules positively. However, the findings also highlight the challenges the EAP tutors and the subject lecturers faced in applying the genre-based collaborative approach. This research contributes to the body of literature focused on institution-wide academic literacy support and will be of interest to those involved in the design and implementation of such support in higher education institutions across both long-established and emerging English medium educational contexts.

Key Words: academic literacy, genre-based writing instruction, English for academic purposes (EAP), English medium instruction (EMI).

1. Introduction

1.1. The need for institution-wide academic language and literacy support

Efforts toward internationalization and widening participation have led to an increasingly diverse student population in many universities around the world. Within some anglophone, English-dominant contexts (e.g., Australia, Canada, U.K., U.S.A.), this growth in diversification has also meant many higher education institutions have seen a rise in the number of students for whom English is an additional language (EAL), whether they are international students or domestic students. In recognition of these students' language and literacy needs, many universities have developed various forms of support. Yet the dominant forms of provision on offer have been widely critiqued and this has led to significant focus in EAP and writing research in anglophone contexts

on the need for appropriate language and literacy support in higher education. This support is often targeted to particular student groups (e.g., non-traditional and international students) (Wingate & Tribble, 2012), but many scholars argue in favour of an institution-wide approach (Goldsmith et al., 2022; Murray, 2022; Wingate, 2018). This is because all students, regardless of their language background, must develop academic literacy in order to participate in the discourse practices of their chosen discipline (Wingate, 2015). The necessity for academic literacy provision to be offered across the university and tailored to students' disciplines has long been advocated in the English for academic purposes (EAP) literature, but garnering sufficient support from university management has been a challenge to its implementation (Wingate, 2019). Thus, a piecemeal approach to academic literacy support remains dominant in many universities.

1.2. Advances in institution-wide academic literacy and language support in Australia

Australian universities seem to be a global outlier in this type of support. Driven, at least in part, by the *Good Practice Principles for English Language Proficiency of International Students in Australian Universities* (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2009)*, several Australian universities have adopted university-wide provision to assist students with English language and literacy development (Humphreys, 2022). Edwards et al. (2021) categorize these institution-wide initiatives in Australia as those which embed academic language development into degree programs, and thus are designed for all students, and those that are targeted to specific student cohorts, particularly international students and those with low academic language development. Goldsmith et al. (2022) describe the embedded provision available at the University of Technology Sydney, which screens all students for academic language development and then supports those considered to have low academic language proficiency through integrated, discipline-specific tutorials. While this initiative is unique in screening all students, it is limited in reach as it only provides support for those who demonstrate low academic language levels. Murray and Nallaya (2014) provide an overview of a project which saw the integration of academic literacies curricula in several programs at a university in South Australia. However, they acknowledge the implementation of the support was hampered in some programs because of a lack of buy-in by subject specialists. Fenton-Smith, Humphreys, and Walkinshaw (2018) describe another institution-wide initiative at Griffith University which has been adopted through credit-bearing English language enhancement modules. These modules are offered across the university, but they are also restricted in that they are targeted to international students and designed at the level of field (e.g., sciences) rather than discipline (e.g., biology).

The development of institution-wide approaches in Australia has led to significant advancements in understanding a whole-of-institution approach, but as has been mentioned above, some of these initiatives are constrained as they continue to target particular cohorts of students, or they are hindered by a lack of buy-in by subject specialists, a persistent issue cited in some of the EAP literature (Sloan & Porter, 2009; Sloan & Porter, 2010; Murray & Nallaya, 2014; Li, 2021). Still, Australia seems to be a unique national context where several universities have adopted university-wide approaches. Outside of Australia, these institution-wide approaches are scarce.

1.3. The state of academic language and literacy support in newer EMI contexts

English medium instruction (EMI) has seen tremendous growth in Asia, Europe, and Africa. The rapid increase of EMI over the past two decades has been met with a growing body of literature which has sought to document this growth, the perceptions of the stakeholders involved in EMI, and the language-related challenges that students face when studying in English (Macaro et al., 2018). However, within the EMI literature, there has been little consideration of which support systems, curricula, and pedagogies might best address students' language and literacy challenges (Zhou et al., 2022). There has also been a persistent lack of cross-fertilization between some of the EMI literature and the EAP literature, which has long addressed these challenges (Hakim & Wingate, 2022).

In many anglophone contexts, there has been a long-standing assumption that students will arrive to university ready to write university assignments and take part in the literacy practices necessary for success in higher education (Tuck, 2022). Thus, remedial support for students was only provided to those who were deemed to have a deficit in doing so. In some newer English-medium instruction (EMI) contexts, university-wide provision may be more common than in several anglophone contexts because of a recognition of students' language-related needs; however, like their older counterparts, academic language and literacy support in these emerging EMI contexts remains focused on so-called "academic English" and what are considered to be transferable study skills. Students' dissatisfaction with the generalized nature of support within newer EMI contexts has received attention within the EMI literature (e.g., Galloway & Ruegg, 2020), and some of the EMI literature has acknowledged students' discipline-specific literacy needs (e.g., Dafouz, 2021; Airey, 2020), but a focus in some of the EMI literature on identifying isolated language-related challenges has, perhaps, taken attention away from students' broader academic literacy needs.

There have been claims within the EMI literature that an understanding of students' language needs in EMI is in a stage of infancy (Soruç et al., 2022; Galloway & Rose, 2021), but this is an area which has received considerable attention (Wingate & Hakim, 2022). Of particular interest here is research concentrated on the language-related challenges that students face in contexts where EMI has more recently been introduced. Given the context-dependent nature of students' needs, it is expected that studies in different settings may identify diverse student needs, but these studies have identified three general categories of problematic areas for students. The first of these is a set of studies (e.g., Zhou et al., 2022; Kamaşak, Sahan, & Rose, 2021, Rose et al., 2019; Lee & Lee, 2018) which have found that students' primary challenge is with productive skills (i.e., writing and/or speaking). The second set of studies (e.g., Aizawa et al., 2020; Hellekjær, 2010) has identified receptive skills (i.e., reading and/or listening) as among the most difficult for students. The third identifies vocabulary as the most important language-related challenge that students encounter (e.g., Soruç & Griffiths, 2018; Yıldız, Soruç & Griffiths, 2017). The trouble with this body of work is that its emphasis on isolated language-related issues, often identified through self-report data, comes at the expense of a broader focus on students' academic literacy needs. Because of this, several of these EMI studies conclude with a recommendation for more generalized support for academic English or more preparatory year provision (e.g., see Zhou et al., 2022; Abouzeid, 2021; Rose et al., 2019). This is in stark contrast to the literature in EAP (Hyland, 2002; Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002; Wingate, 2006; Wingate, 2015; Flowerdew, 2016), which has long pleaded for support that is designed to address the discourse practices of disciplines.

Similar to their "old EMI" (Willans, 2022) and anglophone counterparts, academic language and literacy support in these newer EMI contexts remains generic. The repeated calls that exist in some of the EMI literature for more provision which is generalized or offered in preparatory year programs may misdirect university management from better forms of provision. Current forms of support in EMI contexts have been critiqued for being largely divorced from and irrelevant to students' subject courses (Galloway & Ruegg, 2020; Galloway, Kriukow, & Numajiri, 2017). This has led to a few EMI scholars (Dafouz, 2021; Airey, 2020) to stress the need for a focus on developing students' "disciplinary literacy" (Airey, 2011), or what has been called "academic literacy" in some of the EAP literature (Wingate, 2015). A focus on academic literacy development requires that language and literacy support help students to become versed in the communicative practices of disciplines, which necessitates collaboration between academic literacy specialists and discipline specialists, who are experts in these discourse practices but who may have only "tacit" (Jacobs, 2005) knowledge of them and who may not have the desire nor the expertise to teach them (Hyland, 2016). The need for collaboration amongst academic literacy and discipline specialists has been recognized in the EMI literature, and there have been several pleas for further collaboration (e.g., Alhassan, Bora, & Abdalla, 2021; Lasagabaster, 2020; Lasagabaster, 2018), but often it has not drawn on a body of work within EAP on collaborative approaches. The EAP literature (e.g., Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Sloan & Porter, 2010; Hyland, 2017;

Wingate, 2015) offers several examples of this collaboration in practice, as well as an examination of the challenges and benefits of it.

Within some newer EMI contexts, it seems the dominant form of student support continues to be largely generalized and does not include much collaboration between academic literacy and discipline specialists. It also seems that some of the EMI literature has not considered the large body of EAP work focused on models of academic literacy support and collaboration in planning a way forward (Wingate, 2022; Wingate & Hakim, 2022). This seems to be true of pedagogical approaches which might realize collaborative, discipline-specific academic literacy support, as well.

1.4. The case for a genre-based pedagogical approach

In order to gain access to and participate in the communicative practices of their disciplines, students must become familiar with the discipline's key genres, including their socio-rhetorical context, communicative purposes, and conventional and variable features. One pedagogical approach which can explicate the contexts and conventions of important disciplinary genres is genre-based pedagogy. Genre-based instruction, Hyland (2019a) argues, offers a systematic pedagogical framework for making the context, conventions, and language of genres explicit to learners. This is done in the EAP classroom through sequenced tasks which work toward "rhetorical consciousness-raising" (Swales, 1990) and which scaffold students' noticing and text production through instructional stages, such as those in the teaching-learning cycle (TLC) (Feez, 1998). These stages scaffold learners through phases of awareness raising, to collaborative construction, and independent writing of the genre, and thus offer a supportive means by which novices to a discipline can become familiar with the highly specific genres of academic discourse communities. While the teaching-learning cycle, proposed by Rothery (1996), is an instructional method developed in line with the Sydney School, it has been taken up in EAP genre-based pedagogy as well (Wingate, 2015), which is the genre approach described here.

There have been a few examples of EAP genre-based pedagogy targeted to meet students' disciplinary needs in the EAP literature, but these are often limited in reach. For example, Wingate (2015) has reported on an initiative to develop materials and workshops for students in applied linguistics, history, and pharmacy, but this provision has not been adopted across the institution. In addition, Dreyfus et al. (2016) describe the SLATE initiative, which was an extension of Sydney School pedagogy in a higher education context, and which included academic literacy provision adopted in Hong Kong. Unfortunately, this initiative was short-lived due to a lack of continued support from university management. Mitchell and Pessoa (2017) describe the development of genre-based support, informed by systemic functional linguistics (SFL), for students in history. Similarly, Miller and Pessoa (2016) detail the implementation of SFL genre-informed provision for students in information systems. Hyland (2017) discusses the development and delivery of modules that adopted a genre-based approach for select courses at a university in Hong Kong. These initiatives, too, seem to be limited to certain departments rather than adopted institution wide.

It seems that unlike some anglophone and "old EMI" universities where discipline-specific approaches have been implemented in a piecemeal fashion, such approaches have not been adopted in newer EMI contexts. It also seems that discipline-specific, genre-based approaches have not been considered in the EMI literature much as a possible pedagogical approach to academic literacy support (Wingate, 2022). Because of this, Wingate (2022) calls for more empirical research focused on the implementation of genre-based pedagogy and materials in EMI settings. This study responds to this call and the work of EMI scholars (e.g., Lasagabaster, 2018; McKinley & Rose, 2022) who have emphasized the need for studies exploring the adoption of collaborative, genre-based pedagogies and support mechanisms in EMI contexts.

2. Research methodology

2.1. Research aim

The aim of this study was to investigate the first phase of the adoption of discipline-specific academic literacy provision, which has been developed through collaboration between EAP specialists and subject specialists and implemented in compulsory, credit-bearing EAP modules. It focuses on exploring the perceptions of staff and students regarding the new academic literacy support.

2.2. The research context

2.2.1. The institutional context

The university where this study took place is a trilingual university, reflecting the multilingual linguistic landscape of Lebanon (Zeaiter, 2022). Historically, the university delivered most teaching through French, but over the past twenty years, English has seen an increasing role in instruction and assessment. Students are also required to demonstrate English proficiency. Students are screened for English language development upon entry and then placed into one of five levels of a compulsory English language program, which culminates in an English for academic purposes (EAP) module. The students are grouped into the EAP modules by discipline and year of study. This is a somewhat unique situation as EAP modules are often generalized due to practical circumstances. This is not the case in this university, and this situation has provided an opportunity to implement discipline-specific support. It is important to also point out that the university where this study takes place has seen tremendous support for targeted academic literacy provision from the highest levels of management, which is also atypical (Wingate, 2018). The university management has acknowledged the need to support students' language and literacy development in English and has backed the revamping of provision to best meet students' needs.

2.2.2. The consultancy

In response to growth in EMI, the university has invested in reforming the mandatory EAP module. As part of this initiative, the university consulted my Ph.D. supervisor, Ursula Wingate, and me on the redesign of the EAP module, which had previously taken an English for general academic purposes (EGAP) approach. Our consultation took place in three phases. We first collaborated with an engineering lecturer who selected a target genre and gathered a set of low-scoring and high-scoring student texts. We then conducted a genre move analysis (Swales, 1990), developed a set of genre-based learning materials following the approach discussed by Tribble and Wingate (2013), and confirmed conventions of the target genre with the subject lecturer.

After we developed one set of materials, we led an initial workshop for the EAP tutors who would subsequently work in partnership with subject lecturers and carry out genre analysis for departments across the Faculty of Sciences and School of Engineering. The redesigned EAP module would thus be targeted to students' discipline-specific needs, devised through interdisciplinary collaboration, and delivered using an EAP genre-based instructional approach. While each EAP tutor had autonomy to implement teaching and use of the learning materials as they saw fit, the overarching instructional method which underpinned the learning materials and featured in the EAP tutor workshops was the teaching-learning cycle (TLC) (Feez, 1998).

The learning materials that were designed in collaboration with the discipline lecturers were implemented during the deconstruction phase of the TLC and focused on student-led analysis of the rhetorical moves in each part genre. During this student-led analysis, the students worked collaboratively to identify the obligatory and optional rhetorical moves in the student exemplars and compare the move structure and variation across high and low-scoring student samples. Other genre-based tasks used in the classroom focused on building the context, joint construction, individual and collaborative construction, and linking the students' texts with other texts in the genre, along with the phases in the TLC.

After the consultancy phase concluded, I was hired by this university to oversee the continued design and implementation of the new EAP module, which offered a tremendous opportunity to gain an insider perspective. It also requires acknowledgement of my own positionality as my role shifted from outsider researcher to insider practitioner-researcher. This necessitated ongoing reflexivity, which I practiced through regular memoing.

2.3. Research approach and design

2.3.1. A case study approach

This study focuses on the first phase of the institution-wide roll out of discipline-specific academic literacy provision, which has been implemented with the highest levels of university support – a rarity in the literature (Fenton-Smith, Humphreys, & Walkinshaw, 2018). To examine the application of this provision, a single case study approach has been taken to allow for in-depth description and analysis of the focal phenomenon. This case study might be considered a critical case study, which can provide empirical evidence that is valuable in further developing theory, frameworks, or models (Yin, 2018). In this case study, the aim was not to produce findings that might be generalizable across universities, but rather to capture issues of broader relevance to higher education institutions that are implementing institution-wide, discipline-specific models of academic literacy support.

2.3.2. Research participants

The participants in this study included the discipline specialists, the EAP tutors, and students who were enrolled in the EAP modules. The discipline specialists included eight lecturers from the Faculty of Sciences and the School of Engineering, two of whom were also in leadership positions (i.e., dean and department chair). The discipline lecturers have between 5 and 20 years of experience teaching their discipline. The EAP tutors included seven EAP tutors who have been teaching English language and/or EGAP for 5 to 20 years.

The student participants included those who were observed in the classroom observations, participated in the focus groups, and completed the student questionnaire. There were four student focus groups with 3–4 participants each. The participants in these focus groups included students from four separate EAP modules. The student questionnaire was sent to all the students who were enrolled in the compulsory EAP modules. Out of the 249 students enrolled in the EAP modules, 103 students responded to the questionnaire, representing a 41% response rate.

2.3.3. Data collection

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design. Data collection included two tracks. The first track, shown in Figure 1, followed sequential, mixed-methods design for data related to students' perceptions. First, classroom observations were held. Under focus in these classroom observations were what Tardy and Gou (2021) call "genre-related episodes" (GREs). Because the application of GREs is an innovative methodological tool, I have described GREs at length and detailed the process of identification of GREs in a separate paper (Hakim, in press), and so I do not do so here. Following on from the classroom observations, student focus groups were held. The focus groups allowed for clarification of the students' experiences, perceptions of, and challenges with the genre-based materials and approach. Focus groups likely also lead to a "more fully articulated account" (Galloway, 2019, p. 295) of a shared experience than might be elicited in one-to-one interviews. Finally, a student questionnaire was sent to all students who were enrolled in the EAP modules. Collecting the student questionnaires after the focus groups also allowed for the questionnaire to be refined based on the themes that were identified and to be customized to the specific sociolinguistic context.

Figure 1. Data Collection on Students' Perceptions (sequential, mixed methods design).

The second track of data collection followed concurrent mixed methods design, as is shown in Figure 2. In this track, semi-structured interviews were held with the EAP tutors and the subject specialists who collaborated with them. Eight subject lecturers and seven EAP tutors were interviewed. The purpose of the interviews with the EAP tutors and the subject specialists was to gain an in-depth understanding of their perceptions of the approach that was implemented. At the same time, documents, including public-facing university policy documents, an English department report, and official meeting records, were gathered for documentary analysis.
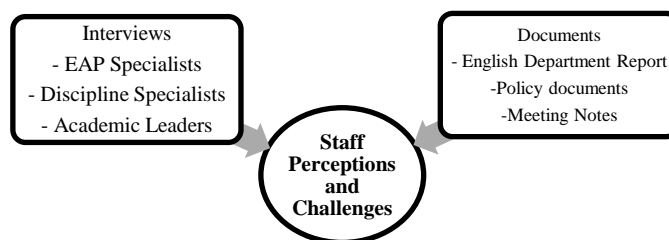

Figure 2. Data collection on staff perceptions and challenges (concurrent design).

2.3.4. Data analysis

The analysis of the classroom observation data centred on small groups of students who were completing in-class analysis tasks. Analysis of this data focused on GREs. Analyzing the types of GREs generated while students carried out student-led genre analysis tasks allowed for a glimpse into the impact of the genre-based tasks, materials, and approach. After each observation, the transcripts were coded in NVivo 12 following the approach described by Tardy and Gou (2021), as I report in more detail in Hakim (in press). The analysis of the interviews and focus groups followed "thematic analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2006) starting with data familiarization, followed by an iterative process of systematic coding, review and refinement of themes, and, finally, writing up. The analysis of the student questionnaire data included analysis of close-ended items and open-ended items. Analysis of the Likert-scale items included descriptive statistics to identify the frequencies of responses. Open-ended items on the questionnaire were also analyzed following thematic analysis as I describe above.

3. Findings and discussion

The analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data demonstrates that overall, the subject lecturers, the EAP tutors, and the students have positive perceptions of the discipline-specific, genre-based approach that was implemented. Because each of these groups of participants had a very different role in the approach, and accordingly different experiences with it, I discuss each of these groups' perceptions in turn and point out where there may be convergences or divergences across each.

3.1. The discipline specialists' perceptions

3.1.1. The feasibility of the collaborative approach

A recurrent theme in the interviews with the discipline specialists was their perception of the feasibility of the collaborative approach, which they discussed in terms of workload and sustainability. Their workload related to the approach included gathering student exemplars, marking and commenting on these exemplars, communication with the EAP tutors, participating in follow-up meetings, and occasionally reviewing the materials developed by the EAP tutors. Although the amount of time dedicated to each of these tasks may differ by discipline, the analysis of the interview data reveals that from the perspective of the discipline specialists, the approach does not add an unfeasible amount to their workload. Their positive perceptions of the feasibility of the approach may be in part because there was a limited time commitment, in contrast to higher time commitments which have been identified as a possible constraint to other sorts of collaborative pedagogical approaches (Dearden, 2018; Hyland, 2015).

The discipline lecturers also discussed the sustainability of the collaborative approach, which relates to the viability of continuing the collaborative approach beyond the initial pilot year. Each of the discipline lecturers agreed that the workload is sustainable year-on-year with one lecturer saying,

> **Extract 1**
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> "In fact, it's one report per student once per year. Yes, no problem for this. I can do it" (Chemistry Lecturer).

It is important to acknowledge that the lecturers' perceptions of sustainability may differ by discipline, though. The Biology Lecturer pointed out that there is significant variability in the number of students in each subject department, which might impact how lecturers see marking and commenting on students' work. He stressed that it might be more manageable for lecturers in departments with fewer students to participate in marking and commenting on students' assignments in detail as was done in the collaborative approach. Nevertheless, the interview data suggests that from the discipline specialists' perspective, the workload of the collaborative approach is feasible and sustainable over time. This finding offers further evidence in support of the approach that was adopted.

3.1.2. The benefits of the approach

The interview data also showed the lecturers' perceptions of the benefits of the collaborative approach for both students and themselves. The majority of the discipline lecturers emphasized the benefits of the approach for students, underlining the importance of the written feedback on assignments which is more detailed and focused on more than justifying a grade. While marking and commenting on students' written work is a regular feature of the discipline lecturers' assessment practice, the lecturers mentioned that they have provided more detailed and a more diverse range of marginal comments as a result of the collaboration. This will certainly benefit students who may have previously received little formative feedback on their writing from the discipline lecturers, whose feedback and commentary have the potential to convey important disciplinary literacy practices to students, as Hyland (2019b) has argued.

It was also suggested in the interviews that the process of providing these detailed comments has been beneficial for the lecturers themselves. The process of providing thorough comments was beneficial in raising the lecturers' awareness of students' areas of difficulty and adjustments that needed to be made in assignment guidelines. One example of this relates to the computer science lecturers, a team of two, who mentioned that students had not understood the need for an introduction to contextualize their software development report, but this was not evident to the lecturers until they had gone back and provided more detailed comments to students. Providing more comprehensive comments gave them further insights into students' areas of weakness and further guidance needed in the assignment prompt. Another example comes from the Mathematics

Lecturer who plans to provide more ongoing feedback to students on text structure and analysis within students' texts as a result of collaborating with an EAP specialist. She plans,

> **Extract 2**
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> "[j]ust to incorporate a bit of the ideas each time they send me a paragraph, a certain analysis or something. I try to incorporate this, just say *attention* [pay attention], sorry...you should add this or that. This was very helpful in this way."

It seems these lecturers gained a heightened awareness of their own assessment practices because of the collaborative approach. This awareness-raising outcome among lecturers has been discussed in previous research on interdisciplinary collaboration between EAP specialists and discipline lecturers (Li, 2020) and it is one that is highly desired (Mancho-Bares, Khan, & Aguilar, 2022). At the university under study, the impact of heightened awareness among discipline lecturers shows some indication that it may lead to changing assessment practices as lecturers have indicated that they intend to continue to integrate further assessment discussions into regular teaching and adjust assignment guidelines. The insights gained because of the interdisciplinary collaboration will clearly be beneficial to both lecturers and students and could indeed prove to be transformational as lecturers integrate changes in their regular teaching and assessment practices.

3.1.3. The learning materials

The discipline lecturers indicated that they see the newly developed genre-based learning materials as both relevant and useful for students. In the interviews, it was suggested that the learning materials are relevant to students' backgrounds and area of study in contrast to the previous provision, which was not discipline specific. The Biology Lecturer put it this way:

> **Extract 3**
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> "Well, I think that what you are doing now and this all this new project will be really very interesting since for the last years at least for the last ten-fifteen years the English course given was mainly English as a language, and they didn't take really into consideration the background or the knowledge of the students, so now what you are preparing is to prepare in English the course dedicated really for each discipline and I think this will be of great help for our students."

This extract reflects a key aspect of the discipline lecturers' perceptions of the materials, and more broadly of the approach implemented, which, like contemporary EAP practice, aims to be relevant to students' disciplinary needs (Hyland & Shaw, 2016).

The discipline specialists also perceive the learning materials as useful for students. Each of the lecturers who were asked about their thoughts on the materials developed stated that they will be useful, or helpful, for students. The Mathematics Lecturer emphasized that the materials are "spot on" in elucidating features of the target genre. Additionally, the Chemistry Lecturer underscored the value of the guiding questions and inductive approach taken in the materials. EAP genre-based approaches keep students actively involved in the process of building genre awareness and rhetorical consciousness-raising through discovery-based tasks (Cheng, 2018; Tardy, 2019). The discipline lecturers have emphasized that they, too, see the value in the aims and types of tasks included in the learning materials.

3.1.4. The challenges

A small number of the discipline lecturers indicated that they faced language-related challenges in providing written feedback on students' texts. While these issues were only raised by two lecturers, language barriers posed a significant challenge for them. The Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Lecturer, for example, said,

Extract 4

"You know there are things that we don't know in the English language. This is obvious."

For the Chemistry Lecturer, language-related challenges added significantly to the amount of time he spent on marking, which he estimated increased from ten minutes per report to twenty minutes per report. This language issue highlights a possibly unique contextual limitation in the approach which asks lecturers to provide written feedback in English. This contextual limitation could be addressed in part through collaborative marking (e.g., Northcott, 2019), but further support for lecturers focused on providing written feedback in English may be needed.

3.1.5. The discipline lecturers' recommendations for future provision

The recommendations offered by the discipline specialists centred on teaching and incentives. Their recommendations for future teaching included language-related and instructional recommendations. Two discipline specialists pointed to students' language needs as a point of concern. The Chemistry Lecturer identified vocabulary, cohesion, and article usage as specific points of concern in need of further instruction, and the Electrical and Mechanical Engineering lecturer pointed to the use of passive voice and personal pronouns as points of concern in student writing.

These language-related concerns may be due to their conceptualizations of writing as technical and students' needs in terms of language top-up to reduce surface errors (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002). It is also likely due to lecturers' perception of students' language proficiency levels and language-related challenges, which are common concerns among EMI lecturers (Abouzeid, 2021; Galloway et al., 2020). While only two of eight discipline lecturers discussed students' language-related challenges, for these two lecturers, language-related challenges are an important issue which need to be addressed.

Here instructional recommendations refer to suggestions made by discipline lecturers on aspects of the target assignment. Half of the discipline lecturers provided instructional recommendations, including, for example, teaching students the necessity of the introduction of the computer science report; plagiarism and source use in the biology report; and the format and timing of teaching in the engineering and chemistry reports. These instructional recommendations point to the need for further and ongoing collaboration regarding target genres, source use and citation practices, and mapping of academic literacy teaching to subject modules.

Two lecturers also made recommendations regarding incentives for participation in collaborative efforts. All but two discipline lecturers mentioned that they did not receive any incentives for taking part in collaboration with EAP specialists. The two computer science lecturers did receive hourly pay to mark and comment on student reports at the rate of one-hour of pay per report although it took them between three to four hours per report to mark and comment. When asked what incentives they might prefer, the lecturers mentioned workload reduction, pay, and recognition as among the most important incentives.

The Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Lecturer brought out the importance of recognition, saying,

Extract 5

"At the end of the day we work for recognition."

What format this recognition would best take needs to be further investigated, but one possibility is acknowledgement in promotion applications.

3.2. The EAP tutors' perceptions

3.2.1. The approach

In the interviews with the EAP tutors, I sought to explore their perceptions of the genre-based approach and learning materials, specifically regarding usefulness and feasibility. The EAP tutors

indicated that they see the approach and the learning materials as feasible and beneficial for staff and students.

The EAP tutors reported that they see the approach as feasible within their current workloads. Given the added amount of work in collaborating with the subject lecturers, adopting the new approach, and developing the new materials, it is quite important that the tutors do see this approach as viable within their current workloads, and their positive perceptions of the feasibility of the approach that was used do show some promise in terms of continued implementation of the approach. Their positive perceptions of the approach are in line with the subject lecturers, discussed above, and with the previous research (Tribble & Wingate, 2013) which has addressed the viability of the approach.

The EAP tutors also see the approach and materials as beneficial for themselves and for their students. One of these benefits relates to students' development of what might be considered "genre-specific knowledge" in Tardy et al.'s (2020) model of genre knowledge. One of the EAP tutors interviewed discussed this genre-specific knowledge in terms of "dos and don'ts" saying,

> **Extract 6**
>
> "Of course. 100% because now they have the dos and don'ts from these samples, and they have in parallel the remarks and the things that we added, that you added, actually, and that I delivered saying 'you should do that and that', some useful phrases and connection words, so yes, of course" (EAP Tutor 3).

Here she is referring to the marginal and summative comments made by the subject specialist and the EAP specialist and the annotations, which show the moves of each sub-genre as well as re-current lexico-grammatical features, or what she calls "useful phrases and connection words." What she has identified as "dos and don'ts" is a pragmatic understanding of students' growing genre specific knowledge.

The EAP tutors also mentioned the benefits of the approach and materials for themselves, but there were some differences between the tutors. The tutors who co-designed materials emphasized the role of the materials in helping them gain a better understanding of the conventions and requirements of the target genres, or what might be understood as genre-specific knowledge. The tutors who were not directly involved in materials development mentioned the role of the learning materials in supporting their pedagogical knowledge. Another benefit of the approach and materials raised in the interviews is their practical relevance. Rather than academic literacy provision that is divorced from their subject courses, as it was previously, the new approach and materials are relevant to their subject modules, and because of this, the EAP tutors reported that they see the approach and materials as relevant. This is also in accordance with the subject lecturers who reported seeing the increased relevance of the learning materials.

3.2.2. The challenges

The EAP tutors reported challenges around uncertainty with the new approach, the instructional time needed for the genre-based approach, and some limited or lack of communication from the subject specialists. The most prevalent concern that the EAP tutors mentioned relates to their uncertainty with the new approach. This uncertainty seemed to stem from the tutors' initial confusion with the approach. For some of the tutors, it impacted their level of confidence in teaching. EAP Tutor 3 expressed this confusion and lack of confidence, saying,

> **Extract 7**
>
> "No, honestly, *yaani* [I mean], it's been a new experience. Okay? If I tell you that I'm 100% confident and, *hayk* [that], feel like myself doing this, I'll be lying."

However, this uncertainty and waning of confidence may have affected some of the tutors differently. The EAP tutors who did not co-design the materials indicated that while they did experience

some initial uncertainty, the learning materials, which had already been developed by the EAP coordinator, alleviated their initial concerns. The comment below illustrates this.

Extract 8

"So I was, I was a little bit scared. I was panicking at the beginning because I felt like the material ... there were so many handouts. I didn't know how we're going to work. Okay, when you started to send us the emails and things, I felt like, okay, no, everything's here, and I'm on track, and it's okay, so take it easy" (EAP Tutor 4).

Here it becomes clear that while this tutor faced significant challenges, the materials were helpful for her in alleviating her initial concerns. There are only a few studies that have explored the experiences of university-level EAP tutors who are new to applying genre-based approaches (e.g., Tardy et al., 2022; Mapes et al., 2018), but the findings here are consistent with these earlier studies, which have discussed EAP tutors' challenges in coming to terms with the concept of genre and with adopting genre-informed teaching approaches. The findings also reveal the potential role of learning materials in building tutors' comfort in applying a new approach.

A related issue mentioned by all the EAP tutors concerns instructional time. They agreed that more teaching time is needed to adequately scaffold instruction and to cover the materials developed for each target genre. The tutors stressed that genre analysis tasks, in particular, were quite time consuming for students. This also accords with earlier research focused on the experiences of EAP tutors adopting genre-informed approaches. Tardy (2017) has found that less experienced teachers, who were implementing genre-based pedagogies for the first time, changed course plans as genre-based tasks took students longer than was originally anticipated, and that this posed significant challenges to these teachers. Tardy et al. (2022) also observed that the tutors perceived the instructional time for genre-based pedagogical tasks to be insufficient as students' genre analysis and scaffolding can be time consuming. Findings from these studies correspond with what the EAP tutors interviewed in this study discussed regarding instructional time and students' need for more time to complete genre analysis tasks.

Finally, some of the EAP tutors discussed communication with the discipline lecturers as limited or lacking. They described facing issues in an occasional lack of responsiveness and a lack of clarity regarding timelines and topics for the linked written assignments. The result of this is that the EAP tutors had to change planned materials, instruction, and assignment deadlines quite late in the term. Given the extensive literature identifying the problems with collaborative initiatives (see an overview in Li, 2021) it is not surprising that the EAP tutors have identified these issues. Although the level of collaboration in this case reached the highest of Hyland's (2019a) levels of collaboration, direct collaboration in linked courses, and the EAP tutors were embedded on the departmental teams, these tutors still faced communication issues. The discipline specialists did not mention these communication issues and did not seem to recognize that this was an issue. This may be because the onus to develop and deliver the materials was primarily on the EAP tutors.

3.2.3. The EAP tutors' recommendations for future provision and support

For each of the challenges, the EAP tutors offered recommendations. The first of these addresses the tutors' uncertainty with the approach. In response to this challenge, the EAP tutors suggested further training and continuing professional development (CPD), for example more workshops focused on the genre-based approach and materials. One tutor also suggested self-directed development through reading. She mentioned her own experiences reading research and scholarship on genre-based pedagogy as particularly helpful in reducing her own concerns with the new approach. While this is a less formalized form of CPD, these readings could help to gain familiarity with the approach, students' backgrounds, needs, and disciplines. The tutors also mentioned their own individual efforts toward further development through informal sharing with colleagues,

searching for online resources and ongoing discussions with the EAP coordinator, but they expressed a desire for more CPD related to genre pedagogy, subject-specific knowledge, conventions of the target genres, and materials development.

The desire for CPD among EAP practitioners is often cited in the literature (Fitzpatrick, Costley, & Tavakoli, 2022; Kaivanpanah et al., 2021; Ding & Campion, 2016), and in the interviews here it became evident that the tutors saw a need for future CPD focused on their own genre knowledge and aspects of what Worden (2019) has called "pedagogical content knowledge of genre." Research focused on teachers' genre knowledge development and the development of pedagogical content knowledge of genre underscores their complex and long-term nature (Worden, 2018). Ongoing CPD in the form of reading groups, as Johns and Caplan (2020) recommend, and which include collaborative reflective practice, as Tardy et al. (2022) suggest, may provide some of the ongoing support that is needed for in-service practitioners during this long-term process.

In response to their own concerns around instructional time, the EAP tutors proposed that instructional time be increased. The EAP tutors suggested that this increase in class time would be necessary to cover the materials and to allow sufficient time for the student-led genre analysis tasks, which are fundamental to the approach. Given the complexity of genre-based pedagogy, and the time needed for tasks to be scaffolded and student centred, the tutors' recommendation for increased instructional time is certainly understandable, and may be warranted, but because of programmatic constraints, it is not likely that classroom time would be increased in the EAP modules. However, it may be the case that as the EAP tutors have repeated opportunities to teach the EAP modules, their challenges with timing will be reduced, as Tardy et al. (2022) discuss.

To address the issues that the EAP tutors faced in communicating with the discipline lecturers, they proposed that face-to-face communication be increased. Because of the Covid-19 hybrid working policies that were in place at the time of this research, the EAP tutors lamented that they primarily communicated through email and had only met once online. They saw the online nature of the communication as detrimental to collaboration. It is not clear whether a change in the mode of communication, including face-to-face meetings, would have improved communication between the EAP tutors and the discipline specialists, but perhaps more guidance or directives from university management around communication would have helped. These issues did seem to be isolated to one or two disciplines, but there may be a need for expectations to be made more explicit and enforced to ensure consistent communication.

3.3. The students' perceptions

3.3.1. Academic literacy support in the university

The students provided a positive evaluation of academic literacy support in the university in general, but a somewhat mixed picture of support within discipline departments. While the majority responded positively when asked about support in the university overall, some were less positive about support from their discipline departments and lecturers. On the student questionnaire, when asked whether they had received enough support to complete written assignments in English, over three-quarters responded that they had. Similarly, when asked if they had received enough support to complete reading for assignments, three-quarters of the participants responded positively. However, one-third of the participants responded that they did not receive sufficient support in their major course, and nearly one-quarter reported that they did not receive enough support from their discipline lecturers. This divergence in the students' perceptions around support was also raised in open-ended questionnaire items and in the student focus groups in which two groups expressed frustration with the lack of assistance within their respective departments.

It may not be much of a surprise that a segment of the students reported dissatisfaction with support in discipline courses and by lecturers. Discipline lecturers may not see support for students' writing as part of their job (Tuck, 2016) and may feel reluctant to engage in helping students develop academic literacy (Jenkins & Wingate, 2015). Because of the crucial role of the discipline

lecturers in this collaborative approach and in supporting students' knowledge of disciplinary literacy practices, this is an issue that the university will need to address, and one for which it should invest in CPD. EAP specialists can play a significant role in this CPD.

3.3.2. The approach and learning materials

On the whole, the students signalled that they have positive perceptions of the EAP modules and the learning materials used in them, each of which is an indicator of their opinions of the genre-based approach (see an overview in Figure 1 below). Over two-thirds of the students indicated that they were satisfied with the EAP modules and that they find the genre-based learning materials as useful. Regarding the learning materials, the students consistently rated particular features of the learning materials highly, for example the annotations on rhetorical moves and the EAP and discipline lecturer comments. The students also reported relatively high rates of satisfaction (72%) with the genre analysis tasks.
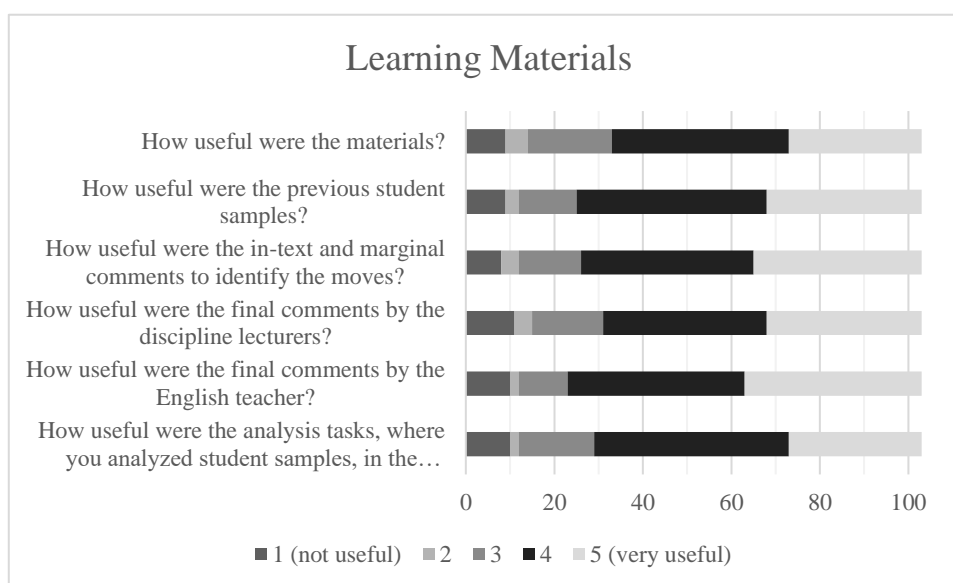
Figure 1. Students' perceptions of the genre-based learning materials ($N = 103$).

The findings from the focus groups shed further light on the students' perceptions of the genre-based materials. In the focus groups, students explained that they found multiple features of the genre-based materials as valuable, but they found the learning materials as particularly useful in learning to avoid mistakes. One of the mathematics students put it like this:

> **Extract 9**
>
> "The materials were great since we were able to see what older students wrote in their reports and learn what mistakes to avoid."

It seems that the students considered some features of the learning materials, such as the annotations on rhetorical moves and the markers' comments, as especially helpful in seeing where students did not meet the requirements of the assignment. This is consistent with what Crosthwaite, Sanhueza, and Schweinberger (2021) have reported regarding students' perceptions of a set of online genre-based learning materials that also featured text annotations. What the students saw as former students' mistakes may be their practical understanding of some of the conventions of the genre which were not exhibited in some of the student exemplars.

3.3.3. The students' recommendations for future provision

The last section of the student questionnaire allowed space for the students to provide their recommendations for future academic literacy provision and learning materials. In response to these

items, the students expressed a desire for more exemplars and more continuous, formative feedback, both of which were also communicated in the student focus groups.

In both the focus groups and the student questionnaire, students conveyed their desire for more exemplars. This was the most common recommendation made by the students in the questionnaire. The students' broad desire for more student samples can be seen, at least in part, as a longing for an extension of the resources that writers use to develop genre knowledge. Tardy (2009) has theorized that some of the resources writers use to develop their genre knowledge include sample texts, feedback, and prior knowledge of genres. In the absence of extensive feedback on their ongoing work from lecturers or repeated opportunities for gaining familiarity with the new genre, students may see further examples as a way to compensate for the resources which are not available to them.

The students also reported a desire for more continuous, formative feedback. One student's comment on the student questionnaire item brings this desire to the fore. He or she said,

>   **Extract 10**
>
>   "Any help from the teachers would be valid. Usually none is given."

While this student did not distinguish whether he or she was referring to an EAP teacher or a subject teacher, it seems likely that he or she was referring to a discipline lecturer as the EAP tutors provided a minimum of two rounds of formative feedback on all students' drafts before the students submitted a final draft to the discipline lecturers. This student's comment underscores the absence of multiple drafts and a feedback revision cycle, which are common in EAP modules, but which are typically absent outside of academic language and literacy-focused provision (Hyland, 2019b; Mancho-Bares, Khan & Aguilar, 2022). Discipline lecturers may not see this formative feedback as necessary or as part of their regular responsibilities (Tuck, 2016). However, this seems to conflict with the students' desire for formative feedback on their work in progress.

4. Conclusion

This study has explored the discipline specialists', EAP specialists', and students' perceptions surrounding the initial phase of the implementation of university-wide academic literacy support in one emerging EMI university. It has shown that each of the stakeholders perceives the collaborative, discipline-specific, genre-based approach positively overall. A note of caution may be warranted here as the experiences of those collaborating and developing learning materials in diverse disciplines may vary widely. Despite its limitations, this research provides valuable insights into effective academic literacy provision to meet students' needs in an EMI context. This study contributes to the body of literature focused on models of academic literacy support for students and answers calls within some of the literature (Wingate, 2022; Wingate, 2018; McKinley & Rose, 2022) by providing an example of university-wide support in practice. Another important contribution relates to collaboration between subject lecturers and EAP specialists, which is uncommon in many EMI contexts. While a few of the EAP tutors did report issues in communication, the subject lecturers reported tremendous benefits from the collaborative approach. The findings from this study show the transformative potential of this interdisciplinary collaboration, particularly related to lecturers' assessment practices, which is one area which has been underexplored. Finally, this study also provides a snapshot into the EAP tutors' experiences with genre-based pedagogies, which also have not received much attention (Worden, 2018; Tardy et al., 2022).

A natural progression of this work would be to extend it over the long term. This would provide further insights into successful practice regarding student support in English-medium higher education contexts. As EMI continues to expand globally, this research will become increasingly important in garnering support from university management to adopt inclusive student support mechanisms. Future research could also focus on some of the impacts of interdisciplinary collaboration which have not been examined. This study demonstrated some of the potential advantages

of collaboration, but future research could explore how EAP practitioners' and subject specialists' teaching and assessment practices shape and are shaped by collaboration. Finally, further research is needed to identify how best to address EAP practitioners' challenges with genre-based pedagogies. Given the significant difficulties that EAP tutors experience and the importance of in-service support for EAP practitioners (Ding & Campion, 2016; Bruce, 2021), further research investigating in-service support focused on genre-based instruction is warranted.

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