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UNCOVERING THE PRINCIPLES BEHIND EAP PROGRAMME DESIGN: DO WE DO WHAT WE SAY WE'RE GOING TO DO?

Abstract

English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) programmes are highly valued in higher education as they provide students with knowledge and understanding of the cultures, literacies, discourse and practices of their academic communities. This article examines an ESAP, pre-sessional programme for Masters students developed by the Language Centre at The University of Leeds, UK. Its aim was to deliver nine discipline-specific courses in collaboration with subject specialists from the wider University. The article investigates the principles underlying the programme with reference to official documentation and data from semi-structured interviews with course designers. It shows that a principled approach to programme design facilitated the development of coherent ESAP courses, despite the many constraints that influenced the design process. A set of principles is proposed which reflect the aims and ethos of an ESAP approach to programme design. It is argued that specificity in EAP programme design is both desirable and achievable.

Key words

content-based, EAP, ESAP, pedagogical principle, programme design, specificity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In summer 2016 I was involved in a new pre-sessional English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programme for post-graduate students at the University of Leeds. Ambitious in scope and complexity, the content-based programme (subsequently referred to as CB programme) was organised into nine discipline-specific 'strands', each one linked to schools and faculties.

Previously, the Language Centre at the University of Leeds had run three summer, post-graduate, pre-sessional programmes, with varying degrees of departmental involvement. Academic English for Business Management (AEBM) and Intercomm were developed with input from academics from participating schools and faculties. This included specialists delivering lectures, suggesting texts, and in the case of AEBM, guidance on assessment tasks. The third programme, Academic English for Post-graduate Studies, was a more general programme, catering for students progressing to all other schools and faculties. According to the programme leaders, collaboration prior to 2016 was based on personal relationships and individual interests.

Whilst the catalyst for the new development was changes in the regulation of visas for international students, the Language Centre had been moving for some time towards more discipline-specific provision for international students, in line with current thinking about what constitutes an effective EAP pre-sessional course. This was started by the leaders of AEBM and Intercomm, but continued by the Director of the Language Centre, Melinda Whong, the driving force behind the adoption of the CB programme.

My own involvement in the CB programme was as course designer and leader for the Language for Business Management and Enterprise strand in summer 2016. This led to my reflecting on the experience and questioning the underlying principles of the CB programme as a whole. Encouraged by Alex Ding and supported by the Language Centre to participate in scholarly activity, I embarked on a project investigating the CB programme's EAP principles.

My approach to the project and the writing of this article is that of a practitioner-researcher with an emphasis on investigating my own EAP practice and sharing it with EAP scholars (Ding & Bruce, 2017). My own experience of scholarship aligns with the definition of the scholarship of teaching and learning as 'a messy process', which involves enquiry in the hope of deepening understanding, rather than solving problems and finding answers (Bond, 2020: 11).

Therefore, the aim of this article is to investigate the principles underpinning the design of the CB programme at the University of Leeds taking into consideration the different viewpoints of its stakeholders, comprising course designers, Language Centre leaders and the University Academic Working Group. It positions the CB programme in the context of English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP), rather than the North American Content-Based Instruction approach. The focus is on seeking to understand underlying EAP principles, rather

than the process of course design itself. In common with Basturkmen's (2019) observation that scant attention has been paid to understanding the processes of course development, course designers' understanding of EAP principles seems to be an area that has received little attention in the literature. It is the author's hope that the exploration of EAP principles from a practitioner's perspective, drawing on colleagues' own beliefs and university documentation, may be of interest to the wider EAP community.

There is a brief overview of the literature relating to content-based instruction, ESAP and importance of principles in course design. I then investigate the difference between the principles presented in official University documentation and frameworks from EAP's professional body, and their interpretation by the course designers. I examine data from interviews with course designers and identify key themes that emerged from their principles. My aim is to show that there were many variables shaping the underlying principles and affecting the realisation of the programme. Firstly, its iterative and collegial nature necessitated compromise, and principles were modified subsequently. Secondly, there were several constraints, which restricted course designers' freedom to follow their own principles, and which created tensions related to "emotion labour" (Benesch, 2018). Finally, I consider whether the competencies required to design ESAP programmes and English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) programmes may differ. I hope to show that a standardised approach to ESAP courses is neither possible nor desirable.

Information was gathered for the project using a range of methodological tools. I read the literature relating to curriculum design and EAP, providing a context for the project. I consulted university documentation in order to understand the official position and principles behind the adoption of the CB programme. Interviews with Language Centre course designers and others involved in the development of the CB courses provided data allowing me to explore the unofficial or pragmatic principles underpinning the programme.

2. CONTENT-BASED INSTRUCTION AND ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC ACADEMIC PURPOSES

Content-based instruction (CBI), a term widely recognised throughout the wider English language teaching world, began in North America in the 1960s with a focus on acquiring language through learning subject-content (Grabe & Stoller, 1997). The term CBI was subsequently, and perhaps confusingly, adopted by some authors in the UK to refer to discipline-specific EAP instruction and research. For example, Jordan (1997: 61) explains "content-based has come to mean, in recent years, the particular requirements of specific academic disciplines e.g. economics, engineering". However, as will be seen in the following section, the use of this term

seems superfluous as a UK version of CBI already exists, namely, English for Specific Academic Purposes.

The development of EAP has been studied extensively in the literature of language teaching, ever since the term was first used by Tim Johns in 1974 as the title for the published proceedings of a conference held in 1975 (Ding & Bruce, 2017; Hyland & Shaw, 2016; Jordan, 1997). The available literature provides a thorough historical overview of EAP from its origins in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), "a practical affair concerned with local contexts and the needs of particular students" (Hyland & Shaw, 2016: 1) to a view of EAP as a "research-informed *academic field of study*" (Ding & Bruce, 2017: 4). Many authors have written on this topic (see Basturkmen, 2010; Ding & Bruce, 2017; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001; Hyland & Shaw, 2016; Jordan, 1997).

ESAP's beginnings in ESP were concerned with notions of specificity, understanding texts and "communicative behaviors" as well as providing practical, pedagogic solutions to students' specific needs (Hyland, 2007). Initially, the emphasis was on language/register analysis and meeting specific aims within specific academic disciplines (Swales, 1985), in particular, the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and medicine) (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

As ESP became more widely adopted across education, it developed to include different ideas about specificity. Hutchinson and Waters questioned its importance and advocated seeking a common ground between disciplines (Hyland, 2016). Widdowson (1983 as cited in Basturkmen, 2010) argued ESP courses could be plotted at either end of a continuum from "narrow-angled", catering for students with specific needs for English, to "wide-angled", more appropriate for students with general needs for English. The idea of varying degrees of specificity was further developed by Jordan, who presented Blue's (1998 as cited in Jordan, 1997) view of specificity in EAP: English for general academic purposes (EGAP) and English for specific academic purposes. EGAP is concerned with study skills and "a general academic English register", which applies to all disciplines, whereas ESAP's concern lies with "language needed for a particular academic subject [...] together with its disciplinary culture" (Jordan, 1997: 5). EAP practitioners were invited to choose between an EGAP or ESAP approach, creating what appeared to be opposing camps (Hyland, 2016). Bodin-Galvez and Ding (2019) provide an overview of the arguments given in support of ESAP and the differences between ESAP and EGAP.

However, Hyland's (2002) influential article "Specificity revisited: how far should we go now?" challenged the practices and thinking underpinning EGAP and ESAP. He argued that academic discourse and practice need to be located in specific disciplines, because students will experience them in the context of their disciplines. Furthermore, students will encounter diverse academic cultures within specific disciplines, and by EAP courses being tailored to their specific needs, they will be better prepared to meet their academic programmes' requirements (Hyland, 2016).

It seems that University of Leeds' adoption of the term content-based was guided by content being a more widely-recognised term in the wider university context. However, the programme was more closely aligned with the goals of ESAP, with a focus on learners developing the language, culture and literacies of their disciplines, rather than with CBI's narrower aim to facilitate the acquisition of language through learning subject-content.

3. DEFINITIONS OF PRINCIPLES AND WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT

This article's premise is that principles underpin EAP practitioners' pedagogy and approach to learning. By interrogating the term 'belief' or 'value', more frequently used terms in educational literature, the idea that beliefs are central to teachers' pedagogy is found in English language teaching (Clark & Peterson, 1986 and Lynch, 1989 as cited in Richards & Lockhart, 1996). A more complex view of belief is offered by Richards and Lockhart (1996: 30) suggesting teachers construct "belief systems" consisting of "goals, values and beliefs" not just about pedagogy, but also the institutional and wider educational context and the part they play within those systems. In the field of ESP/EAP, Basturkmen (2010) focuses on curriculum development and how practitioners' beliefs underpin choices about wide-angled or narrow-angled course design, real and carrier content and authentic and non-authentic texts. Furthermore, principles are key to EAP's professional body, BALEAP, whose practitioner accreditation scheme adopts a framework which places values alongside knowledge, competencies and professional activities (BALEAP, 2014: 4).

4. PRINCIPLES OUTLINED IN OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS DOCUMENTATION

Official university documentation provided evidence of underlying principles, specifically a briefing paper outlined the ambition for the CB programme to become a collaborative venture between receiving schools/faculties and the Language Centre (University of Leeds, 2015a). According to the briefing paper, the introduction of the CB programme formalised the links between the Language Centre and a range of university departments contributing to an innovative level of cooperation at pedagogic and operational levels. Students would begin their academic careers on summer pre-sessional courses in the Language Centre and progress to "the in-sessional bespoke Language Centre programmes which are run in conjunction with specific Schools, and which support students during their PGT programmes" (University of Leeds, 2015a). Responsibility for running the CB programme was shared between The Language Centre "responsible for providing

language development based on content" and "academic content delivered by academic colleagues" (University of Leeds, 2015a). The programme's purpose was "to prepare students more effectively for their future academic programmes" (University of Leeds, 2015b). It is implicit in these statements that the CB programme was to be discipline-specific.

Another important source for understanding the official underlying principles are the module objectives and learning outcomes (see Appendix A). Developed by Bee Bond in the Language Centre, they can be found in internal communications such as the briefing paper (University of Leeds, 2015a) and meeting minutes (University of Leeds, 2016b), and student-facing documents such as the Programme Catalogue (University of Leeds, 2016a) and instructional materials for teachers and students. The underlying principles of the module objectives and learning outcomes were based on the definition by Bruce (2011: 35 as cited in BALEAP, 2016) adopted by BALEAP, "EAP course design needs to be grounded in knowledge of the more general assumptions, values and practices of universities as well as understandings of the more specific differences that can occur among different subject areas" (BALEAP, 2016: 12). In addition, a key figure in the development of the CB programme argued for curriculum design to incorporate the "knowledge base of our students' future academic discipline, including its epistemology and ontology" (Bond, 2017: 13).

The module objectives refer to "discipline-specific academic context" and "academic study in the field of [discipline]" (University of Leeds, 2016b). These ideas about specificity are detailed in the learning outcomes (see Appendix A). They set out how the discourse, academic conventions, critical approaches, autonomous learning and cultural and ethical issues should be embedded within the specific contexts of the students' destination programmes (University of Leeds, 2016b). They run through the syllabi, assessment tasks, lesson materials, activities and plans (University of Leeds, 2015a, 2016a). It is worth noting, however, that both module objectives and learning outcomes were intended to be sufficiently broad in scope to allow course designers to interpret them within certain constraints.

5. METHODOLOGY

As previously mentioned, I am an EAP practitioner, not a researcher. Any shortcomings in the research process may be explained partly by my lack of experience in conducting research, but also by a conscious choice to present a practitioner's perspective. In addition, there is a difference between a researcher's relationship with participants and the one between a practitioner and participants. It was important for me to preserve working relationships and respect the integrity of participants, who were colleagues and friends.

5.1. Interviews

Fifteen participants were interviewed, although only data from eleven participants was used in this article. Some of the data gathered from Language Centre managers proved to be less relevant to the themes that arose from the investigation. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as they guided participants on specific themes, but allowed for exploration of ideas in keeping with the project's exploratory nature (Borg, 2006). Interviews were conducted individually, with the exception of two designers who co-designed the course. Interviews typically lasted between one to two hours.

The main topics covered included:

1. EAP principles underpinning courses
2. Influence and involvement of discipline specialists on course design and enacted courses
3. Constraints, challenges and good practice related to course design and enacted courses

The full set of interview questions are included in Appendix B.

5.2. Participants

All participants were responsible for designing courses. There were significant differences in the length of participants' time at Leeds, ranging from two to fifteen years. Also, levels of experience in course design varied with only five out of eleven participants having previous course designer experience. The majority of interviewees had MA qualifications in EAP-related subjects and only three with solely Delta qualifications.

Participant (see note)	Gender	Nationality	Length of time at University of Leeds	Qualifications	Previous experience as course designer
CD 1	F	British	7	MA & Delta	Yes
CD 2	F	British	15	MA & Delta	Yes
CD 3	F	British	2	Delta	No
CD 4	M	British	3	MA	Yes
CD 5	M	British	7	MA	Yes
CD 6	F	British	4	MA	Yes
CD 7	F	British	3	MA & Delta	No
CD 8	M	British	8	MA	No

CD 9	F	British	2	MA	No
CD 10	F	British	2	Delta	No
CD 11	F	British	2	Delta	No

Note: In order to ensure anonymity each participant has been allocated a number and is referred to as CD 1–11 throughout the article.

Table 1. Interviewee profiles

5.3. Data analysis process

The interview data were subjected to thematic analysis. Interviews were recorded and listened to repeatedly in order to identify salient points. These were transcribed and analysed carefully for emergent themes, which provided the focus of the investigation.

6. COURSE DESIGNERS' PRINCIPLES

In keeping with Basturkmen's (2010) view that beliefs may develop during the course design process, rather than be decided in advance, the principles underpinning the CB courses evolved from official principles, module objectives and learning outcomes, and were interpreted by course designers. An opportunity was provided for reflection on EAP principles in general at an open meeting in the Language Centre at the beginning of the programme design process. There was no attempt to 'impose' a consensus from 'above', rather the forum served to encourage reflection on these matters. A wide range of views were expressed with no overriding consensus reached. One designer explained how the forum had influenced their beliefs, "things like when we had those forums on what is EAP and it comes out what your actual beliefs are about teaching and things like that. So definitely that will have shaped it" (CD 3).

In addition, the original remit given to course designers was for module objectives and learning outcomes to underpin each strand programme. Some course designers commented on the importance of objectives and outcomes, "Learning outcomes were important in shaping programme design" (CD 7). Before the interviews participants were given a list of suggested principles to stimulate discussion, but were also encouraged to articulate principles for themselves. The five principles chosen as a focus for this article were those most widely agreed on: academic practices and assessments of receiving schools, needs analysis, genre analysis, independent learning, and academic skills. Obviously, there were differences in interpretation of these themes and in understanding of their enactment, which the following section will attempt to explore in relation to themes in the literature.

6.1. Academic practices and assessments of receiving schools

An overview of the literature suggests that EAP is concerned with authenticity, adopting authentic texts, tasks and practices of the academic community (Hyland & Shaw, 2016). In particular, an ESAP approach with a focus on specific disciplines is considered to be the most effective way of teaching practices and assessments (Basturkmen, 2010; Hyland, 2002, 2016). BALEAP also recommends "assessment will clearly reflect the academic expectations of receiving departments and faculty" (BALEAP, 2016: 20).

The aim of the CB programme was to include more discipline-specific practices and assessments and this was partly achieved through the pairing of Language Centre course designers with subject specialists, described as "informants" by Basturkmen (2010: 140). Data from the interviews showed that designers' courses were developed, to a greater or lesser extent, in consultation with experts in the disciplines. Collaboration involved provision of content in the form of themes, texts, lectures and assessment tasks, "a lot of the academic practices and assessments came very much from what the nature of what the academic lead gave us" (CD 8). Perhaps unsurprisingly, designers who reported high levels of support from departments strongly believed their courses reflected this principle.

However, there were notable constraints on designers' abilities to create subject-specific courses. In some cases, constraints overrode designers' own preferences for creating more bespoke courses and involved them modifying their own principles. The largest obstacle was the need to cater for a wide range of Masters programmes resulting in less specific programmes. One designer explained how she mitigated for large differences in destination programmes, "it wasn't quite so closely matched, but we just took things we knew all of them did like an essay, presentation type thing, so that was important, but we couldn't mirror the variety" (CD 3).

Another constraint related to some designers' feelings about their lack of subject knowledge. CD 1 acknowledged the challenges relating to this, "the constraints of working in a knowledge field we didn't understand" and "the people putting together the programme didn't have that subject knowledge". Ding and Campion (2016) point out that acquisition of discipline-specific knowledge is a common challenge for EAP teachers. Conversely, others believed they had developed a greater understanding of the depth and breadth of students' future Masters programmes, "another great thing about doing the content-based [courses] is that we started to understand the complexity of what they are studying" (CD 6) and "I think it was a real shock to us the gap between what we'd been doing previously and what they were going to have to do on their Masters course" (CD 2).

Their comments, "great thing" and "a real shock", also demonstrate their emotional engagement with the process of developing such specialist knowledge. Benesch (2018) suggests that the emotions educators experience in response to

institutional changes can be viewed as a positive catalyst for change. The enthusiasm expressed by these designers suggests that this newly-gained knowledge was instrumental in changing their own beliefs and influenced their approach to course design.

This principle, perhaps due to its centrality in the design process, was the one most commonly mentioned in the interviews. There seemed to be genuine enthusiasm for designing ESAP courses. Overall, there was a sense that designers' courses were bespoke and introduced students to the assessments and practices of their destination departments.

Possible indicators as to how well the courses achieved their aim of developing a programme which reflected the academic practices and assessments of receiving schools can be found in external reports. Three external examiners' reports from 2016 recognised that content and practices reflected those of students' postgraduate programmes and offered, "a significant enhancement to the pre-sessional offering" (University of Leeds, 2016c). In addition, an external inspection report carried out by BALEAP in 2018, commented, "the content-based PG courses, developed in collaboration with academics from receiving departments, are examples of best-practice in the field of English for academic purposes" (BALEAP, 2018: 4).

6.2. Needs analysis

According to Bocanegra-Valle (2016) needs analysis has been a feature of EAP since its advent, and is an area well-documented in EAP literature (see Basturkmen, 2010; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Hyland, 2014; Hyland & Shaw, 2016; Jordan, 1997). It is widely recognised that needs analysis is a complex process involving identifying different aspects of students' needs (Basturkmen, 2010), including accounting for different stakeholders' perspectives (Bocanegra-Valle, 2016).

Interestingly, needs analysis was not identified as a requirement of the course design process. In a study by Bocanegra-Valle and Basturkmen (2019) teachers highlighted the importance of basing ESP teaching on students' needs. The aspects of practice that teachers identified as essential included developing a syllabus based on discipline-specific content and discourse as well as the ability to carry out a target situation analysis (Bocanegra-Valle & Basturkmen, 2019). At Leeds there was no explicit reference to needs analysis in the module objectives or learning outcomes, presumably because they were student-oriented rather than practitioner-oriented. However, university documentation seems to infer a requirement for needs analysis. The role description for course leaders calls for a close working relationship with the subject specialist to facilitate an "understanding of the academic practices, teaching contexts and literacies of the specified discipline" and "develop a syllabus for the pre-sessional course around

this" (University of Leeds, 2015b), the implication being that designers were expected to carry out a needs analysis by consulting stakeholders.

In interviews most designers stated they discussed student needs, genre, assessment tasks and practices with "secondary stakeholders" (Bocanegra-Valle, 2016: 560), i.e. subject specialists from departments. Bocanegra-Valle and Basturkmen (2019) discuss the opportunities provided by collaboration between subject specialists including course design, deepening understanding of terminology and concepts, identifying authentic resources, materials design and becoming familiar with academic practices. Designers at Leeds were also able to gather information directly, "we did go and see some lectures and seminars in the school" (CD 8), or by observing department practices. These insights added to designers' understanding of literacies and cultures of receiving schools, which were incorporated into syllabi and materials. One designer incorporated structured seminars in line with practice in Leeds University Business School, "they [subject specialists] gave me a way they would do it, how they would run a seminar" (CD 4). CD 3 and CD 8 included seminar tasks in their course in order to address subject leaders' concerns about students' reluctance to speak in seminars.

However, whilst needs analysis was mentioned, understandings of the term varied. This seems to chime with the view that needs analysis is not value-free as course designers bring their own beliefs about pedagogy to the process (Basturkmen, 2010; Hyland, 2008). There were some designers who did not refer explicitly to conducting needs analyses, even though they did obtain information from subject specialists. Other designers saw needs analysis as a tool for gathering information from students. The tool most commonly adopted, namely investigation of students' "present situation analysis" (Basturkmen, 2010: 19), involved a written diagnostic task and/or a questionnaire for students at the beginning of the course, "we only did an IELTS-type essay for an initial evaluation of writing skills" (CD 9, CD 10). Another aspect of present situation analysis, that of soliciting students' views about their perceived needs, was discounted by one designer because, "how can students know what they don't know?" (CD 6). The limitations of consulting only students about their needs is noted by Brown (2009 as cited in Bocanegra-Valle, 2016), who questions the value of only consulting students, due to their lack of knowledge of their discipline.

In addition, needs analysis data was sometimes discounted in favour of course designers' own professional judgement. Subject specialists' perceptions of students' needs were sometimes disregarded, either because their perceptions were judged to be reductive or subject to Language Centre constraints. CD 7 felt, "schools' priorities were more basic" and made choices based on their own experience. In another case, speaking skills were assessed through presentations, despite presentations not being the faculty assessment tool (CD 11). These examples demonstrate how designers occasionally prioritised their beliefs or official requirements over stakeholders' concerns.

A significant factor in the needs analysis process was the constraint of time. Many designers stressed the difficulty of squeezing the programme into six weeks and "making choices about what to prioritise and what to leave out" (CD 11). Once again designers' principles were adapted to meet practical programme constraints. Another reason for why needs analysis may or may not have been identified as a key principle by designers is that of teacher competency. BALEAP includes the ability to conduct needs analysis in its TEAP framework (BALEAP, 2008: 6). However, the question arises as to what extent designers were aware it was a desirable competency for creating an ESAP programme. If not, they could not have been expected to conduct a needs analysis.

6.3. Genre analysis

Genre analysis is identified as being central to EAP practice by various authors (Basturkmen, 2010; Ding & Bruce, 2017; Hyland, 2007) and BALEAP (BALEAP, 2008). EAP's approach has tended to categorise texts from academic genres and identify their communicative purposes (Ding & Bruce, 2017). Studying genres from specific disciplines is helpful because of their subject-specific nature (Hyland, 2002) and can be used by students as a tool to analyse texts independently (Hyland, 2007).

In terms of course design, genre analysis of written texts is a key method for carrying out discourse analysis (Basturkmen, 2010). According to Bocanegra-Valle and Basturkmen (2019) ESP teachers need knowledge of a range of discipline-specific genres specifically text organisation/structure as well as discourse and its relationship to the discipline. BALEAP (2008: 8) states "knowledge and understanding of approaches to text classification and discourse analysis" are a professional competency that tutors should be able to demonstrate and tutors should "guide students to investigate the genres and expert practitioners of their specific discourse communities" (BALEAP, 2008: 4).

In relation to the CB programme, genre analysis was identified as an underlying principle by all course designers, both for students and for course design, and as having emerged from the needs analysis process. It was one of the learning outcomes for the CB programme, "students should have begun to develop an awareness of subject specific genre, discourse and rhetorical function; making appropriate choices in relation to audience and purpose at whole text, paragraph and sentence level" (University of Leeds, 2016b).

A variety of authentic texts, mostly provided by subject specialists, were analysed by designers and featured in the learning materials. Designers identified rhetorical and discourse features which could be used to raise practitioners' and students' awareness of genres, focusing particularly on genres most useful in students' own writing.

There were several approaches to using genres as a pedagogical tool by designers for the CB courses. One approach was to include student exemplars, "I did incorporate student essays, lots of analysis of student essays, within the materials" (CD 4). This designer described their approach to teaching writing, adopting a framework for analysing texts involving moves analysis (Swales, 1981; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988 as cited in Tribble & Wingate, 2013). Interestingly, they were the only designer to mention taking a principled, evidence-based approach to this element of course design, and explicitly mentioned the genre-based model adopted. Student exemplars were seen as being very useful in preparing students for written assignments on their future programmes and were highly prized, although not always available, "my dream is to get genuine samples of authentic texts of the type they will actually have to produce" (CD 7).

In the absence of student exemplars, a second approach was to use other genres. Texts were selected in order to provide an alternative model, "we did some discourse analysis on academic marketing texts, because that's what would apply to their own writing more" (CD 11). Other academic texts were also analysed from the viewpoint of increasing students' ability to read critically in order to prepare them for the academic texts they would encounter.

A third approach was for designers to raise students' awareness of the variety of genre that they would encounter. For CD 6 and CD 7, the need to accommodate a wide range of postgraduate programmes meant students also had to recognise different texts in their own specific disciplines:

> For our course we would say, you will have very different texts, for example, design have weird texts. So, we'd be saying this is something that you are very likely to read on design or on history. We had a little bit of making students aware that there's not one type (CD 6).

A fourth approach was to train students to analyse texts themselves. CD 7 explained how students began by analysing generic texts and progressed to specific texts, "[Students] just take a text and make a structure of that type of text, and then see if another text of the same type matches it, and then sort of do the same with a different text, and then you can start to look at similarities and differences".

Evidently, there were constraints on designers' use of genre analysis. Their use was partly conditioned by accessibility of appropriate genres, which depended on departments' willingness to provide student writing models, and when unavailable of appropriate, alternative models. However, there may also have been an expectation that designers would have the expertise to adopt genre analysis strategies, as seen by the inclusion of genre analysis in the learning outcomes and by BALEAP (2008). Designers' ability to conduct genre analysis may have been hampered by these constraints.

6.4. Independent learning

Another key principle of EAP is that students should be encouraged to become autonomous learners, in terms of their own language and literacy development. In Bocanegra-Valle and Basturkmen's (2019) study ESP practitioners identified the necessity of helping students become independent learners in order for them to manage their own language learning in future. Perhaps surprisingly, there has been little research done into the issue of developing independent learning strategies in ESP provision (Bocanegra-Valle & Basturkmen, 2019). BALEAP (2016) endorses autonomy by making it a course design requirement in its accreditation for institutions, "the development of student autonomy and engagement with academic texts and practices will be integrated and made explicit throughout the syllabus components" (BALEAP, 2016: 17). In the higher education context, the importance of a student's role in their own learning provides a rationale for making independent study an integral part of postgraduate study.

Independent learning is presented as part of postgraduate study on the University of Leeds library website (2020), "taking responsibility for your own workload; being motivated to learn, managing your time and reflecting on your progress". It is represented in the CB course learning outcomes, "students should have begun to critically reflect on their own learning and demonstrate awareness of resources and techniques they could employ to continue their own development" (Appendix A).

In interviews, all course designers agreed it had been an important principle, but did not comment in detail, perhaps because such an established practice required little interrogation. The underlying assumption was learners are expected to undertake independent study and that teacher instruction does not equal student learning. It was also a pragmatic response designed to deal with the programme's short duration. Students were given responsibility for learning content outside class, because of the limited number of teaching hours available.

Typical independent study activities included reviewing lectures, researching sources, reading texts, producing written assignments, preparing for presentations and seminars, and working on language development. Designers also signposted resources which students could use to support independent study.

However, independent learning tasks and resources were more general than specific. They fostered academic skills such as writing essays and seminar preparation, not necessarily related to students' specific Masters courses. Students' ability to activate these independent learning practices would depend on their ability to transfer these general skills to a specific future context, not always achievable, without considering the specific context in which transfer occurs (Perkins & Salomon, 1992). Reasons for the absence of subject-specific practices may have been designers' lack of knowledge of those academic community practices or needing to cater for a wide variety of courses.

6.5. Academic skills

A key focus of EAP since the 1980s has been the teaching of academic skills (Ding & Bruce, 2017). BALEAP recommends syllabi include "academic literacy skills" related to students' academic programmes (BALEAP, 2016: 17). In the case of the CB programme, the module objectives stated the need for students to "display linguistic and literacy skills to a level that will enable them to communicate competently within their discipline-specific academic context" (Appendix A).

Interview data revealed academic skills was another principle that all course designers agreed underpinned their courses and was discussed in some detail by designers. Reflecting current thinking, academic skills were not viewed as separate, decontextualised items, but embedded in the content and processes, "there was less teaching of 'atomised' skills" (CD 8) and "academic skills were really, really important, and I think key, because writing that essay and how you write that essay, so that was the process we were going through" (CD 6).

Other designers reflected on how specific skills such as referencing, paraphrasing, summarising, introductions and conclusions should be taught. One approach to teaching them was through independent learning. Some designers, "put the onus on students to find a little bit more about that" (CD 1), or introduced skills through a flipped approach with students accessing information themselves, followed by classroom discussion to develop their understanding (CD 11). In contrast, other designers favoured a more direct approach by making teachers responsible for raising awareness of skills (CD 5) or providing a more scaffolded approach, "some practice at doing them and ideally feedback on their practice" (CD 7).

The most divergent approach came from designers rejecting the term academic skills, preferring either 'competencies' defined as, "what students are going to need to be able to do" (CD 3), or "I don't like 'academic skills'. I'm not denying it's not part of what we do, I just don't see them as skill, it's just the word 'skills'… competencies? I don't know what I call them, developing an ability to communicate in academic life?" (CD 2).

In common with independent learning, some designers relied more on established practices, resulting in less critical reflection on their practice. Firstly, their experience from previous pre-sessional courses may have been of a mainly skills-based, EGAP approach. Indeed, initially designers were encouraged to borrow materials from pre-existing, general skills resources. Secondly, they had more limited knowledge of specific departmental practices.

7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

7.1. Constraints

Importantly, the various iterations of the programme and my own involvement in its development have consequently influenced my own understanding of what constitutes an effective CB programme.

Those principles which were most frequently discussed in interviews and were considered to raise the most salient and interesting questions were the focus of this project. However, it should be pointed out that these principles may not reflect the views of all designers involved in the design process as not everyone was interviewed. Also, by choosing to focus on principles over which there was most agreement, other principles, which may have been equally important to designers, were discounted. That said, the project raised questions which merited exploration and applied equally to myself, as co-course designer, not just to colleagues. To what extent did we reflect on the meaning of content-based and the underlying principles during the initial design process? Was our knowledge implicit rather than explicit? What other factors, such as working collegially, constraints and competencies, affected the courses? Did we have the necessary competencies to develop an ESAP programme? These issues are addressed below.

According to Stern (1983, 1992 as cited in Basturkmen, 2010) concepts related to language teaching, whether implicit or explicit, may be observed in teachers' pedagogy or in institutions' policies. Our principles may have been initially implicit, but they emerged during the process of course design. At the beginning, although we were encouraged to reflect on underlying principles, much of our attention was focused on meeting operational deadlines and producing a programme and pedagogic materials. Timescales were relatively tight and pragmatic concerns were prioritised. Post-course evaluation, an important stage in course design (Bocanegra-Valle, 2016; Stoller, 2016), fed back into the programme in subsequent years, providing designers with the opportunity to reflect on their principles, thus bringing them to light.

Another feature of the course design process is that it was developed collegially, raising further issues. Course designers were not always course leaders, therefore, the programme enactment may have differed from the designers' original ideas. In addition, designers and leaders were replaced over the years, leading to further compromise and modification. These variables are likely to have changed the underlying principles. This collegial approach to course design contrasts with the way modules are developed in the wider university, where module leaders are responsible for developing their own courses, and consequently have more control over all aspects of programme development.

Constraints are usual for any course developer (Basturkmen, 2010) and were to be expected for designers in this study. In her inventory of EAP student needs Stoller (2016: 578) points out that, "EAP preparation is accompanied by ambitious

goals, often within formidable time constraints". The main constraints at Leeds were related to official requirements, e.g. Secure English Language Test compliancy; standardised course structure; levels of engagement by participating academic departments and time deadlines. Also, constraints changed over time and had an impact on later iterations of the CB programme. Such constraints included an increase in student numbers; changes in availability of facilities e.g. teaching rooms; requirements of external examiners, inspecting bodies/non-EAP actors, e.g. subject specialists, school leaders.

The constraints created a tension between the actions required of designers by official decision makers and designers' feelings about the process, although, not always with negative outcomes. Benesch (2018) refers to the conflict teachers might experience between their own training or beliefs and "feeling rules". The emotions experienced by teachers in dealing with official policy can engender change, and this "emotion labor" may lead them to adapt, accommodate or deviate their practice (Benesch, 2018). The aims set out in the University briefing document and comments from course designer interviews suggest there were different interpretations of content, leading to designers exercising agency and making changes to course structure and decisions over what to include in the courses. Overall, these constraints had a significant impact on the realisation of the programme and its ability to fully meet its objectives.

Another aspect that may have influenced the extent to which the CB programme achieved its aims was that of designers' professional competencies. They were not the focus during the design process, instead more importance was given to the challenges of dealing with content. The module objectives, learning outcomes and role description for designers were based on the Competency Framework for Teachers of English for Academic Purposes (CFTEAP) (BALEAP, 2008), but these competencies seem to be more suited to general EAP rather than those needed for specific EAP. Indeed, Ding and Campion (2016) suggest perhaps CFTEAP is not the ideal model for defining competencies as it can be seen as normative and self-perpetuating. Designers' lack of awareness of competencies needed for designing ESAP programmes may have prevented them from engaging in the usual ways of developing specific competencies, such as reading the literature, participation in Continuing Professional Development (CPD), conferences or other forums (Ding & Campion, 2016), which may have impacted on the integrity of the courses. This was also the case for the teachers in Bocanegra-Valle and Basturkmen's (2019) study and the authors comment on how generally ESP teachers receive little formal professional development in preparation for their roles.

7.2. Arising implications and conclusion

The principal aim of the Language Centre's CB programme was to provide students with an authentic introduction to their future discipline in three ways by adopting

an ESAP approach. Firstly, through close collaboration with subject specialists; secondly, engagement with academic practices and cultures of those disciplines; and thirdly, the development of communicative competencies which enabled effective participation in those communities. The placing of the discipline and the various stakeholders' needs at the centre of programme design is consistent with the ethos of ESAP and, as such, the CB programme should be viewed through its principles. Not only has ESAP developed out of practical, theoretical and research-based approaches to ESP (Hyland, 2007), it is also closely linked to the wider academic community by a shared emphasis on principles, which are seen as vital in underpinning a coherent approach to course design (Kember & Kwan, 2000).

This project set out to uncover the principles of the various stakeholders involved in the development of CB programmes at the University of Leeds, and to consider whether we did what we said we were going to do. I would argue that overall the programme achieved its aims, but individual courses were conditioned by pragmatic constraints of time, official requisites, contribution of receiving departments, designers' professional competencies and a collegial approach. One further way of verifying whether the courses achieved these aims would be to examine and seek evidence of those aims within the instructional materials, and this could be a focus for future research.

Since the launch of the CB programme at Leeds in 2016, the programme has continued to develop and change. As already mentioned, there have been changes in staff, including course leaders, designers, Language Centre directors and subject specialists, resulting in alterations to the original programme. Student numbers have continued to rise, giving rise to an expansion in the programme and introduction of new strands, increasing from nine in 2016 to thirteen in 2020. Despite these changes, the programme has maintained and strengthened its ESAP ethos. Ever-closer collaboration with university departments through the Language Centre's in-sessional provision has enhanced its ESAP focus. Staff are now embedded in twenty-three schools and faculties across the university. They employ their knowledge of academic practices to enrich the CB offering, particularly those in-sessional lecturers who are also CB pre-sessional strand leaders. In summer 2020 the CB programme moved online to accommodate government restrictions imposed during the coronavirus pandemic. Despite the challenges created, it did not affect the ESAP experience offered to students as all strands made the transition online and even included the incorporation of digital practices of destination departments into their design.

In terms of implications for the wider EAP community, this article has shown the benefits of ESAP over EGAP provision in relation to pre-sessional courses for postgraduate students progressing to Masters programmes. Whilst this article has not focused on the wider process of course design, there may be aspects of the experience at Leeds which could be of interest to those interested in developing ESAP programmes in their own contexts. It has also identified the constraints, including their potential opportunities: the value of post-course evaluation in

addressing the imbalances of a pragmatic approach to principles taken during the initial design stage and designers' increased sense of agency, experienced due to "emotion labor" (Benesch, 2018: 63), in dealing with exacting institutional requirements.

I would argue the shared principles identified in this project provide the basis for an approach to developing ESAP pre-sessional programmes which aspire to become truly reflective of specific disciplines. They would enable stakeholders, particularly course designers, but also programme leaders, subject specialists and others to integrate the discipline knowledge and practices needed by students to pursue their future studies. Their adoption could be embedded in the design process itself, thus highlighting the importance of principles in developing a coherent approach to course design. They might become a set of principles that underpin and shape future ESAP programmes not just at the University of Leeds, but at other institutions. It would be expected that the principles evolve and respond to future changes in the EAP and HE environment, and could include multimodality and digital literacies and plurilingual practices (Hafner & Miller, 2019).

Through the process of exploring the complexities of establishing principles on an ESAP programme, I have shown that principles are complex, evolving, influenced by many stakeholders, shaped by constraints, operating on different levels of explicitness, and affected by issues of competency, transparency and orthodoxy. It seems to me the original principle that all the strands on the Leeds CB programme should be similar in approach, in terms of structure and aims, was in reality, modified early on in the design process. Rather than seeing this as a weakness in the programme design, it could be argued that this allowed for a complexity of approach and richness in provision in keeping with the multi-dimensional nature of the participating subject disciplines. If content-based programmes are truly to reflect the academic literacies and practices of receiving departments, I believe these differences should be protected and even encouraged. It also sounds a note of warning that any move towards a more standardised approach may endanger the vision of the initial content-based initiative at Leeds and signal a return to a more homogenous offering characteristic of previous non-ESAP programmes.

In summary, I would argue for increased specificity in EAP programmes in order for students to be able to fully engage with others in their disciplines and to facilitate effective spoken and written communication allowing them to become members of their academic community (Hyland, 2002). I believe if the unifying, underpinning principle for a CB programme is a subject-specific approach, there should be nothing to fear from specificity within programme design.

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Appendix A

Module objectives (students should…)

1. Meet the language requirements of their future academic programme.
2. Display linguistic and literacy skills to a level that will enable them to communicate competently within their discipline specific academic context at post-graduate level.
3. Be developing an awareness and understanding of the culture, context and discourse of academic study in the field of XXX.
4. Be developing into autonomous, reflective learners, with a cultural awareness and understanding of ethical academic practices.

Module learning outcomes

1. Be improving their ability to use and manipulate written and spoken academic language to suit a clear communicative purpose, including having a wide lexical resource, a range of appropriate structures and the ability to use these coherently, accurately and fluently.
2. Have begun to develop an awareness of subject specific genre, discourse and rhetorical function; making appropriate choices in relation to audience and purpose at whole text, paragraph and sentence level.
3. Have begun to develop an ability to follow subject specific academic conventions in both spoken and written tasks, such as referencing, citations, synthesising sources and their own argument, meeting task requirements, turn taking and building collaborative understanding.
4. Be developing a critical approach to their own work and the work of others through use of a range of sources, counter-argument and/or evaluation; development of an argument with a clear position.
5. Have begun to critically reflect on their own learning and demonstrate awareness of resources and techniques they could employ to continue their own development.

6. Have begun to develop an ability to communicate an awareness of the cultural and ethical issues of academic study within the field of XXX.

Appendix B

Interview questions for strand leaders/programme designers

1. Which of the following were important considerations in your programme design?
    a. Academic practices and assessments of the receiving school(s).
    b. Academic skills.
    c. Assessment tasks.
    d. Communicative competency.
    e. Communicative language teaching.
    f. Independent learning.
    g. Genre analysis.
    h. Language systems (grammar, lexis, punctuation, spelling, pronunciation).
    i. Language learning strategies.
    j. Learning outcomes.
    k. Needs analysis.
    l. Subject knowledge/content of the discipline.
    m. Students' cultural/educational backgrounds.
    n. Theories about education and learning.
    o. Anything else.
2. What were the principles underpinning your programme design?
3. How were the learning outcomes fulfilled in your programme?
4. What kind of assessments did you choose and why? How did they influence the programme design?
5. How much input did you receive from your academic lead(s)? How did they support you before and during the programme?
6. What were the constraints on your programme?
7. What aspects of good practice did your programme include?
8. What were the innovations on your programme?
9. To what extent were you influenced by other programmes a) in the LC including ones you were involved in designing and teaching on (current and past)? b) in other institutions/from your own experience of designing courses?