Introduction

The relationship between language and learning is at the core of English for academic purposes (EAP). Hyland and Hamp-Lyons (2002), in their editorial marking the inaugural issue of the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, see the aim of EAP as facilitating learners’ study or research in English. Following an English for specific purposes (ESP) approach, Hyland and Hamp-Lyons highlight the need to tailor EAP research and pedagogy to the particular requirements of specific academic disciplines. The last decade or so since their editorial has seen accounts of a great diversity of disciplinary and professional genres – in law (Price 2014), business (Bhatia 2008), and medicine (Sarangi and Roberts 1999) to name just a few. There have also been a smaller number of reports which discuss the development of EAP materials and curricula based on this type of research (e.g. Swales and Feak 2000). It should be noted that these materials, and the research upon which they are based, are primarily directed at a postgraduate rather than an undergraduate level.

EAP at an undergraduate level, as Johns (2009) has observed, is ‘more complex and elusive than most other ESP categories’ (p.41). It is shaped by multiple factors including country-level differences in higher education systems, which influence the orientation of EAP courses and materials. In British universities, for example, students specialise from first year, leading to a prevalence of discipline-specific EAP offerings. In North American universities, later specialisation has meant that EAP typically takes the form of generalist freshman composition courses and writing across the curriculum programs. Generalist EAP offerings, which aim to prepare students for a wide variety of target situations, including diverse disciplines and professions, highlight the challenges of decision-making about materials and methods. When this decision-making is not framed (or indeed constrained) by a particular discipline and its practices, how do we determine the content – the knowledge and practices – that we teach? More generally, what are the theories and studies that have informed the development of materials and the teaching of undergraduate EAP, particularly over the last decade? Our review of the EAP literature suggests there is not a great deal of scholarship directly addressing such issues, and in particular there is a lack of published research that discusses actual examples of pedagogical materials and course curricula.
There are a number of ways approaches to EAP can be categorised. For example, Charles (2013) distinguishes between EAP informed by corpus-based research, by analysis of academic genres, and by investigation of the broader positioning of EAP as a set of social practices within higher education institutions. Hyland (2006) draws on the work of Lea and Street (1998) and presents an alternative tripartite model: study skills, disciplinary socialisation, and academic literacies. Our discussion of approaches to EAP in this chapter uses a modified typology: study skills, academic socialisation, and critical EAP. We use these categories as a way of reflecting upon different views about the role of EAP, the focus of instruction, and the status of EAP in the academy. They also reflect an evolution in our understanding of literacy practices in different universities and our experiences of teaching EAP across a range of disciplines. It is important to note that these approaches are not mutually exclusive, and EAP offerings in any one institution can include all three approaches or indeed any particular offering might combine several such approaches.

In this chapter, we discuss these three approaches and provide brief examples, where possible, of how they have been operationalised. The examples come predominantly from the Australian higher education system, the context with which we are most familiar. In our discussion, we note the contributions of each approach and the main criticisms levelled at each approach, and we identify contentious issues, some of which are discussed more fully in other chapters in this handbook. We acknowledge that of necessity the perspectives that we report represent a partial sampling of work done on undergraduate EAP pedagogy.

Approaches to EAP in undergraduate courses

*A study skills approach* is the most ‘traditional’ form of EAP. Jordan (2002), in a history of EAP in Britain, notes that early offerings in the late 1960s and 1970s focused on teaching academic vocabulary and different ‘registers’ of writing. These days, study skills provisions offer a variety of resources for students in the form of stand-alone workshops, short courses, individual tutorials, and increasingly via online formats that provide mostly generic advice, tips, and techniques around various academic ‘skills’ (see for example Wingate 2012a). EAP informed by this approach tends to be delivered by centralised student support centres. At our university, for example, an academic skills unit provides a range of EAP offerings, including: pamphlets such as ‘Getting started: 10 tips for a top first year’ and ‘Tutorials: how to get the most out of tutes’; workshops; and interactive online short courses in developing academic writing and preparing for exams. The workshops are typically available to all students, including native speakers, since it has been recognised that native speakers may also be unfamiliar with the requirements of university study. While participation in these workshops does not earn credit points, the advantage of this form of EAP is that students can access it when desired – especially in online formats. Examples of this kind of breadth of EAP offerings can be found in all Australian universities.

The study skills approach arguably perceives EAP as a form of remediation and aims to assist students to overcome deficiencies in language and/or study skills. The assumption underlying this ‘fix-it’ approach (Turner 2012) is that there is an identifiable common set of skills associated with academic communication. Thus, EAP provisions informed by this approach tend to be generic, viewed as helping learners deal with the challenges of studying at the university in general and assessment tasks in any discipline. A number of criticisms have been levelled at the study skills approach, particularly in terms of the views it reflects about academic literacy. By teaching a set of decontextualised skills, the approach
may present a narrow view of academic language and learning and deal only superficially with valued discourses in specific disciplines (Hyland and Hamp-Lyons 2002).

A further criticism is that while the study skills approach may ‘scaffold and reassure in a general way’, it is ‘not intended to promote critical engagement’ (Goodfellow 2005: 484); an issue we return to later in this chapter. Turner (2012) also notes that this model of EAP, with add-on courses carrying no credit points, may have deleterious effects on the already marginalised status of EAP within the academy. For example, in many Australian universities, EAP practitioners in student support centres are employed on short-term contracts and/or classified as non-academic staff. This marginalisation of EAP practitioners is likely to extend to the marginalisation of students whose academic language and learning needs these programs seek to address. In the Australian context, however, it is important to note that a service orientation to EAP does not necessarily entail a study skills approach. As Jones (2004) notes, language and learning centres in Australian universities are responsible for a substantial proportion of EAP teaching and are currently more likely to orient towards an academic literacies framework.

The second approach to EAP instruction is academic socialisation. This approach views EAP as a form of induction, based on the idea of knowledge about rhetorical and linguistic features of texts as a means to understand a disciplinary culture’s ‘norms, epistemology and social ontology’ (Berkenkotter and Huckin 1995: 21). Two strands can be identified in this approach: induction into the academic culture via a generic EAP course or induction into a specific disciplinary discourse community in an ESP course. The pedagogy in both strands tends to be genre-based with explicit teaching of the defining features of selected genres or text types. The approach is informed by a large body of research on genre analysis, with different researchers drawing on different theories of genre (e.g. Hyland 2002 in EAP; Hewings 2004 in systemic functional linguistics (SFL); Paré 2014 in rhetorical genre studies), and now facilitated by corpus linguistics (e.g. Gardner 2012). However, as noted earlier, most of the research on academic genres has focused on postgraduate student writing (e.g. Basturkmen 2012) rather than that of undergraduates. Wingate (2012b), for example, notes the lack of research on the genre of the argumentative essay, the most common genre found in undergraduate writing.

Examples of ESP-type provisions include credit-bearing subjects and non-credit-bearing offerings such as adjunct modules that are offered alongside a disciplinary subject, and workshops and online activities designed to assist students with specific assessment tasks. ESP offerings tend to be designed in consultation with discipline specialists and are informed by a genre analysis of relevant assessment tasks (see for example Wingate 2012a). Teaching tends to be text focused (oral and written genres), and often includes the use of model texts not only to exemplify the identifying traits of a genre but also to show examples of well-written texts. According to Hyland (2007; 2011) the main advantages of a genre-based approach to EAP is that it is coherent and addresses the needs of the students expediently. Many researchers, including Hyland, also argue that genre-based pedagogy can provide students with a metalanguage with which to discuss and critique texts (e.g. Drury 2004).

One good example of a genre-based online program (informed by SFL and developed at the University of Sydney) is a series of discipline-specific interactive modules for writing undergraduate laboratory reports in a variety of science and engineering disciplines (Drury 2004, accessible at www.usyd.edu.au/learningcentre/wrise/). Another genre-based EAP offering is described by Johns and Swales (2002). The course is one in which Johns taught academic literacy to first year university students through content and assessment tasks from cultural anthropology. Close co-operation with discipline specialists was essential.
in this teaching endeavour. A similar emphasis on ongoing collaboration between content and EAP staff was noted in a case study of a genre-based EAP credit subject taught in the discipline of architecture at the University of Melbourne (Melles et al. 2005). This EAP subject included three components that mirrored the three core subjects (architectural history, design, and construction technology) in the first year of the architecture degree. For example, the EAP design component covered the presentation genre in design studio contexts; its rhetorical structure; the integration of visual and verbal forms of communication, and an emphasis on critique – how to provide it to peers, and how to handle it from tutors. This case study also records how the EAP teacher needed to be flexible in adjusting pedagogical materials and methods in response to changes over time in the School of Architecture.

Some researchers, however, have had concerns about a focus on genres and texts. One concern is about the underlying view of genres (and disciplinary discourse communities) as homogenous and stable (e.g. Prior and Bilbro 2012). Another concern is that a genre-based approach which focuses on the product may ignore the processes that surround text creation. Leki (2007), for example, argues that the use of model texts to exemplify the defining features of a genre provides students with a false sense of academic literacy requirements because it obscures how context may shape these requirements. Macbeth (2010) found that the use of model texts stifles creativity and encourages textual borrowing. We note here that more recent genre-based EAP research and pedagogy tends to acknowledge that even within a single discipline, academic genres are heterogeneous and often hybrid (Bhatia 2008), and has moved away from a focus solely on texts to take into consideration the contexts in which the texts occur (Jones 2004).

There are also debates about the merits of a general versus a discipline-specific EAP, and the notion of transferability. Questions have been raised about whether students can transfer what they have been taught in an ESP class to the literacy requirements in other subjects (e.g. Benesch 2001) or different assessment tasks. This is particularly a concern given the reality of the growing inter-disciplinary nature of higher education. On the other hand, the concern with the general EAP strand is the relevance of the genres dealt with for students who may come from a range of disciplines. The now commonly accepted notion of situated learning – that is, that learning processes are specific to the context in which the learning occurs – clearly poses a major challenge for a generalist EAP pedagogy.

For some researchers, academic socialisation is viewed as an unproblematic transmission of knowledge from experts to novices, although this is not a position we hold. Such a perspective has been criticised because it explicitly encourages students to accept and accommodate to the norms and ideologies of particular disciplines – as embodied in valued genres – rather than question these ideologies. The work of those that critique this perspective informs the third approach to EAP, that of critical EAP.

Proponents of critical EAP include theorists such as Pennycook (1997), Benesch (2001; 2009), and Canagarajah (2002). These scholars reject the notion of EAP as the acquisition of a set of cognitive skills (the ‘study skills’ approach) or the reproduction of valued texts (the ‘academic socialisation’ approach), and instead argue that EAP should aim to develop learners’ critical literacy. They also draw on the work of researchers such as Lea and Street (1998) and others (e.g. Lea 2004; Lillis and Scott 2007) who have investigated academic literacy practices of native speaker students. Lea and Street (1998) use the term ‘academic practices’ to highlight the cultural and contextual nature of literacy in the academy, and to encourage a more student-centred approach with an emphasis on practices rather than on texts, and on the socio-political contexts of writing.
The aim of critical EAP is to encourage students to engage actively with the unequal power relations that shape writing contexts, question rather than reproduce the valued genres, and develop their own writer identities. This approach acknowledges that undergraduate students not only have to learn how to write for different subjects, but also have to calibrate their writing to suit the expectations and requirements of specific subject tutors (Lea and Street 2000). Writing then, becomes ‘a process of creating and defining a new identity and balancing it with the old identity’ (Shen 1989: 101). A way in which the critical EAP practitioner can assist students to negotiate various subject positions across different discourse communities, argues Canagarajah (2004), is by creating safe learning environments that enable students to develop new and alternative identities without being penalised for what might be perceived in the academy as deviant behaviour. It has been argued, however, that there are few published examples of EAP syllabi or materials which have adopted a critical EAP or academic literacy practices approach that include a focus on the role of student identity in academic writing. Our review of available undergraduate EAP materials has revealed a number of exceptions worthy of further consideration.

Grey (2009) in Australia offers valuable insights into how a critical approach to EAP pedagogy can be applied to undergraduate teaching. She describes an EAP elective subject entitled ‘business communication’ in a business undergraduate degree. Working from the assumption that business students need to be equipped to deal with diversity in a globalised marketplace, the subject aims to encourage students 1) to become critical ‘nomadic ethnographers’ who, with the aid of digital cameras and mobile phones, capture different visual representations of race, gender, and diversity in their local communities; and 2) to reflect on and question how their own identities are shaped by their individual histories, cultures, and genders. For assessment, the images students compiled, combined with material from additional resources such as blogs, music clips, and electronic databases were incorporated into a business proposal presented as an academic poster. Encouraging students to engage with and question different forms of knowledge is also a key aim of the critical EAP activity included in our case study section.

Moving beyond Australia, of the few published descriptions of EAP courses which represent academic literacies or critical EAP, Morgan (2009a) in Canada and Wingate (2012a) in the UK provide interesting examples. Morgan describes the development of an EAP credit-bearing course entitled ‘language and public life’ which aimed to co-develop learners’ writing (e.g. paragraph development) and critical inquiry. Morgan emphasises the importance of designing assessment tasks that require students to engage with their own diverse textual experiences beyond the university (e.g. examples from mass media publications), in order to ensure that the research they undertake is socially relevant. However, as he acknowledges, there may be a number of difficulties inherent in encouraging students to find source materials that represent a variety of perspectives on a given topic, because of a growing concentration of media ownership.

Wingate’s (2012a) example is of a critical EAP course developed for information technology undergraduate students. The course was offered online and not for credit. Her findings, based on how often students visited the online site and student interviews, show that students rejected this approach, preferring a genre-based ‘accommodationist’ approach. Wingate suggests that students may be perhaps more willing to take a critical perspective when they have a better understanding and control of disciplinary discourses, echoing Leki (2007) and Hyland (2007; 2011). Hyland argues that it is difficult for students, particularly undergraduate students who are novices in their discipline, to question or challenge a genre unless they fully understand it. However, the notion that a critical approach to EAP
cannot co-exist alongside a more pragmatic and accommodationist approach is challenged by Harwood and Hadley (2004), who argue that it is possible to combine these different orientations in what they term a corpus-based form of ‘critical pragmatism’. Although the authors apply this model to a postgraduate context, it is nevertheless useful to consider its merits in the light of this discussion of undergraduate pedagogical settings.

Harwood and Hadley (2004) describe ‘pragmatic EAP’ as a skills-based instrumental approach to academic literacy development in which the main aim is to teach students to accommodate to, and eventually appropriate, the dominant conventions of Anglo-American writing styles in order to ensure academic success. In contrast, ‘critical EAP’, they contend, conceives of learners as active researchers engaged in processes of knowledge creation. Learners are encouraged to question rather than adopt dominant academic discourse practices in their search for new understandings and perspectives. Rather than focusing on access to power (the realm of ‘pragmatic EAP’), ‘critical EAP’ focuses on exploring diversity. ‘Critical pragmatic EAP’ attempts to reconcile these opposing positions by teaching the dominant features of disciplinary discourses sourced from examples identified in discipline-specific corpora relevant to students’ fields of study, whilst simultaneously recognising and respecting the need to explore cultural and rhetorical differences.

Although such a model may seem appealing, and certainly offers students insight into different disciplinary practices, it is less clear how learners might be encouraged, or indeed supported, in the production of writing that does not adhere to corpora conventions. Part of the answer might lie, as Harwood and Hadley suggest, in raising lecturers’ awareness of students’ diverse cultural and rhetorical backgrounds so that differences in student writing styles might be more widely tolerated. Part of the answer might also lie, as Benesch (2001: 53) and Morgan (2009b: 86) indicate, in paying greater attention to the right of students to question the academic literacy demands they face.

**Applications of EAP pedagogies in undergraduate settings: two case studies**

We have noted in this chapter that EAP offerings at any particular university are shaped by a whole range of socio-political, cultural, and historical factors, including their country and institutionally specific contexts. At our university, EAP encompasses all three approaches described above. A centralised academic skills unit provides generic and assignment specific workshops; and an English as a second language (ESL) unit, located in the School of Languages and Linguistics, offers a range of credit-bearing EAP subjects for students for whom English is an additional language (EAL) at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The undergraduate subjects are 12 weeks long and are available each semester. They include two generalist EAP subjects (Academic English 1 and 2) and a discipline-specific subject (Academic English for Economics and Business). Since their inception approximately 20 years ago, these subjects have only been offered on a credit-bearing basis to ensure that they are included as part of students’ degree courses. This not only avoids the potential problem of overloading, it also guarantees that students obtain credit for their EAP studies. The subjects are taught by lecturers whose academic status puts them on a par with teaching staff in other disciplinary areas, and whose research in applied linguistics informs their EAP teaching.

In the following section, we describe two case studies: one describing the curriculum and assessment tasks of one of our EAP subjects (Academic English 2); the other describes an activity used with students in Academic English 1, which endeavours to engage students critically with subject materials.
Case study 1: Generalist credit-bearing EAP subject

Academic English 2 (AE2) is designed for EAL students with levels of English language proficiency equivalent to IELTS (International English Language Testing System) 6.5–7. The subject consists of a one-hour lecture, a two-hour tutorial, and participation in online discussions each week. The subject is intended for first year students from across the university, but second and third year students also sometimes enrol in the subject as an elective.

As noted, a particular challenge of generalist EAP courses is determining the content – the knowledge and practices – that we teach. AE2 could best be described as a genre-oriented, theme-based EAP subject. What we mean by this is explained below. The subject is organised into three parts, with the overarching theme being the effects of globalisation and internationalisation on Australian institutions. The three current themes are: internationalisation of education; the changing family; and Australia’s international relations. The choice of themes reflects a primarily sociological orientation towards content, consistent with our location in an arts faculty, as well as our aim to select topics with which our students have some personal experience or familiarity. Their connection to the first theme is self-evident; the second theme requires students to compare recent trends in Australian families with those in their countries of origin; and the third theme focuses on how Australia is perceived and represented (in the media) by other countries, particularly those from where our students come.

AE2 is genre-oriented in a number of ways. The subject is structured around a series of more formal assessed tasks, beginning with a short and then a longer summary, a critical evaluation, a comparison of two articles, and leading to an oral presentation and an essay. These text types – all of which incorporate source material – have been identified as amongst the most common in undergraduate academic writing on the basis of surveys of academic tasks. Such surveys attempt to categorise written academic tasks and report their frequency and some detail of their linguistic and rhetorical features (Carter 2007; Moore and Morton 2005 for a survey of tasks in our own university; and most recently, Nesi and Gardner 2012; Nesi, this volume). Such surveys can provide useful input into pedagogical decision-making for generalist EAP subjects. In addition, in AE2, ‘genre’ is introduced in the first lecture as a key concept, and discussed explicitly throughout the semester. In the first lecture, for example, students are given three extracts on the theme of internationalisation of education and asked to identify text types – a blog, a newspaper article, and a research article – on the basis of rhetorical issues including purpose, audience, structure, and style.

The third way that AE2 is overtly concerned with genre is in an active attempt to ‘promote rhetorical flexibility’ (Johns 2009: 43). Building on the notion of genre introduced in the first lecture, students are presented during the subject with a wide variety of text types and required to write a range of texts – more and less formal – in different conditions (e.g. timed writing in exam conditions, reflective pieces on the process of assignment writing, narrative and opinion in blogging and online discussion board; only some of which are assessed). The overarching aim is more about genre awareness and an understanding of process rather than genre acquisition per se. Flexibility and adaptability are encouraged through comparing rhetorical and linguistic features of different text types as well as discussion of variability and choice within any one genre. The balance between a focus on teaching language and a focus on generating and discussing ideas remains a tension; one that is negotiated differently each time the subject is taught. In its most recent iteration, the subject saw several other changes including a shift in the first assessed summary from individual to collaborative (see Storch 2013), and a move to make the oral presentation task more open-ended by giving
students a choice in what they research and present within the themes of the subject, and how they present this – in groups, individually, using video, posters, drama, instead of the more traditional PowerPoint. These initiatives were met with some enthusiasm but notably very few students took up the alternative oral presentation formats. While this may have been a consequence of our undergraduate students’ unfamiliarity with these new assessment formats, it also has curriculum design implications suggesting that we may need to calibrate our teaching more carefully in order to prepare students adequately for these new formats.

**Case study 2: Critical thinking activity**

In Academic English 1 (AE1) a thematic approach to the teaching of language is adopted. The overarching theme for the subject entails a study of the development of Australia as a multicultural society, thus attempting to develop students’ appreciation of cultural diversity. Readings and lectures on Australia’s indigenous peoples comprise one of the key areas of focus. It is within this thematic context that the ‘critical thinking’ activity is conducted. Students begin the activity by discussing their own understandings of ‘critical thinking’. They are then asked to consider the proposition by Gieve (1998: 126): that for students to think critically at university level, they need to not only question how their own beliefs and claims to knowledge may influence their own actions, but also question how beliefs and knowledge claims influence the actions of their peers, their teachers, and other sources of authority they may encounter.

A key point to discuss with students here is the connection between ‘thought’ and ‘action’: the ability to think critically and to consider issues from a variety of perspectives will have a direct influence on the decisions students make, and the subsequent course of actions that they then adopt. Furthermore, some undergraduate students may be encountering the notion of ‘critical thinking’ for the first time, especially those from educational backgrounds where learning is conceived primarily as the work of memory and repetition of the words and ideas of one’s teachers and authority figures. It will be important for teachers to acknowledge that for such students, the prospect of challenging recognised experts may seem quite daunting.

Next, students discuss how this approach to critical thinking could relate to their own choice of source materials in their writing. Students are encouraged to reflect on how factors such as authors’ cultural backgrounds, disciplinary affiliations, and text genres are important to consider. Students are also prompted to discuss possible economic, social, cultural, and political implications of the perspectives they may promote as a result of their selection of specific source texts in their written work.

Students then write a paragraph in response to the question: *Discuss the origins of Australia’s indigenous peoples*. To do this they are required to read and critically evaluate information found in four short text extracts representing different written genres (an historical text, a scholarly essay, an entry to an historical reference book, and a poem) and cultural orientations (indigenous compared with Anglo-Australian perspectives). Each text extract provides information relating to the origins of Australia’s indigenous peoples. Next, students discuss the language and cultural values represented in the text extracts; they then write paragraphs that draw on the texts provided to address the above question. Finally, students reflect on which texts and cultural orientations they included in their paragraphs, and their reasons for choosing these sources.

A key objective underpinning the activity is to encourage students to consider how their own cultural beliefs and assumptions influence the kinds of source texts and epistemological orientations they select in their writing. Without exception, students who have completed
this activity have favoured using the texts written by the non-indigenous authors ahead of the indigenous writers. They explain that this is because they cannot understand the indigenous authors’ narrative writing styles, and prefer a more ‘scientific’ style of writing, that includes the use of dates and figures, found in the Anglo-Australian text extracts. Although difficulties with language and text genres can prove problematic, it is felt that the insights students gain by engaging with different viewpoints and culturally different orientations to knowledge outweigh these disadvantages.

A more detailed description and theoretical rationale for this approach to the teaching of critical thinking as a form of social and political practice in EAP contexts, as well as suggestions about how to adapt this activity to suit discipline-specific contexts, can be found in Thompson (2002). The activity can also be adapted to non-credit-bearing undergraduate EAP contexts (refer to Thompson 2009, for details) and can be used for professional development of critical EAP practitioners (e.g. Morgan 2009b). The amount of time required to focus on related language-oriented activities will depend on students’ previous educational backgrounds and levels of English language proficiency.

Final reflections and future research directions

To conclude, we now review the key areas of contention in EAP undergraduate pedagogy that our research for this chapter has identified. We do so with the aim of providing fertile ground for further reflection, curriculum development, and future research. The points we raise are primarily related to the role of EAP, the focus of instruction, and the status of EAP in the academy. We also wish to emphasise the role played by specific institutional factors in shaping the nature of EAP provision offered in different settings. As suggested above, the three main approaches to EAP discussed in this chapter have many points of convergence, and a single institution might include all three approaches, just as one particular offering might combine a variety of approaches.

A study skills approach to EAP is generally offered across the university sector, usually by centralised student support centres, considered by the academy as providing a form of remediation. The main concern with this approach is its generic nature, which may preclude fostering critical engagement with texts, institutional practices, and ideologies. Despite the fact that the study skills approach may offer students many potentially valuable resources, EAP provisions that adopt this approach run the risk of being viewed as low status, resulting in the language learning needs of students being accorded low priority.

Academic socialisation is the second approach to EAP instruction considered in this chapter. The approach includes credit- and non-credit-bearing generic EAP and ESP provisions. EAP and ESP pedagogy tends to be genre-based with explicit teaching of the defining rhetorical and linguistic traits of selected genres or text types. Concerns with this approach relate to both the view of genre as homogenous and stable, and the issue of transferability: whether what is learned in one EAP/ESP context can be transferred by students into other study areas. The EAP/ESP approach, as in the study skills approach, arguably continues to downplay the position of EAP in the academy. A number of researchers maintain that EAP should work towards becoming a fully-fledged discipline in its own right rather than continue to see its role as subservient; that is, servicing the requirements of other disciplines (Benesch 2001; Melles et al. 2005).

The final approach we have reviewed is that of critical EAP. Broadly speaking, this approach encourages students to evaluate the socio-political factors that shape their learning contexts, to question rather than reproduce valued genres, and to develop their own scholarly
identities. Most of the critical EAP offerings we have referred to in this chapter have been credit-bearing stand-alone subjects. The concern with this approach is whether learners can question the ideological foundations of disciplinary discourses before they fully master these discourses. The possibility of developing a ‘critical pragmatic EAP’ has also been raised. Such an approach might entail teaching disciplinary discourses based on examples sourced from discipline-specific corpora relevant to students’ fields of study, whilst simultaneously working to raise staff awareness about students’ different cultural and rhetorical orientations, as well as recognising that students have the right to question the dominant ideologies of the academy.

From our research, we conclude that discussion of approaches to EAP tends to be predominantly theoretical. As previously mentioned, there are still relatively few empirical investigations of how these approaches are implemented, nor studies reporting on systematic evaluations of these approaches. Tardy (2006), for example, notes the dearth of studies investigating how genre-based pedagogy has been implemented, and calls for research gauging the success of EAP courses using a genre approach. Wingate’s (2012a) account of designing, implementing, and evaluating different approaches to EAP is a good example of such a study. It illustrates quite forcefully that an effective EAP course needs to draw on a range of theoretical models, to take account of local factors, and, as importantly, to take student preferences into consideration. Yet another issue that became increasingly clear to us in writing this chapter is the bias in EAP towards writing (or the reading–writing nexus). In particular, we could find little research or pedagogy addressing the speaking demands of undergraduate study.

Finally, while it is clear that current understandings of the nature and issues surrounding EAP pedagogy in undergraduate settings have expanded over the last 10 to 15 years, there is still more that needs to be done to ensure that its position within the broader institutional frameworks within which it is offered is secure. A key to this stability lies not only in investing in regular professional development for EAP practitioners, but also in demonstrating to the wider academic community the important contribution this work makes towards enhancing the quality of student scholarship from across all university disciplines.

Further reading

Brandt (2009); Castelló & Donahue (2012); Mauranen, Hynninen & Ranta (2010)

Related chapters

2 General and specific EAP
3 Academic literacies
19 Genre analysis
22 Critical perspectives
23 Undergraduate assignments and essay exams
42 Needs analysis for curriculum design
43 EAP materials and tasks
EAP pedagogy in undergraduate contexts

References


