

# **A history of ideas: A culture of inquiry : A content-based approach to teaching EAP**

Dr. Matthew Piscioneri

(Arts Academic Language & Learning Unit, Monash University, Australia)

## **Abstract**

The paper outlines a model for an *English for Academic Purposes* [EAP] programme designed to enhance the micro and macro study skills of students in the Arts from non-Western educational backgrounds. This EAP model draws on Jurgen Habermas's (1995; 1988) theory of communicative rationality to argue that the contemporary culture of inquiry in Arts' subjects reflects the communicative rationality that – according to Habermas -- has constituted the modern, Occidental lifeworld. The emergence of communicative rationality Habermas suggests is socio-culturally and historically specific. In other words, it has largely been absent from the socio-cultural contexts of many non-local entrants into Western universities. Yet, effective and successful participation in the Western academic discourse community, as well as everyday or non-scientific discourse communities, at least partly depends on a non-local student's awareness of the historical impacts generated by the developmental trajectory of communicative rationality. Successful participation in the Western academic context also depends on a non-local student's growing mastery over the methodologies, again generated by communicative rationality, that underpin this culture of inquiry. The EAP model proposes a practice based on a history of the ideas that form the bases of the Western academic tradition. It suggests that the macro (critical thinking, formal register) and micro-level (word choice, sentence construction) skills expected of students in Arts' subjects in Western universities are shaped by broader disciplinary and historical features. The pedagogical framing of this EAP model reflects the principles of situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1990; McLellan, 1995) and addresses the recent research of Duff (2007), Morita (2004) and Zamel and Spack (1998).

## 1 . Introduction

The paper outlines a model for an *English for Academic Purposes* [EAP] programme designed to enhance the micro and macro study skills of students in Arts subjects, although the programme could be adapted to apply to a range of discipline areas at university. The programme is mainly designed for transition level students at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels and mainly for students of a non-English speaking background and ‘international’ students from non-Western educational backgrounds, for example from Asia and the Middle East. It proposes an EAP practice based on a history of the ideas that have formed the Western academic tradition and contends that the macro (critical thinking, formal register) and micro-level (word choice, sentence construction) skills expected of students in Arts’ subjects in Western universities are shaped by broader disciplinary and historical features of the Western academic tradition.

The aims of the programme are threefold. Firstly, the programme aims to enhance target students’ understanding of the *content* of their subject areas in the Arts by *mapping* the history of the ideas that comprise the grand narrative of Western civilization (roughly from Classical Greece to the present). Second, the programme aims to develop the macro-skills expected of Arts students (critical thinking, appropriate register, logical structuring of texts, referencing and citation conventions) by exploring the genealogy of these expectations in the Western academic tradition. Third, target students’ micro-level skills (word choice, grammar, coherency devices, syntax) are developed through exercises based on analysing the texts that have comprised the content of the programme. For example:

**Content:** Discussion of Socrates’ critical inquiry into Athenian society as represented in the Plato’s *Dialogues*

**Macro:** Highlight the dialectical logic in conventional argumentation

**Micro:** Effective use of transitions of contrast (however, nevertheless etc)

In summary, the proposed model is ‘testing’ a fairly straightforward hypothesis: whether teaching a conventional EAP programme (Arts) through a history of ideas which outlines the culture of academic inquiry in Western civilization is firstly achievable and secondly effective.

Initially this paper outlines the anticipated format and delivery options of the programme. It next explores the programme's rationale as well as positioning the conceptual justification for the programme within a broad theoretical framework that draws upon situated learning theory, Jurgen Habermas's socio-cultural theory of Occidental society and more specific debates in the discourse of EAP. It is important to note that the programme is still in the development phase. The 1st prototype is expected by early 2009. Phase two is testing. Phase three is refinement. Phase four is implementation: (1) onshore face2face intensive delivery in 5 day summer and winter schools (2) flexibly delivered, own pace completion to both local and international markets – intending students, re-enrolling students, lifelong learners.

## II . Presentation and delivery format

The basic premise of the programme is that macro (eg: critical thinking, register) and micro-level (eg: word choice, sentence construction) skills in Arts' study are shaped by broader disciplinary features of the Social Sciences and the Humanities. It is anticipated that highlighting the connections between these broader disciplinary aspects of the Arts and macro and micro-level study skills will result in enhanced learning outcomes and even deeper student engagement with their study. Successfully achieving this 'linkage', especially in self-directed learning contexts, will be difficult. In agreement with Moore & Oppy (2002) the author's experience in the field of academic learning support (in particular the development of learning support resources and their delivery) strongly suggests that in self directed learning contexts (both hardcopy and online delivery of learning support materials) the uptake rate of learning support resources is low (local and non-local students, ESB and NESB). Moreover, the effectiveness of self directed learning in the area of academic skill development, especially for NESB students, is quite disappointing.

Overcoming this hurdle is the primary 'presentation' challenge of the programme. Ideally, the programme will function almost as well in a flexibly delivered course format (technology assisted + hardcopy materials) as it does in a face2face format. To assist the effectiveness of the flexible delivery format a range of techniques are being investigated. It is considered essential to avoid a largely *static* presentation format of learning resources (Son, 2007; Nagy & McDonald, 2007; McDonald, 2002) is result, short video and audio files will be added to the texts in both the online and physical digital (Powerpoint slides on DVD) media formats. As well, online virtual world (eg: 2<sup>nd</sup> Life) formats are being investigated to supplement physical digital + hardcopy formats. The opportunities presented by a blended or multi-modal form of resource presentation should go some of the way to ensure the conventional static block text format is avoided.

Virtual world learning contexts such as *2<sup>nd</sup> Life* creatively ‘imitate’ face2face teaching and learning (Monahan, McArdle & Bertolotto, 2008). Students assume the identity of a mobile avatar and can attend lectures and tutorials or utilize a range of learning objects (information screens, libraries or virtual environments). While the opportunities for synchronous interaction with instructors are limited to real time meetings in-world, at the very least the emphasis on the mainly static presentation of resources is reduced. In Figure 1 a model of a .ppt slide from the programme represents how static content + A/V content might be integrated:

*Figure 1: Slide 1, Module 1: Introduction to Study in the Arts*

1. Study in the Arts: An Introduction

"At Monash Arts we are committed to providing you not just with an excellent academic education but also with an enjoyable educational experience that combines intellectual stimulation with social interaction and engagement with the wider world."  
*Rae Frances, Dean, Faculty of Arts, Monash University*

[video]  
 [text]

The short video from the Dean of Arts then forms the basis of a macro-skill tutorial on lectures and notetaking. Micro analysis of the video text allows for examination of genre distinctions between written academic texts (essays) and oral academic texts (presentations).

Figure 2 shows one model of a learning environment in-world in 2<sup>nd</sup> Life that has been designed for Monash University's Chinese Studies Department by Mr Scott Grant:

*Figure 2: Chinese Tea House, Monash Island, 2<sup>nd</sup> Life*



In the virtual environment Mr Grant has developed for the Chinese Studies programme at Monash University, students can wander through a beautifully constructed Tea House encountering a range of learning objects which model relevant vocabulary and functional conversation phrases.

Complementing the active elements in the programme's format (short videos of expert commentators, in-world participation) it is deemed highly desirable to include interactive tasks in the way a student navigates the learning resources in the programme. These include interactive multiple choice questionnaires [MCQs] that review the students' progress as well as more extensive assessment tasks to be submitted to instructors for evaluation (Nokelainen & Ruohotie, 2004). While the MCQs are designed to test students' awareness of the content component of the course, the types of tasks exemplified below review the students' acquisition of the macro and micro skill elements of the programme. On the macro level, for example:

Elaboration 5: The influence of the Ancient Greek Rationalists can be identified in, for example:

- debates over the use of the personal voice in academic writing “I believe.....”
- the use of overly emotional language in academic writing
- the requirement that claims to truthfulness are supported by evidence that can be tested
- “knowing” based on intuition or emotion is devalued

Test yourself: As a critical thinker, your role is to examine – without bias – the beliefs and truth claims of all theories, theorists and value systems, such as those expressed by the Ancient Greek Rationalists. Apply the dialectical method to the claims of the Rationalists; carefully examine the opposite point of view; carefully examine the consequences of the Ancient Greek Rationalists’ method: what have you found? Think about what members of society, for example, were privileged by the Rationalists’ approach? What ways of knowing were devalued?

Check your responses

Linked via HTML to a set of possible ‘answers’, the student can check his or her responses. In this case, the ‘answers’ highlight the patriarchal nature of Classical Greek society and the growing bias against the traditional epistemologies of religious and mystical worldviews, a bias which has had a lasting impact on the formation of the culture of inquiry in Western academic contexts.

On the micro level, skills such as paragraph organization are assessed and word choice analysed and acquired:

***Teaching theme: successful introductions***

According to our macro-skills discussion, a good way of structuring an introduction is as follows:

**A. general subject/topic sentence** (introduces the general area of discussion)

**B. specific issue/s sentence** (narrows the field of discussion to one or two specific issues)

**C. justification sentence** (identifies the “problem”; why this issue is a matter of debate)

**D. author’s thesis sentence** (states the author’s position or precise argument)

**E. method** (states what method of analysis will be used to develop the discussion)

**F. programme** (outlines the stages of the discussion’s development)

Next, identify the type of sentence in the following introduction by listing the relevant letter (A,B,C..)

1. ‘EU-related issues and patterns of behaviour are permeating the new member states' domestic environments.

2. The literature assessing the domestic impact of the Eastward Enlargement focuses on the institutional capability of the new member states to meet the accession criteria as defined in Copenhagen in 1993.

3. This article expands the remit of the debate on Europeanisation in the new member states from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) by assessing the impact of EU membership on interest politics.

4. The analysis undertaken here focuses on Business Interest Associations (BIAs), their behaviour and patterns of interaction with decision makers at the national and transnational levels. **(B)**

5. Their experience illustrates the effect of EU accession on the new member states' repertoires for interest intermediation and the relevance of policy transfer paradigms as suitable research frameworks.

6. At the same time, the impact of the communist heritage and the

constraints of domestic political cultures reveal patterns of behaviour at the national and supranational level in a path-dependency fashion.

7. The evidence presented here will show that the Europeanised activities of Central and Eastern European interest groups constitute a peculiar model of interest intermediation, where the exchange and ownership of information take prominence over the actual impact on policy-making.” (D)

[Perspectives on European Politics and Society](#), Volume 5, Number 2, 2004, pp. 243-272(30)

Now, check your answers:

[4B.....7D.....]

Next, re-read the introduction and find 10 high level VERBS to add to your word bank:

[permeate, assess, define, focus, expands, undertake, illustrates, reveals, shows, constitutes]

The important point to glean from this brief set of examples is the way in which the programme anticipates integrating the three levels of the programme (content, macro-skills, micro-skills). It is not possible here to present a comprehensive overview of the programme’s format or the delivery mode. Suffice to say that a multi-modal form of delivery in both flexible and mainly face2face contexts is considered optimal.

In summary the programme’s presentation and delivery formats are clearly essential to the potential overall success of the course. Shorter modules, fewer blocks of dense text and a variety of active and interactive tasks are intended to facilitate greater learner engagement and – hopefully – more productive learner outcomes. The following discussion verges away from the practical issues of format and delivery to focus on more theoretical issues connected to the programme’s development.

### III . Rationale

How to survive in a Western academic context studying the Arts, and NOT know what feminism is? To not know what happened in 1968, why it happened and what were

the social, cultural and political consequences of the counter-culture and protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s? To not know how to apply the Socratic method in critical discourse analysis? Imagine a student trying to study successfully in any cultural/academic context without any or very little contextual understanding of the social, cultural and political background to his or her study? It is not impossible, but certainly more difficult.

In light of these reasons, the EAP programme is very much a pragmatic programme. In the context of the author's work, mentoring mainly NESB non-local/international students at university, the difficulties I witness are not simply micro skill issues of grammar/syntax but also contextual issues that emerge from a less than adequate background awareness of their new "alien" cultural/academic discourse community. Effective and successful participation in the Western academic discourse community, as well as everyday or non-scientific discourse communities, at least partly depends on a non-local student developing awareness of the culture of inquiry into which he or she is seeking participate.

Very broadly, the conceptual framework of the EAP model draws on Jurgen Habermas's (1995) theory of communicative rationality. Habermas has argued that the contemporary culture of (social) scientific and critical inquiry in Western societies reflects the communicative rationality that has constituted the modern, Occidental lifeworld. As Maeve Cooke (1997: 16) neatly states: "Habermas argues that communicative action is the primary mechanism of social integration in modern [Occidental] societies." In Habermas's *Theory of Communicative Action* (1995) he strongly argues that this fundamental type of social action has been coordinated by a unique form of reason: communicative reason. In brief, Habermas understands *communicative reason* as the expectation that social actors can furnish reasons in support of their speech acts, and that consequently social actors in dialogue can take a yes/no position on the validity of the claims to the truthfulness of another's speech acts.

The liberating innovation of communicative reason, according to Habermas, consists in the constitution of a rational *procedure* that has guided the formation of the modern autonomous institutions of science, the cognitive and moral-legal institutions, as well as an autonomous art criticism (Habermas, 1994). Significantly, Habermas argues that while communicative reason is potentially a species-wide competency or attribute, historically it is *sui generis*. The emergence of communicative rationality is socio-culturally and historically specific, indeed mainly limited to European cultures and their derivatives (Habermas, 1992). In other words, the impact of communicative reason has largely been absent from the socio-cultural contexts of many non-local entrants into Western universities. Just as problematic is that the Occidental lifeworld (as are all

lifeworlds?) remains largely opaque to those inside:

This all-penetrating, yet latent and unnoticed presence of the background of communicative action [the lifeworld] can be described as a more intense yet deficient form of knowledge and ability. To begin with, we make use of this knowledge involuntarily, without reflectively knowing *that* we possess it at all (Habermas (1996: 22).

and perhaps impenetrable to those outside. Yet successful participation in the Western academic context depends on a non-local student's growing mastery over the methodologies again generated by communicative rationality that underpin the Western culture of inquiry (the experimental method, critical thinking). If Habermas's contentions are accurate, then an EAP programme might be more effective if it traces the staging posts in the developmental trajectory of the formation of the modern, Occidental lifeworld (and its deformation in advanced or Post-Modernity) through a history of ideas.

From a quite different angle, the pedagogical framing of this EAP model reflects the principles of situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1990; McLellan, 1995) and addresses the recent research of Duff (2007), Morita (2004) and Zamel and Spack (1998). Successful learning according to Lave & Wenger resembles a process of "apprenticeship", of learning a 'craft' which suggests a gradual, calibrated enrolment and enculturation not simply into the factual-technical aspects of a knowledge domain but also into the culture of the inquiry. The EAP programme I am proposing is about successfully enculturating students, mainly from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds, with some basic background understanding of the formation of their new academic discourse community. On the basis of this process of conceptual mapping, the EAP programme anticipates skilling students by illustrating how understanding the historical context of the Western academic tradition can translate into acquiring the macro and micro level skills essential to effective study in the Arts at university in a Western academic context.

#### IV. Discussion

The basic contention of the EAP programme "*A history of ideas: A culture of inquiry*" is that a history of the ideas taken to be central to the development of Western civilization can illuminate the culture of inquiry that shapes contemporary expectations of the academic skills (including English communication skills of course) required for

successful participation in a Western academic context. Such participation, especially for non-local/international students as I have argued above, also depends on these students' growing awareness of and ideally mastery over the methodologies generated by what German philosopher Jurgen Habermas (1994; 1995; 1996) has termed *communicative rationality*. According to Habermas, communicative rationality has constituted the modern, Occidental lifeworld, its historical trajectory, the form of its academic tradition. And, the culture of inquiry into which non-local students seek access has been largely shaped by this form of rationality. However, the emergence of communicative rationality, according to Habermas, is socio-culturally and historically specific. In other words, it has largely been absent from the socio-cultural contexts of many non-local entrants into Western universities (see further Ridley, 2004; Ingleton & Cadman, 2002; Ramburuth & McCormick, 2001). The EAP programme under development seeks to introduce students to this culture of inquiry largely by retelling the 'grand narrative' of the history of ideas, as shaped by communicative reason, in Western civilization.

A major qualification to the entire programme being outlined here is a very strong awareness of the risk of retelling a hegemonic grand narrative about the superiority of Western Civilization, its history, its achievements and culture of its academic inquiry. The EAP approach being suggested here does not have an explicit (or even hopefully an implicit) normative agenda. In other words, it is not about saying that the West is the best. Indeed, and this is a point I will develop in a little detail below, the content of the programme particularly emphasises the Counter-Enlightenment tradition of critical scepticism. Of equal importance is careful recognition of the temptation of presenting a perspective on the history of ideas that suggests the West is the worst. It is important to avoid either superlative: *best* or *worst*. This approach to the normative aspect of a content based/history of ideas approach to EAP has specific ramifications for the discourse of EAP outlined below. I argue that an approach to an EAP programme which suggests Western civilization and/or its academic traditions are either superior/the best or inferior/the worst are overly normative, overly didactic and risks dogmatism.

Very productively, the methodology of the programme [a history of ideas] allows participants in the programme to reflect on a broad range of important issues: reflexive critique, logics of inquiry, the dialectic of critique, cultural hegemony, the function of integrating social/cultural narratives, processes of Othering. For example, by taking Habermas's theory of communicative rationality as the formative platform for the development of the programme, the Counter-Enlightenment tradition is usefully exposed (Hegel, theories of the pathologies of Modernity, Horkheimer and Adorno, PostModernism). In other words, the programme's methodology – the use of the conventional grand narrative of Western civilization/history of ideas -- itself becomes

part of the programme's focus. The programme's methodological emphasis on critical reflection *on the programme itself* ideally will alert participants to the importance of the logic of critical self reflection in the Western academic culture of inquiry. In this rather special way, I think such a programme keeps faith with some of the most basic norms that permeate the contemporary Western culture of inquiry, especially in Arts subjects:

Our age is, in especial degree, the age of criticism [Kritik], and to criticism everything must submit. Religion through its sanctity, and law-giving through its majesty, may seek to exempt themselves from it. But then they awaken just suspicion and cannot claim the same respect which reason accords only to that which has been able to sustain the test of free and open examination (Kant, 1993: 17)

I think that the central issue of philosophy and critical thought since the eighteenth century has always been, still is, and will, I hope, remain the question: What is this Reason that we use? What are its historical effects? What are its limits and what are its dangers? (Foucault, 1984: 26)

The integration of form/content/learning strategy is one of the strengths forecast for the programme. In addition, it is an approach which the author believes successfully positions the programme as an effective compromise between a *pragmatic EAP* approach and a *critical EAP* approach in the discourse of EAP.

## V. The Contemporary discourse of EAP

Perhaps dramatically, Alastair Pennycook (1997: 265 ) declares a “tension lies at the heart of EAP”. It is a tension which Pennycook describes as follows:

On the one hand we need to help our students gain access to those forms of language and culture that matter while on the other we need to help challenge those norms. On the one hand we need to help our students develop critical awarenesses of academic norms and practices, while on the other we need to understand and promote culturally diverse ways of thinking, working and writing. (1997: 265)

Pennycook is suggesting that any programme of EAP should not posture a sense of political neutrality. Indeed, it cannot be neutral (1997). The pedagogy of any EAP course must take a political stance. It must – in idiomatic terms – fight the good fight. He assumes what in agreement with Harwood & Hadley (2004) I will term the *critical EAP*

approach. In critical EAP:

[I]t is crucial to see English classes not as mere adjuncts to the knowledge curricula but rather as important sites of change and resistance. I am therefore urging that EAP gets itself engaged in critical explorations of academic knowledge, that we need to ask whose version of sociology, engineering, medicine and so forth is being taught. EAP needs to become directly involved with *the pluralization of knowledge in the present*. (Pennycook, 265)

In contrast to Pennycook's critical EAP is the position we can label as *pragmatic EAP*, although Pennycook labels an extreme form of this approach to EAP as *vulgar pragmatism* (1997).

In general the pragmatic approach to EAP programmes is much less interested in the politics of a critical pedagogy (Harwood & Hadley, 2004, Pennycook, 1997). Pragmatic EAP is not especially concerned with the revealing the politics of English as the international academic language (Canagarajah, 1996), notions of cultural imperialism and hegemony, or with identifying and rooting out oppressive masculinist and/or class biases still believed to suffuse the rationale and methodologies of the Western academy (Harwood & Hadley, 2004, Pennycook, 1997). Neither is pragmatic EAP especially concerned with, as Pennycook would have it, the "need to help [students in EAP courses] challenge those norms". Instead pragmatic EAP focuses squarely on what Pennycook nicely accounts for as the "need to help our students gain access to those forms of language and culture that matter". To the EAP pragmatist, the objective of an EAP programme is to equip the students with the academic skills they will need firstly to survive and more hopefully to succeed:

Johns (1993, p. 274) summarizes what pragmatism entails when she says that the goal of an EAP course is "to prepare ESL/EFL and native-speaking students for the literacy demands at the secondary or college/university level". It is a skills-based, instrumental approach that attempts to make students aware of the dominant conventions in Anglo-American writing, and then successfully appropriate these same conventions. (Harwood & Hadley, 2004: 356)

As a form of compromise, Harwood & Hadley (2004: 357-66) posit a *critical pragmatic* approach to teaching EAP. Their critical pragmatic EAP "acknowledges that students should be exposed to dominant discourse norms, in line with pragmatic EAP; while on the other hand, like Critical EAP, it stresses that students have choices and should be free to adopt or subvert the dominant practices as they wish" (2004: 357).

Yet, this sense of choice is a little illusory. In spite of Harwood & Hadley's agreement with Lillis (1999) that "writing successfully for the academy is an 'institutional practice

of mystery” (2004, 360), I would like to suggest that certain core academic writing and presentation conventions, as well as citation and referencing expectations, remain largely intact in the Western academy. Perhaps some of the “truth” [?!] (Harwood & Hadley, 2004: 366). is indeed that “academic writing practices vary from discipline to discipline, from department to department, and even from lecturer to lecturer” (Harwood & Hadley, 2004: 366). However, this does not appear to constitute a licence for ignoring the overlaps and consistencies that *do* occur between disciplines, departments and lecturers. An effective EAP programme would focus -- as far as is practicable -- on these shared, overlapping elements and instructively investigate the reasons for the inconsistencies. Yes, perhaps academic “neophytes” (Harwood & Hadley, 2004: 360) *should* “be free to adopt or subvert the dominant practices as they wish”. But largely, I would respectfully suggest, this might be the freedom to choose between academic success and academic failure. If this is the case, an EAP programme that proffers the notion that subverting “dominant” academic practices is somehow a viable alternative in the contemporary academy risks neglect of at least some of their students’ more immediate interests. Indeed, such an overly paternalistic approach could also be held to “construct[s] students as passive receivers in an unequal relationship” (Harwood & Hadley, 2004: 365).

The issues identified by key authors in the debate over EAP’s normative positioning are difficult to disentangle and difficult to resolve. Critical EAP appears to risk “prescriptivism” (Ellsworth, 1989; Johnston, 1999); a pragmatic approach to EAP risks a hollow even disingenuous sense of political neutrality. For as Harwood & Hadley emphasize, the notion of a “value-free pedagogy” is difficult to sustain (see also Pennycook, 1997, Allison, 1996). Critical EAP worries about dominant discourses and Pennycook (1997, 257) argues “a poststructuralist conception of language would suggest that we need to look more critically at the contexts of language use and to view language as social practice.” However, as with most totalizing critiques of the sort Pennycook appears to favour, it is not clear how one can successfully ‘get outside’ of academic language to offer a sustainable academic critique of the power relations embedded in academic language. Moreover, an irony not fully explored in the literature is that as the quotes from Kant and Foucault noted earlier suggest the *dominant* paradigm in the discursive methodology of the Western academy, especially in the Arts, is that of *critique*. If this is the case, the opportunity in EAP to have one’s cake and also eat it should readily present itself. It is into this petite maelstrom that the EAP programme I am proposing somewhat blithely sails.

## VI. Conclusion

The basic premise of the *History of Ideas: Culture of Inquiry* EAP programme is that macro (eg: critical thinking, register) and micro-level (eg: word choice, sentence construction) skills in Arts' study are shaped by broader disciplinary features of the Social Sciences and the Humanities. It is anticipated that highlighting the connections between broader disciplinary aspects of the Arts and macro and micro-level study skills will result in enhanced learning outcomes and even deeper student engagement with their study. While notions of a Western canon, a Western academic tradition, a definable genre of Western academic study skills deserve interrogation even the most far flung post modern, critical, sceptical agenda in a study in the Arts tends to draw on (even when in opposition to) certain well established conventions of scholarship, methodology and register.

Certainly in the Arts, there remains a deep seated expectation that students develop and exercise critical thinking skills for example. The genealogy of such an expectation and the skills themselves are based on European Enlightenment scholarship that certainly drew on the renaissance of Classical Greek thinking in the Europe of the early Modern period, that certainly has roots in the Classical academy. There IS a fairly well established grand narrative of Western civilization. In practical terms, and to mollify to some degree the demands of critical EAP theorists such as Pennycook, to begin to approach a critique of the narrative one needs to at least have some understanding of the narrative. Again, relative to study in the Arts in a Western academic context, how can you grasp Post-Modernity if you don't have a sense of the European Enlightenment, if you don't have a sense of Modernity, of the Renaissance, of the Dark Ages, of Rome, of Athens? It is not about saying this narrative is true or unchallengeable, but the narrative is clearly relevant, for example, when you are asked in Communications and Media 1010 to write of the "media and critical political economy".

Overall the proposed programme should be understood as a process of mapping. In agreement with Lave & Wenger (1990), learning at any level is a calibrated, even cumulative process. So, in the future, when a student fronts me and asks in all innocence: "Dr. Piscioneri, What is feminism?" (let alone, when a student asks me "What is critical political economy?") I anticipate an EAP programme that has successfully mapped the history of the ideas that underpin the formation of contemporary Western academic curricula in the Arts, and which links this history to the macro and micro skills that generally remain pertinent to a student's course of study in Arts subjects, will be of some help.

---

**References**

- Allison, D. (1996). "Pragmatist discourse and English for academic purposes". *English for Specific Purposes*, 15(2), 85–103.
- Canagarajah, A. S. (1996). "Nondiscursive" requirements in academic publishing, material resources of periphery scholars, and the politics of knowledge production. *Written Communication* 13(4), 435–472.
- Cooke, M. (1997). *Language and Reason*. Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press.
- Duff, P. (2007). "Problematising academic discourse socialisation". *Learning Discourses and the Discourses of Learning*, November 2007, Vol. 1, No. 1: Pages 1.1-1.18
- Ellsworth, E. (1989). "Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy". *Harvard Educational Review*, 59(3), 297–324.
- Foucault, M. (1984). "What is Enlightenment?". *The Foucault Reader*. Ed. Paul Rabinow; Trans. C.Porter. New York : Pantheon. pp 32-50.
- Habermas, J. (1988). *On the Logic of the Social Sciences*, trans., S.W NicholSEN and J.A Stark. Cambridge, U.K. : Polity Press.
- (1992). *Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews with Jürgen Habermas*, ed., P.Dews. London : Verso.
- (1994). *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, trans., W. M. Hohengarten. Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press.
- (1995). *Theory of Communicative Action Vol. One and Two*, trans., T. McCarthy. Cambridge, U.K. : Polity Press.
- (1996). *Between Facts and Norms*, trans., W. Rehg. Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press.

- 
- Harwood, N. & Hadley, G. (2004). "Demystifying institutional practices: critical pragmatism and the teaching of academic writing". *English for Specific Purposes* 23. pp 355–377.
- Kant, I. (1993) (original: 1781). *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. J.Meiklejohn. Edited by V.Politis. London: Everyman.
- Ingleton, C. and Cadman, K. (2002) 'Silent issues for international postgraduate research students: emotion and agency in academic success', *Australian Educational Researcher*, vol 29, no 1, pp. 93-114
- Johnston, B. (1999). "Putting critical pedagogy in its place: a personal account". *TESOL Quarterly*, 33(3), 557–565.
- Jones, J. Turner, & B. Street (Eds.), *Students writing in the university: Cultural and epistemological issues* (pp. 127–147). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1990). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Lillis, T. (1999). Whose \_common sense\_? Essayist literacy and the institutional practice of mystery. In C.
- Jones, J. Turner, & B. Street (Eds.), *Students writing in the university: Cultural and epistemological issues* (pp. 127–147). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- McDonald, J. (2002). "Is 'as good as face-to-face' as good as it gets?". *Journal for Asynchronous Learning Networks*. Volume 6. Issue 2. pp10-23.
- McLellan, H. (1995). *Situated Learning Perspectives*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications.
- Monahan, T. McArdle, G. & Bertolotto, M. (2008). "Virtual Reality for collaborative e-learning". *Computers and Education* 50. pp1339-1353.
- Moore, T. & Oppy, G. (2002). "Writing instruction online: A case study from a first-year philosophy subject". *New Zealand Studies in Applied Linguistics*. Vol.8. pp99-108.

- Morita, N. (2004). "Negotiating Participation and Identity in Second Language Academic Communities". *TESOL Quarterly*, Volume 38, Number 4, 1 December 2004, pp. 573-603.
- Nagy, J., & McDonald, J. (2007) "New models for learning flexibility: Negotiated choices for both academics and students". *Proceedings ACILITE Conference, Singapore*. [www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/singapore07](http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/singapore07) (accessed on 10/8/08)
- Nokelainen, P. & Ruohotie, P. (2004). "Empirical Validation of Abilities for Computer Assisted Learning Questionnaire". In Proceedings of the 3rd International Self-Concept Research Conference. University of Western Sydney, Self Research Center.
- Pennycook, A. (1997). "Vulgar Pragmatism, Critical Pragmatism and EAP". *English for Specific Purposes*. Vol. 16, No. 4, pp. 253-269.
- Ramburuth, P. & McCormick, J. (2001). Learning diversity in higher education: A comparative study of Asian International and Australian Students. *Higher Education*, 42(3), 333-350.
- Ridley, D. (2004). "Puzzling experiences in higher education: critical moments for conversation". *Studies in Higher Education*, Volume 29, Issue 1 February 2004 , pages 91 – 107.
- Son, J. (2007). Learner experiences in Web-based Language Learning". *Computer Assisted Language Learning*. Vol. 20, No. 1, February 2007. pp. 21-36.
- Zamel, V., and Spack, R., Eds. (1998) *Negotiating Academic Literacies: Teaching and Learning Across Languages and Cultures*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.