



Title: Uncovering EAP - How to Teach Academic Writing and Reading

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Uncovering EAP is an interesting title from Macmillan Books for Teachers. It was written to respond to an excessive demand for English courses specially

fabricated to prepare learners with English and academic skills required in content- or subject-area courses. English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is a branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) which is a language learning approach based particularly on learners' needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Learners who take EAP courses generally have a clear aim to continue their study in higher education where English and study skills are keys to their academic success. EAP is, therefore, generally defined as teaching English to facilitate learners' study or research in that language (Jordan, 1997). This explicit purpose of EAP makes it a distinctive form of ELT (English Language Teaching) which usually makes teachers who are not familiar with this special need of learners grapple with both the concepts and the methodology for teaching it. This book is specially designed to assist teachers in dealing with this demand. It claims to be a useful teaching companion for both new and experienced teachers, native or non-native speakers of English, providing simple explanation, basic concepts, and useful resources and materials for EAP teachers.

The book focuses primarily on writing and supports it with reading skills. It deals with both theoretical and practical aspects needed for teaching these two skills to help teachers gain a good grounding in teaching principles, and to understand learners' needs, background, and learning problems which are very useful for teachers in deciding what and how to teach.

The book is divided into ten chapters covering a wide range of topics that teachers need to know. Each chapter starts with a theory section which offers a basic theoretical input or explanations of key concepts, followed by a 'Good practice' section which provides case studies to illustrate relevant challenges encountered by students and teachers. It includes a collection of activities and photocopiable worksheets for classroom use which makes the book more

attractive, particularly for novice teachers. A brief summary of each chapter follows.

Chapter 1: Writing and reading approaches. This chapter defines the scope of EAP in preparing second- and third-language students for graduate and postgraduate levels and describes what this group of students expects from a course. It paves the way for explanations of basic concepts including needs-analysis, learning styles and methodology. The chapter also includes bottom-up and top-down approaches to writing and reading, skills for effective writing and reading, as well as the importance of students' background knowledge.

Chapter 2: Understanding task questions and selecting ideas. This chapter aims to assist teachers in guiding students to understand terminology in task questions, such as argue, analyze, differentiate, discuss, evaluate, outline, etc., in order to analyze the task requirements. It also introduces steps in the writing process, focusing on creating, selecting, and recycling ideas. Reading techniques are introduced to prepare students for writing.

Chapter 3: Types of academic assignment. This chapter introduces a range of different types of academic assignments like essays, reports, journals, text evaluation or analysis and rationales, focusing on the overall requirements of each type and suggesting ways to help students approach each one.

Chapter 4: Academic writing genres. This chapter is built upon the basic concepts in Chapter 3, covering high-frequency genres found across different types of assignments. These include comparison and contrast, processes, cause and effect, narrative, and description. It deals with different text-types and genres at sentence and text levels, offering lists of information, structures and linking words appropriate to the genres.

Chapter 5: Critical thinking. This chapter defines critical thinking and stresses the importance of this essential issue in an EAP course. It progresses from simple activities such as recognizing facts and opinions to more advanced skills like reasoning, evaluating, and analyzing. Critical reading and producing opinions for writing are also highlighted.

Chapter 6: Academic vocabulary. The focus of this chapter is on sub-technical vocabulary. It introduces approaches to vocabulary expansion and how to teach new vocabulary through context. Aspects of lexical relations including synonymy, antonymy, collocation, morphology, and register are covered to provide practical examples on what teachers can do.

Chapter 7: Giving feedback and redrafting. The chapter provides an overview on the importance of feedback, how to give feedback through bottom-up and top-down approaches, how to balance positive and constructive feedback, as well as how to involve students in the correcting process. It also includes suggestions for redrafting and keeping records of redrafting for learners' confidence building and personal development.

Chapter 8: Reading academic texts. This chapter highlights reading skills. It covers issues on the nature of the text, the purpose of reading, reading techniques, how to examine how students read, and how to help them move up

through the bottom-up/top-down scale to become efficient readers. Both speed reading and reading comprehension are dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter 9: Research and referencing. This chapter provides explanations on the scientific and qualitative research methods to help teachers understand what students do in their content-area courses, problems students might encounter, and support they need from EAP teachers. Issues on plagiarism and referencing skills are also highlighted.

Chapter 10: Moving from general EAP to subject-specific teaching. This chapter explains the relationship between EAP, ESP and EOP, and what distinguishes different fields of language teaching. It illustrates ESP situations and what is involved in teaching the courses.

In these 10 chapters, the authors' primary concerns are obviously not only EAP content or what to teach but also the methodology or how to teach which are in line with Watson Todd (2003) who noticed that most previous work in EAP focused heavily on the content rather than the methodology and argued for greater emphasis on the latter. Clear aims and guided methodology are explicitly stated for each activity suggested in each chapter. Moreover, the contexts of the activities vary and are not too specific to or biased towards any particular field. Many of them can be used directly in class, while others are more appropriate for experienced teachers who have a good background in the genre and generic structures of the text.

However, experienced teachers who expect to gain sophisticated explanations or varieties of approaches to EAP methodology might not find the book interesting as it intends to be more practical rather than theoretical. And, novice teachers may not find this book as simple to use as expected by the authors. For instance, in order to use a worksheet provided for report writing in Chapter 3, teachers who are not familiar with the content area would need more support and guidance on the specific discourse features required for each section of a report, for example, the aims, methods, results and evaluation. They would also need suggestions on how to implement the task using, for example, inductive or deductive, or product-oriented or process-oriented approaches (White & Arndt, 1991). Inexperienced teachers may also require greater assistance on how to provide feedback to students on this free activity.

In spite of some difficulties that novice teachers may encounter, the book is a promising teaching companion, as claimed. The authors thoroughly guide the audience in a very teacher-friendly manner by addressing the teachers as if they are sharing hands-on experiences with new colleagues rather than by using a theorist's voice. In addition, the authors emphasize the roles of learners' background knowledge throughout the book. This is a crucial part of the learning process and principle qualities of EAP students. *Uncovering EAP - How to Teach Academic Writing and Reading* is thus worth considering for EAP teachers who would like to get a reader-friendly and practical guide for teaching EAP.

References

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