

Not just some random English class: raising the profile of in-sessional provision through the CEM model

Olwyn Alexander, Diane Sloan and Elizabeth Porter

Abstract

In-sessional support for students on taught postgraduate degrees is a growth area in EAP as increasing numbers of international students come to study on these programmes. The CEM model (Sloan and Porter, 2010) is designed to provide a systematic approach to managing and evaluating in-sessional provision by assessing the degree to which in-sessional classes are contextualised within a subject area, embedded within a programme and mapped to the ongoing needs of students. The CEM model was used as a framework for an action research project to evaluate and improve in-sessional provision within the School of Management and Languages at Heriot-Watt University. Classes were delivered in semester 1, 2009, for each of the six degree pathways in the school. In order to systematise the delivery, a coherent set of materials was created, which could be customised for individual degrees. The delivery was evaluated within the CEM framework through semi-structured interviews with staff and students. Lessons learned from the first year were implemented in the second year when the CEM model was used as the basis for teacher and staff development. The CEM model provides a meta-language for discussion with staff and EAP teachers which has contributed to raising the profile and status of in-sessional provision within the school.

Biodata

Olwyn Alexander is a Teaching Fellow at Heriot-Watt University, where she manages the in-sessional provision across the university and teaches scholarship and research skills on social science postgraduate programmes. She is currently Chair of BALEAP. With two colleagues, she published *EAP Essentials: a teacher's guide to principles and practice*.

Dr Diane Sloan, Teaching Fellow, is Programme Director for Learning Support and Enhancement, at Newcastle Business School, Northumbria University. Recent research with colleague, Elizabeth Porter, on supporting the integration and learning skills of international students has attracted internal and external funding, with the findings delivered at national and international conferences, publications, and workshops for UK universities and the Association of Business Schools.

Elizabeth Porter, Senior lecturer, is the EAP specialist for the postgraduate portfolio in Newcastle Business School. Her research has informed working practice in the Business School in supporting the design and development of the student e-learning portal, dissertation learning material, and EAP material; additional research relates to the language used in assessment and feedback, and the staff and student induction process.