



Course code	LANGCTR5020E
Title of course	Teaching English for Academic Purposes – Online Course
Course lead contact	Carole MacDiarmid (carole.macdiarmid@glasgow.ac.uk)
No of credits	20 credits
Level of course (UG/PG) & year	PG: 20-credit stand-alone course (commercial from Jan. 2017); 2017-2018 it will also be available as an option for MEd and MSc TESOL students.
No. of students	13
Applications used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moodle • BigBlueButton • Google Drive (Docs and Forms for weekly student feedback) • Padlet
Content	Learning activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text (written by academic staff and core/supplementary texts) • Video clips from YouTube • Video – introductions to the units • Video – Camtasia mini-lectures • Digested copies of teaching materials for analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings • Forums • Peer-collaboration and review tasks • Quizzes • Wikis • Webinars (discussions and peer presentations) • Learning Object Creator interactive tasks

<p>Describe your online learning approach</p>	<p>The course was adapted from a face-to-face course and delivered fully online as a stand-alone module for practitioners working in teaching English, including teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP). It is also intended as potential option on two face-to-face masters in TESOL (Teaching English as a Second or Other Language) programmes. The content was delivered by a mix of video- and text-based input (through the Moodle's 'book' resource') which the students used to deepen their understanding of key concepts and practices in teaching EAP. There was a strong focus on applying theory to practice through a range of interactive activities, including pair and groupwork, research-based discussions and analyses of existing teaching materials and creation of new ones, and reflection on one's own teaching practice via forums, wikis and webinars.</p>
<p>Why was this online approach taken? i.e. what issue was it trying to solve?</p>	<p>The strength of the face-to-face course is the interactivity drawing on the students' existing experience in teaching or learning in EAP and higher education contexts. Therefore, the design of the online course heavily relied on the principles of social constructivism and experiential learning. It was also important that the students, current or future practitioners, have ample opportunities to explore the links between the theory and practice and through that deepen and consolidate their own practice.</p> <p>The face-to-face course is led by three academics, each with a distinct teaching style, and they were to teach on the online course too. While it was important to allow them to preserve the unique approach to designing and delivering the materials, it was also crucial that the online course presented itself as a coherent and logical whole. The division of each unit into three themes, use of visual icons symbolising different types of activities and consistency in the visual layout and navigation of the site was meant to contribute to establishing the sense of continuous narrative. In order to achieve this, the academic team also maintained the close links between individual units in order to ensure the sense of progression and each unit building on the previous one. The weekly activities were kept as optional but the end-of-the-unit 'milestone' activity that usually involved using higher order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation and creation, were marked as 'highly recommended'. Initial induction week activities were designed to establish the group and regular live-rooms were integrated into the course to maintain a sense of group and learning community.</p>
<p>What advice would you give to other teachers taking this approach for the first time?</p>	<p>It is important to think of the 'unique strength' of the course and see how this can be preserved or even reinforced in an online environment. For example, in this case it is important that students become more reflective practitioners and it seems the online environment which relies on the written medium supports this more effectively than a face-to-face class which by definition is more of a transient experience.</p> <p>However, if the course is meant to be highly interactive, it is crucial to ensure that the number of discussions is not too overwhelming and group tasks are evenly distributed throughout the course as well as the balance between delayed (asynchronous) and real-time (synchronous) discussions is maintained. Students often opt for online learning because of its perceived flexibility and while using webinars is crucial for 'humanising' the course and building a close-knit community too many webinars may create tension among students who feel they miss out if they do not attend real-time sessions.</p>
<p>What student support needs should be taken into account? i.e. how did you support their transition into this way of learning?</p>	<p>It is important that there is a 'zero' week that allows the students to get to know each other, the tutors and the course (content, assessments and the technologies) so that they can build the confidence and focus on engaging with the content once Unit 1 is open. An induction week also allows any latecomers or students, whose registration, takes longer not to fall behind with the coursework. Clear communication channels have to be established and it is good</p>

	<p>to have weekly virtual office hours so that the students can voice their concerns in one-to-one sessions with their tutors. Having a clearly designated technical forum for any alerts regarding faulty technology or task set-up is also recommended. It is important to establish clear rules with respect to the frequency of communication, feedback, tutor availability early on and perhaps adjust it mid-course to suit the learners needs as closely as possible.</p>
<p>What are the lessons for the institution and the sector from this work?</p>	<p>While designing the course, it is worth having pilots built into the process early on to spot mistakes in the design approach. This allows the developers and academic staff to avoid spending considerable time after the course completion correcting minor but persistent flaws in the design, bugs related to navigation or layout for example.</p> <p>It is important to have protocols established for online communication between academics, technical staff and students in order to facilitate swift and seamless troubleshooting, redesign, adding, adjusting and/or removing content to respond to the student cohort's needs.</p> <p>In order to facilitate future reiterations of the course, it may be worth keeping a record of typical weekly communications so that they can be recycled in the future and time gained in such a way can be used productively to engage in a dialogue with the learners.</p>