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English Across the Curriculum: Fostering Collaboration

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Abstract

English across the curriculum as a philosophy is widely considered to be the backbone of curricula in schools. However, its introduction into the tertiary sector in Asia is relatively recent. With the re-structuring of secondary and tertiary education in Hong Kong, referred to as the 3+3+4 model, reducing secondary education by one year to expand the university curriculum to four years, Hong Kong universities have allocated increased resources towards General Education (GE) provision and literacy. In order to provide impetus for inter-institutional collaboration and relevant pedagogical development, the Hong Kong's University Grants Committee launched the Competitive Funding Scheme on Teaching and Learning 2012-2015. This has resulted in new English across the curriculum initiatives. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University is leading three such inter-institutional projects, two of which focus on English Across the Curriculum. In addition, since 2012, it has implemented a university-wide requirement for students to complete a 2,500-word academic writing assignment as part of the GE curriculum. English Language Centre (ELC) staff provide detailed written, genre specific feedback on two drafts before the assignment is submitted to the subject teacher. The support tools and materials have been developed after a thorough genre-analysis. This compulsory scaffolded writing model has resulted in a significant impact on stakeholders' perceptions about writing and its role in enhancing students' learning. Colloquium participants, who are engaged in various EAC initiatives, will express their stances on the role of collaboration in scaffolding students' language ability at the tertiary level and models of collaboration that have worked.

Key Words: EAC, writing, collaboration, pedagogical models

The expansion of the Hong Kong university curriculum from three to four years starting 2012 has created new spaces where students can develop their academic literacies. These new spaces extend across disciplines, through reading and writing requirements, into general education courses and into specific courses in the disciplines. Underpinning each of these is a growing awareness among English language lecturers of the diversity of academic genres used and how these are deployed in specific disciplines. Successful growth in academic literacy provision is also underpinned by collaboration with subject lecturers and their greater appreciation of the support available to them and to their students. It is therefore a time of growth that is enhancing the academic lives of students, English language lecturers and subject lecturers. This paper describes a number of recent Hong Kong EAC initiatives. After establishing the theoretical framework that underpins genre-based pedagogy, brief descriptions of various models of collaboration in use in Hong Kong as part of several EAC initiatives are elaborated.

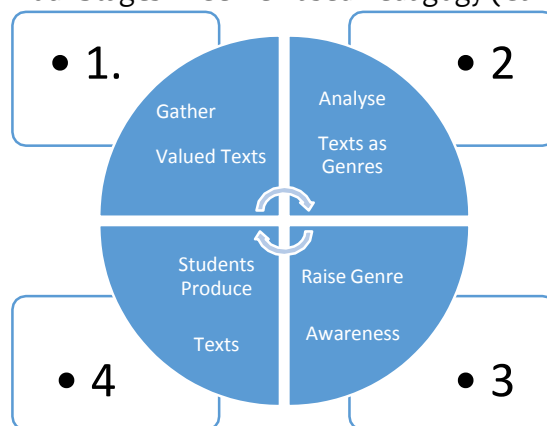
Theoretical framework

Collaboration with subject lecturers can be understood through the lens of genre-based pedagogy. The basic elements of a genre-based pedagogy involve first collecting authentic and valued texts from disciplinary contexts, second analysing these to understand the nature of the genres to be taught, third developing a teaching approach to raising genre awareness among students, and finally evaluating student outputs. This basic framework is shown in Figure 1. Before turning to the role of collaboration at each stage, we will place the framework in the broader context of research in genre analysis and genre-based pedagogies.

Much has been written about different approaches to genre analysis (e.g. Hyland 2007), and while all of them have merit, we have been most influenced by the approach developed by Gardner and Nesi (Gardner and Nesi 2013, Nesi and Gardner, 2012) because it has resulted in a comprehensive description of university student assessed written genres across the curriculum. Nesi and Gardner’s approach employs Systemic Functional Linguistic principles of genre analysis, but differs from much SFL genre research in the importance it attaches to Stage 1, the ethnographic investigations required to identify and understand the valued texts that will become the subject of genre analysis. In our work in English across the Curriculum, collaboration with subject lecturers in this first stage is particularly important.

Equally, in the third stage, many different models of genre-based pedagogy are possible (see also Johns 2002): SFL scholars tend to advocate a deconstruct, joint construct, independent construction model (Martin 2009); Tribble and Wingate (2013) advocate a pedagogy of awareness raising through analyzing then producing comments on successful and less successful texts, culminating in students ‘improving’ weak texts; Gardner (2016) proposes a genre-instantiation approach that draws on online resources for students in multi-disciplinary groups; while Swales and Feak advocate a rhetorical consciousness raising approach (2012: ix) which includes an analysis-awareness-acquisition-achievement cycle. The genre-based pedagogies used in our project are diverse, each responding to the contextual constraints of the different teaching situations, as described below.

Figure 1. Four Stages in Genre-Based Pedagogy (Gardner 2015)



Our aim in this paper is to elaborate on this framework with a focus on collaboration between English lecturers and subject lecturers at each stage. We suggest that the first and most basic type of collaboration occurs at stage one, while the deepest and potentially the most satisfying collaborations extend throughout the four stages. Before we look at each stage in more detail, it is helpful to be reminded of Dudley-Evans and St John’s (1988) continuum from cooperation through collaboration to team teaching. Cooperation occurs when subject lecturers are willing

to share information, opinions and texts about their course with English lecturers. Collaboration occurs when the two work together outside the classroom to ensure that the English teaching supports the subject teaching. The third level of integration occurs when the English and subject lecturers team teach, that is they teach together on the same course, each contributing from their own areas of expertise.

Co-operation CollaborationTeam Teaching

Figure 2 Dudley-Evans and St John’s (1988) three degrees of integration

Stage 1: Gather valued texts

An early stage in any EAP teaching is needs analysis, a central concern of which from a genre-pedagogy perspective is what sort of texts students are expected to produce for assessment, and what kind of input (e.g. lectures, readings, seminars, labs) supports these assignments. Access to such information requires basic cooperation from subject lecturers, and is most successful where there is collaboration, where English lecturers are invited into the subject classes, have opportunities to discuss the nature of teaching and learning on the courses, and develop a rounded appreciation of the functions of events and texts in context.

Stage 2: Analyse texts as genres

A basic genre analysis involves identifying the purpose(s) of the text, what it is trying to achieve, and how it generally unfolds (its stages) in order to do so. This analysis is made easier with reference to existing analyses and frameworks. For instance, whether a student is expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a system or process (e.g. the EU Parliament, chemotherapy), or whether they are expected to produce the sort of text they might be asked to produce in their anticipated workplace (e.g. a financial report, a medical case study). The following framework (see table

1) proved helpful in analysing texts and checking these analyses with subject lecturers. Where these analyses provided insights to subject lecturers, this helped develop collaborative relationships and build respect among subject lecturers for the expertise of English lecturers and a better understanding of what English language teaching offers.

Table 1. Five social purposes and thirteen genre families of assessed student writing (Gardner & Nesi 2013, Nesi & Gardner 2012)

5 Educational Purposes:	13 Genre Families:
Demonstrating Knowledge and Understanding	Exercises, Explanations
Developing Powers of Independent Reasoning	Critiques, Essays
Building Research Skills	Literature Surveys, Methodology Recounts, Research Reports
Preparing for Professional Practice	Case Studies, Design Specifications, Problem Questions, Proposals
Writing for Oneself and Others	Empathy Writing, Narrative Recounts

Stage 3: Raise genre awareness

The third stage involves the nature of the teaching. In some subjects, a cooperative mode was chosen, and support materials were made available to students. In others, greater collaboration was possible, where English language lecturers were given time in the subject

lectures to support English. Team teaching occurs when both lecturers are in class together with the English lecturer explicating genre and its importance in participating in disciplinary communities, thus raising students' awareness of distinctions between writing for different disciplines. This will be enhanced where there is joint assessment, with both language and content being assessed, and the marking involving both lecturers.

Stage 4: Students produce texts

With the typical high stakes assessment at university still being the written assignment, the ultimate test of the success of the literacy support begins when students produce work for assessment. This is where we expect to see successful performance where evidence is linked to literacy support in areas such as student evaluations and subject lecturer feedback. Collaboration here is therefore critical. Where there is team teaching, there can be shared student evaluations and course development. The deepest collaborations appear where there is joint assessment. Several models of this are available. An innovative tool that facilitates team teaching was developed as part of the writing requirement at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. In certain courses, students write drafts of their assignment and receive feedback from English lecturers, twice, before the final assessment by subject lecturers. In order for this to work, an assignment guide was developed collaboratively by subject and English lecturers.

This section has illustrated degrees of 'integration' of English and Content through the basic stages of a genre-based pedagogy. The treatment is by necessity brief, but is illustrated with specific examples in the sections that follow.

Models of collaboration for integrating literacy across curriculum in Hong Kong

To provide a broad language education across the curricula, tertiary institutions in Hong Kong have adopted a range of approaches for offering a broadened language curriculum resulting in universities developing various types of stand-alone and embedded, required and elective language subjects. Some models exemplify the range of approaches that took place in various tertiary institutions in Hong Kong. These include 1), The English Reading and Writing Requirements Programme (EWR) launched in the fall of 2012 at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University; 2) a collaborative, inter-institutional, University Grants Committee (UGC) funded project led by the English Language Centre of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, in collaboration with the City University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Baptist University "*Supporting and developing students' English Literacy Practices in the disciplines.*" to investigate the key assignment genres in three disciplines and provide support to various stakeholders with a view to developing and enhancing students' academic literacy; and 3) English across the curriculum initiative,

another inter-institutional collaborative project among four Hong Kong universities that aims to support subject lecturers in integrating EAC into their assessment and pedagogy.

1. Integrating literacy across the curriculum through English Writing Requirement: Supporting students through interdepartmental collaboration

In response to the 2012 switch from a three-year to a four-year curriculum in Hong Kong universities, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University introduced general education subjects called Cluster Area Requirements (CAR) subjects. The stated objective of the CAR subjects is to expand the intellectual capacity and critical thinking of undergraduate students beyond their chosen disciplinary domain. This has been accomplished through inviting all faculties to develop subjects which would be of interest and accessible to students from majors other than their own. One such subject is called "Bionic Human and the Future of Being Human" offered by Biomedical

Engineering department. Students studying biomedical engineering are not allowed to enroll in it. Rather students from other disciplines take this subject to expand their understanding.

To achieve the stated aims of the CAR curriculum, the University also introduced compulsory reading and writing requirements (RWR) that are integrated into the CAR subjects, whereby “All students are [...] required to complete one [CAR] subject that includes a requirement for a substantial piece of writing in English” (RWR. Implementation Guidelines 2010). This piece of writing is 2,500 words long and is graded jointly by the subject instructor and an English Language Centre (ELC) teacher. The assignment is allocated at least 40% of the final grade for the subject, with 10% of this awarded by the ELC teacher.

The English Writing Requirement (EWR) has been a major undertaking that has been completed by 12,851 students since its inception in 2012. The programme has been implemented as a collaborative provision, requiring the faculty offering GE subjects from across the university to engage English language Centre (ELC) lecturers in providing detailed feedback to two student drafts over one semester. The English Writing Requirement (EWR) Team of the ELC facilitate collaboration between the various stakeholders (CAR subject lecturers, English language lecturers and students). During its recent review of the 4-year curriculum, the university has decided to continue the requirement as the programme has received very positive feedback from both subject lecturers and students. This acceptance of the EWR programme can be attributed to its collaborative implementation model elaborated below.

1.1 The EWR Implementation model

The EWR pedagogical implementation model was developed to establish a sustained and systematic communication system aimed to provide support to all stakeholders including students, English language lecturers and subject lecturers (See Table 1).

Table 2. Stakeholders in 2012/13-2015/16

	2012- 13 S1	2012- 13 S2	2012- 13 S3	2013- 14 S1	2013- 14 S2	2013- 14 S3	2014- 15 S1	2014- 15 S2	2014- 15 S3	2015- 16 S1	2015- 16 S2	Total
Subjects	5	9	1	13	25	7	23	24	11	30	26	174
Subject lecturer	9	26	1	24	47	8	27	32	10	31	29	244
English lecturer	23	42	5	75	91	26	85	85	40	89	84	645
Students	227	440	84	932	1449	469	2027	2077	952	2507	1687	12851

Table 2 shows the significant continuous increase in the number of stakeholders involved resulting in an exponential increase in the number of scripts that the language lecturers needed to give feedback on. 12,851 students submitted two drafts. That means that 25,702 drafts have been marked and given detailed feedback on by around 80 English language lecturers over the last four years.

1.2 Beyond the EWR model

As our experience of the EWR has demonstrated, our students’ academic writing can be nurtured through a process that integrates critical thinking with linguistic conventions within

the disciplines. Implementing this is a shared responsibility of all those involved in academic community. Academic writing beyond the GE subjects is invariably based on the reading of disciplinary texts often harder to interpret, comprehend and refer to for novice writers. The linguistic resources employed to structure written knowledge in a particular academic or disciplinary community need to be made available to the users of this knowledge for writing (Hyland, 2007). The philosophy of writing across the curriculum, is “inherently interdisciplinary, merging the strengths of writing specialists with those of disciplinary faculty” (Craig, 2012, p. 12). A lack of awareness regarding the importance of a collaborative approach to writing pedagogy among senior management and subject lecturers could contribute to a less supportive environment for students that, in turn, may result in diluting the impact on student acquisition of relevant literacy skills. In the Hong Kong Polytechnic University context, there was a need to expand the model used for EWR which integrates writing into the GE curriculum to equip our students with the crucial tools for situating their writing practices within their discipline(s). The project described in section 2 below is the result of the realisation of that need and has developed support for the various disciplinary genres that are expected of students in three disciplines across three Hong Kong tertiary institutions through integrating elements of literacy into subject pedagogy.

2. Integrating literacy in the disciplines through a UGC-funded project: “Supporting and developing students’ English Literacy Practices in the disciplines.”

The project, *Supporting and developing students’ English literacy practices in the disciplines*, has been developing literacy support for Science, Engineering and Social Science in The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, City University of Hong Kong and The Hong Kong Baptist University. We call this project Literacy in the Disciplines (LID) and the freely available website and materials are referred to as LID website/materials. This project is designed to have an impact on areas such as 1) lack of awareness regarding literacy among senior management in academia, 2) lack of collaboration among the language and content practitioners and, as a result 3) lack of support infrastructure for students to be able to grasp the disciplinary literacy conventions, through establishing thorough and timely intervention.

Resulting facilities from the LID project aim to develop a coherent and comprehensive support system for students, language lecturers and subject lecturers. Such support may then enable both language lecturers and subject lecturers to provide students tools for the development of the literacy skills they need to enter their chosen disciplines. The inter-institutional nature of the project and the involvement of the language centres has already had a considerable impact on literacy development through:

- bringing together experience and ideas from a range of disciplines;
- establishing support frameworks for students as online resource packages and materials;
- developing online databases with models, instructional activities and guides; and
- sharing pedagogical and technical resources of the three institutions.

The LID project implementation model is adapted from the English Writing Requirement model described in the preceding section. The LID version of the model, however, had to be flexible while being implemented in the three collaborating universities, to respond to the culture, pedagogical practices and different logistical constraints presented by each university.

2.1 Liaison processes in the two initiatives

Both of the above Hong Kong initiatives feature varying degrees of collaboration between language and subject lecturers as the pivot for integrating literacy into the pedagogy. Table 3 below helps visualize the two slightly different models:

Table 3. Liaison and collaboration processes in two literacy initiatives in Hong Kong

English Writing Requirement (EWR)	Literacy in the disciplines (LID)
	1. Liaison with Subject teachers
	2. Subject document analysis
3. Collaboratively completing a Writing Assignment template	Identifying key assignments
4. Developing relevant tools – writing guidelines, checklists, genre-specific feedback action points	Developing genre analysis document for each key assignment genre
5. Confirming tools with the GE teachers	Confirming the assignment genre analysis document with the discipline teacher
6. Communicating genre-expectations to all stakeholders involved – students, language lecturers and subject teachers	Developing genre-awareness among subject lecturers through back and forth negotiation and dialogue to understand practices in the disciplinary communities
7. Training and standardizing language lecturers to ensure a common understanding of the genre	Developing self-access online tools, templates, activities and materials to support subject lecturers and students
8. Standardizing English lecturers for providing assignment specific feedback to students on genre aspects and language on two drafts before submission of final paper.	Piloting the materials with the discipline lecturers thus soliciting cooperation for continued use of the tools and materials developed.

Each of the two models above fulfills the four stages of genre-based pedagogy in different ways. EWR has a focus on shared assessment as a crucial tool in effective collaboration that allows English language lecturers to provide feedback twice on the assignment before subject lecturers mark the final paper. LID potentially has a broader reach with its online materials and thus extends beyond the institutions involved in its collaborative development.

In the sections below, two accounts of liaison within the LID project are described.

2.2 Collaboration for supporting literacy in Social Sciences

The old, famous Chinese premier Deng Xiao-ping’s often quoted line: ‘Feel the stone to cross the river’ means there are no set and fast rules when tackling a situation. Engaging discipline lecturers often meant engaging eclectic strategies like that. The sections below chronicle collaboration with subject lecturers in the Social Work Department using the 4-step genre-based pedagogy, for the Hong Kong government-funded project “*Supporting and developing students’ English Literacy Practices in the disciplines*” (Gardner, 2015).

Step one: Collaboration begins - gather target texts

For the social science discipline, the way we collected student scripts was entirely through communicating with the subject lecturers. Collaboration began with making ‘cold calls’ and establishing contact with individual discipline lecturers, selling them our vision of supporting students’ writing IN the discipline. Individual contacts were made with well over ten discipline lecturers, and across two universities. It helped tremendously to obtain ‘buy in’ from discipline lecturers who were programme leaders or heads of the department. The process required careful negotiation, persistence and patience. Those who took the time to collaborate tended to have a genuine desire to see their students benefit from developing better writing skills, which they linked to better professional practice and job prospects in the near future.

Over 200 graded scripts were collected from six core courses. Table 4 shows the genres collaboratively chosen to develop and the number of subject lecturers engaged. Of the range of these scripts we worked with, we found that strong scripts were more useful for analysis as they tended to capture all the essential elements the subject teacher required for that assignment. The general effectiveness of language use of the better scripts also provided insights into the generic language features.

Table 4. Studying genres in Social Science

Genres	No. of scripts collected	No. of subject lecturers in collaboration
Case assessment reports	58	2
Argumentative essays	16	1
Reflective writing	30	1

Step two: Affirmation of analysis - texts as genres

Analysing marked scripts and other core documents including course syllabus, assignment instructions from discipline lecturers, and grading criteria, where available, forms an essential part in the whole process of genre analysis. Analysis work was made easier when there was an abundance of information to work with in terms of detailed marking, plenty of comments and queries in the margin of the student scripts, and clear component grading criteria, as was the case with the genre ‘Case assessment report’. Together with that, we definitely benefitted from being able to have informal, on-going, open-ended exchange with discipline lecturers in order to enrich our understanding of the assignment, including the thinking behind the design of the assignment, or how it evolved.

Affirmation by subject lecturers of our analysis was clearly another feature of collaboration at this stage. We produced a genre guide and assignment checklist for the students, both based on our text analysis. Those documents were sent to the discipline lecturers for comments and feedback, so that we could further fine-tune our work. Where we had limited clues in the documents about discipline lecturers’ requirements about the assignment, it became crucial to engage the discipline lecturers further to ensure that our advice to students was in line with their thinking. An example is the reflective writing that social work students mainly do prior to their fieldwork practice. In our genre guide to students, we have attempted to give advice on what makes a reflective comment a good one, as this seems important for the students to know. The subject lecturer affirmed the genre guide during a scheduled and focused meeting, in which both the

subject lecturer and the English Language teacher scrutinized and discussed the guide, as well as some extracts from student scripts together. This kind of face-to-face meeting also provided a good opportunity to raise questions with the discipline teacher. One query we raised was, for example, whether it was decided that an introduction or conclusion is not required for the reflective journal under discussion. The discipline teacher conceded that although he mainly looked for reflective comments, an introduction and a conclusion were not without value.

Step three: Writing support to raise genre awareness

Raising genre awareness was our key strategy in providing writing support to students. Apart from the genre guide and assignment checklist, our package of support materials also included language activities developed based on our genre analysis. They are all being rendered online and will be available to subject lecturers, students and English language lecturers. So far, opportunities to engage students in using our materials include a pilot study which features workshops during which the guide was explained and language activities trialed. The workshops were run using subject lecturer's classtime. That was a strong sign of support. As the subject lecturer also sat in the workshop, it was also a great way to encourage him to engage with the genre-based materials and see how they work in supporting writing, thus subtly raising the lecturer's genre awareness further.

Step four: On-going collaboration: students produce texts

Some initial evaluation of the impact of our writing support was made on a second cohort of students taking the same course. In that pilot study, students were invited to try out our package on-line before writing their case assessment report. The incentive given to them was that an English language lecturer would then read and give feedback comments on their report, which we did. The students then made revisions and submitted their works for assessment by their subject lecturer. This mode of collaboration tends to be quite popular with discipline lecturers in the Social Work discipline, who were likely marking improved versions of students' work. This activity clearly puts a considerable amount of strain on resources. But it is possible to see that given more trials, with generic characteristics of the genre firmly established, it would take fewer resources to have a preliminary round of marking and feedback giving, then revision, before final submission for assessment.

Another collaboration model of integrating language support for the Engineering curriculum in the LID project is given in the paragraphs below.

2.3 *Collaboration for supporting literacy in the Engineering curriculum*

Providing appropriate English language support for Engineering has been a challenge for English language teachers, particularly if they are unfamiliar with the content of the Engineering curriculum and, for example, its widespread use of symbols to express meanings. This unfamiliarity has hampered many early attempts to support the language needs of Engineering students. This section describes the attempts of Language Centre teachers at the City University of Hong Kong to identify appropriate ways of providing online support to undergraduate students of Engineering in meeting the English demands posed by the Engineering curriculum.

Creating online language support materials tailored to the needs of Engineering students and lecturers was an unprecedented endeavor for both the Language Centre and the Engineering departments in the City University of Hong Kong. It was decided that formulating objectives and setting the scope of the project needed to be done collaboratively. Therefore, invitation letters were sent to all teaching staff of the five Engineering departments in the University, inviting them to participate in the project. After some negotiation, the Electronic Engineering Department (EE)

committed itself to the project.

The first stage in formulating objectives and setting the project scope involved identifying the key assignments students were required to complete and identifying the language needs the assignments entailed. The Associate Head of EE met with the programme leaders of the department to identify the key assignments for each year of the undergraduate programme. As students in the City University of Hong Kong are not required to decide on their major subject until their second year, assignments from year 2 to year 4 were examined and four key assignments were identified. The purposes and requirements of each of these key assignments are listed in Table 5 below

Table 5. Key assignments for Electronic Engineering majors in City University of Hong Kong

Year	Key Assignments	Individual / group	Length	Specifications
2	Lab reports	Group work and Individual report	2-4 pages	describing and analysing a lab experiment.
2	Progress reports	Group work and Individual report	4-5 pages	developing problem-solving and project management skills.
3	Final reports	Group work and Individual report	5-6 pages	building on knowledge in product design, enhancing abilities in working in a group, developing evaluation abilities and research insights.
4	Final Year Project Reports (FYPRs)	Individual work and individual report	40 pages +	developing knowledge of research studies, enhancing discovery and innovation abilities, advancing problem-solving skills.

Six students majoring in Electronic Engineering studying in their second or third year of study were interviewed. The purpose of the interviews was to learn more about the language demands the students perceived that they needed to meet, in completing these key assignments. Interview results show that students did not know how to organize the information effectively and they often felt helpless when they experienced problems in language use in writing. Guidelines were provided by their lecturers but were limited in the amount of guidance provided with regard to language use. It is a common practice for students to refer to past examples submitted by earlier senior year students to learn how to structure and format their own writing.

Four senior subject lecturers were interviewed in order to gain their perspective on students' language needs. The results indicated that subject lecturers expected their students to use simple sentences in their assignments as they believed that many of them were not capable of more sophisticated writing. 'Idea flow', the logical sequence of propositions, was their major concern. Subject lecturers did not assign a specific language mark to students' writing in lab reports, progress reports or final reports as they believed that students' abilities in communicating their ideas in their written work were reflected in their overall performance in these assignments. In the Final Year Projects, however, a language grade was included. An

overall Grade A could only be awarded to Final Year Project reports that reached a grade B in language. The descriptive criteria for language grades included spelling and grammatical accuracy.

The next stage of the project involved making use of the information gleaned from interviews and analysis of students' work to develop online materials to support students in meeting the English language demands of the key assignments. These included language rubrics and support for completing key assignments.

Realizing the limitations of the language guidelines provided by EE lecturers as revealed in the interviews, the project team decided to not only develop materials to support the 4 key assignments but also construct a set of language rubrics for the subject lecturers and EE students. The rubrics consist of 3 categories, namely Organization, Academic Style and Language Use, each of which is elaborated in terms of performance at 5 levels, corresponding to grades from A to E. Extracts taken from Final Year Projects written by earlier students were included in 3 of the 5 levels to illustrate good, average and weak writing.

Subject lecturers from the EE Department were asked to provide reference documents for analysis, including assignment guidelines, marking schemes and, most importantly, authentic samples for each key assignment. The table below shows the number of scripts provided by the subject teachers.

Table 6. Engineering assignments collected

Key assignments	No. of scripts collected
Lab Reports	20
Progress Reports	7
Final Reports	7
Final Year Project Reports	12

The contribution of subject lecturers to the materials development was significant and substantial. This included providing the reference documents, meeting with the materials writers at least once before the actual writing started and commenting on the appropriateness and accuracy of the drafts. One professor volunteered to help to draft the outline of the main sections in the Progress and Final Reports.

All materials written were first sent to the project team leader for comments, then to the subject teachers. Materials were revised according to the feedback received, and then tried out by a group of six post-graduate students majoring in Electronic Engineering for their comments on level of difficulty and user-friendliness. With the support from the Electronic Engineering department, the FYP materials have already been posted on the departmental intranet which students need to visit for information exchange within their department. The online materials the project developed have enabled the university to cater to the needs of students who, in turn, benefit from engaging in self-directed learning. These materials should not be treated as a replacement for classroom teaching but seen as additional learning resources to complement workshops or courses.

Another large-scale EAC initiative elaborated below describes collaboration with the subject

lecturers from the perspective of professional development of the faculty as the pivot for integrating English across the tertiary curricula.

3. Staff development in English Across the Curriculum

English Across the Curriculum (EAC) is a relatively new endeavour in the Hong Kong Polytechnic University; and the negotiation process can be challenging when the concepts and theories of Writing Across the Curriculum are new to many subject lecturers. It should not be assumed that subject lecturers, who primarily focus on subject content in their teaching and assessment, have the same skills or readiness to develop their students' language abilities as English language lecturers. Subject lecturers believe that language is the responsibility of language lecturers. Staff development is therefore necessary in the process of negotiating the implementation of EAC in Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The EAC project aspired to engage the faculty through:

a) Communicating EAC vision to discipline academics and getting a buy-in.

Professional development meetings and workshops allow English language lecturers to present their vision and purposes of implementing EAC to subject lecturers, so that the two groups of staff can begin to envisage the same goal of improving teaching and learning. This stage is essential for a buy-in towards integrating literacy into subject lecturer's pedagogy.

b) Discussing specific collaboration and actions details.

Secondly, since EAC is a joint effort of English and subject lecturers, continuous professional development meetings and workshops offer the opportunity for the two groups of staff to negotiate detailed information about the nature, content and extent of their collaboration, including action plans and timelines at a later stage.

c) Offering support that addresses concerns.

Although Hong Kong Polytechnic University is a university that conducts its lectures in English as medium of instruction (EMI), some subject lecturers lack confidence in their use of English as well as in the teaching and assessing of the English skills needed to fulfil the assessment tasks they have set for their students. Staff development support can help to alleviate some of these concerns.

d) Evaluating EAC impact on, and designing improvements to, teaching and learning.

Subject lecturers cannot be expected to know how to implement EAC in their subjects; by the same token, they cannot be expected to know how to evaluate the impact of EAC intervention. Skills such as ways to evaluate their students' assessment performance can be topics for staff development workshops and meetings.

Such EAC-related staff development in Hong Kong Polytechnic University has been introduced in both direct and indirect ways. The direct approach includes meetings to discuss matters related to subject lecturers' responsibilities; workshops as well as engaging subject lecturers in joint conference presentations and research. Meetings fulfilled objectives such as drafting the wording for an assessment criterion on language use and its corresponding descriptors; analysing student comments on the assessments, including clarity of assessment rubrics, usefulness of teacher comments, and differences between teacher and student expectations of assessment performance; rewording assignment guides, questions and rubrics upon receiving student feedback; and agreeing on ways to better communicate the above to students. Workshops addressed staff needs including understanding the linguistic features of certain genres through, for example, the use of genre-specific corpora; examining academic writing

features, e.g. advanced academic writing skills and avoiding plagiarism; using online language resources, e.g. concordancers and university websites. As part of the EAC initiative, collaboration involved creating opportunities for enhancing subject lecturers' research profile through participating in cross-disciplinary learning & teaching initiatives; co-presenting with English language lecturers in the EAC conference and co-publishing.

While a direct approach is generally welcomed by staff, an indirect approach can be equally useful, especially as a face-saving mechanism in the context of Hong Kong. The indirect approach is achieved in Hong Kong Polytechnic University by inviting subject lecturers to confirm that the content of student handouts contains linguistic features pertinent to the assessment genre; and requesting subject lecturers to be present when their students receive EAC briefings offered by English language lecturers. When subject lecturers' worries of including EAC in their subjects and concerns over their own English proficiency level become gradually alleviated, and when they begin to see the positive impact of EAC on their teaching and their students' learning, subject lecturers' readiness to adopt EAC increases.

Collaboration between English language lecturers and subject lecturers is crucial throughout the four stages of genre-based pedagogy described earlier. Such collaboration cannot be fully effective unless English language lecturers and subject lecturers develop a similar understanding of the terms and concepts involved, as speaking the same language is "a crucial part" of the negotiation process (Charlton, 2007, p.26).

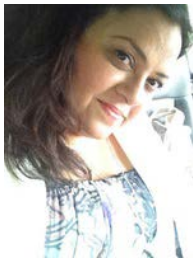
Conclusion

From genre investigation, to analysis, to generating supportive materials, and evaluating the impact on student performance, the collaboration with discipline lecturers is crucial. Starting at times from a strategy of 'feel the stones to cross the river', diverse models of collaboration have emerged to suit different contexts and their constraints. As outlined above, these range from close one-to-one collaboration between English lecturer and subject lecturer (Social Science), to collaboration that is mediated by shared assessment rubrics (EWR) or by a subject lecturer (Engineering), to indirect collaboration where subject lecturers are invited to attend sessions ostensibly designed for students (staff development) or contribute to the development of online materials (LID). While team teaching may be the deepest form of collaboration, a variety of modes of collaboration will, over time, promote greater integration, mutual understanding, and the responsive development of stable processes to support the writing of as yet unmapped genres for increasing numbers of students.

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