English for Specific Purposes and Academic Literacies: Eclecticism in academic writing pedagogy

MCGRATH, Lisa <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2598-4942> and KAUFHOLD, Kathrin

English for Specific Purposes and Academic Literacies: Eclecticism in academic writing pedagogy

Lisa McGrath and Kathrin Kaufhold

Affiliation

Lisa McGrath*, Sheffield Institute of Education, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, S1 1WB, UK, L.McGrath@shu.ac.uk, Phone +44(0)114 2255503

Kathrin Kaufhold, English Department, Stockholm University, SE-106 91 Stockholm, Sweden, kathrin.kaufhold@english.su.se, Phone: +46(0)8 16 22 43

*Corresponding author

Abstract

Academic Literacies and English for Specific Purposes perspectives on the teaching of academic writing tend to be positioned as dichotomous and ideologically incompatible. Nonetheless, recent studies have called for the integration of these two perspectives in the design of writing programmes in order to meet the needs of students in the increasingly diverse and shifting landscape of academia. The aim of the present paper is to reflect on how this theoretical integration could be put into practice. Drawing on the design of a research-based writing workshop for postgraduate anthropology students, we argue that rather than a 'hybrid' model of writing pedagogy, a theoretically-grounded but eclectic approach is needed in order to respond to students' personal, local, and disciplinary contexts.

Key words: English for Specific Purposes, Academic Literacies, academic writing pedagogy, postgraduate research writing

Introduction

Interdisciplinary research, the integration of different disciplines' knowledge-making practices and beliefs (Trowler 2014a), has gained significant ground in the contemporary, international university. Within the context of this epistemological shift, researchers from different fields with interests in academic writing have called for engagement with each other's work, 'both in order to avoid working within conceptual boundaries they seek to disrupt, and as a means to develop richer understandings of knowledge-making in the

contemporary world' (Lillis and Tuck 2016, 39). Nonetheless, the academic writing literature suggests a limited willingness to step outside of those established 'conceptual boundaries', at least in terms of research within Academic Literacies (AcLits) (e.g., Lillis and Scott 2007) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (e.g., Swales 1990). These two perspectives on academic writing development are often contrasted, and despite the shared goal of supporting students in their writing through theory, research and practice (e.g., Lillis and Tuck 2016), are traditionally associated with different ideological stances, and practised in different academic contexts (Wingate and Tribble 2012).

As a broad characterisation, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), as a branch of ESP, evolved as a pragmatic solution to expediting non-native English speakers' integration into professional and academic disciplinary discourse communities. EAP has developed theories, methods and frameworks to investigate and describe the textual practices of scholars and students from a range of disciplines and linguistic backgrounds, as well as a pedagogy drawing on genre analysis. The overarching aim is to demystify prestige, academic genres (Hyland 2003), and to facilitate students' transition from novice into accepted member of their disciplinary discourse communities (Swales 1990). EAP can be taught as English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP), with a focus on skills and language used across the academy, or as English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) where learning is more targeted to the discourse of particular disciplinary groupings.

In contrast, AcLits emerged in response to a dominant skills approach in supporting chiefly undergraduate (Badenhorst et al. 2015) 'non-traditional students' at UK universities and elsewhere (Lillis and Scott 2007; Thesen and Pletzen 2006). Crucially, AcLits underscores the situated nature of academic writing, the role of institutional power structures and writer identity that are negotiated in students' or academics' writing (Lillis and Scott 2007). While also concerned with disciplinary contexts, AcLits emphasises the specific institutional and learning contexts that shape writing and reading practices (Lea and Street 1998).

A dichotomous characterisation of ESP and AcLits is convenient in terms of theoretical description; however, it does not necessarily capture the diverse teaching backgrounds and practices among on-the-ground academic writing teachers, nor the range of provision that is offered in universities worldwide. In a timely article, Wingate and Tribble (2012) problematise this oppositional view of academic writing pedagogy by 'identifying shared principles that can be used for developing relevant writing programmes for students from all

backgrounds at UK universities and elsewhere' (Wingate and Tribble 2012, 481). The authors call for a pedagogy that is 'inclusive, not reserved for certain types of students' and that is 'discipline and context specific'. This is important as labels such as 'non-native' and 'non-traditional' are increasingly seen as unhelpful (Hathaway 2015), and disciplinary boundaries now understood to be dynamic (Trowler 2014a). However, while Wingate and Tribble's (2012) article offers an account of the assumptions, strengths, and criticisms of both 'camps', no concrete example of how their 'best of both worlds' (481) pedagogy would translate into course design is given. Experiments with implementation are clearly an important next step, so as to avoid assumptions that 'the two fields can be straightforwardly combined or their differences collapsed' (Lillis and Tuck 2016, 37).

One such example is Hathaway (2015) in the form of an academic English course for undergraduate students at a UK university, irrespective of language or academic background. While the author shows that the design successfully incorporated elements of both AcLits (particularly in terms of criticality and voice) and ESP, the students' own disciplinary context is somewhat marginalised, perhaps due to the diverse student body and level for which the course caters. Nonetheless, both ESP and AcLits acknowledge that for students to operate in higher education, some ‘epistemological adaptation’ (Hathaway 2015, 509) is required through a developing awareness of knowledge construction in their (local) disciplinary context (e.g., Bruce 2008). Therefore, we would argue that a syllabus that focuses on developing generic academic literacy practices but does not tackle head on the disciplinary issue, albeit through the theoretical lens of AcLits and ESP, is not entirely 'discipline and context specific' (Wingate and Tribble 2012).

The present article moves this discussion forward in three ways. First, we describe a writing pedagogy that emerged from the collaborative design of an MA writing workshop for anthropology students by two academic writing practitioners. The practitioners identify with different writing perspectives: the first author with the ESP genre-based approach, the second with AcLits. Second, as practitioners in Sweden, we offer a perspective from outside of the UK context - in the development of a writing pedagogy 'for students from all backgrounds at UK universities and elsewhere' (Wingate and Tribble 2012, 481) there is presumably a need to transcend geographical as well 'conceptual borders'. In our context, many students in the humanities take an academic writing course at the Master's level, irrespective of native language or prior university experience. Third, an MA level workshop constitutes an interesting case. Increased student mobility especially among master’s students across Europe

(Wächter and Maiworm 2014) has led to very heterogeneous groups; students often have some disciplinary subject knowledge at this level but have to relate this to their new institutional contexts. Master's students also have the challenge of thesis writing, a significant moment in their academic progression, as the genre is situated between student essay and research-based writing (Paltridge 2002). Based on our experience, we argue that a 'best of both worlds model' may not emerge from convergence or conflation, but rather a theoretically-grounded and eclectic approach which draws on areas of strength from AcLits and ESP, and focuses on students' local and disciplinary context.

We begin by outlining pertinent characteristics of ESP and AcLits perspectives. Research-based writing in anthropology and the students' local context are described, followed by an account of how AcLits, ESP, and our understanding of the disciplinary and local context fed into the workshop design, supported by examples of course activities and extracts from student evaluations. We conclude by characterising the writing pedagogy that emerged from the collaboration, and argue that a theoretically-grounded yet eclectic approach to academic writing can yield positive results.

English for Specific Purposes and Academic Literacies

In this section, we sketch ESP and AcLits perspectives on academic writing. Space precludes a detailed discussion of the various interpretations, and therefore we focus on elements that specifically influenced our workshop design.

English for Specific Purposes

ESP is described as a practical, goal-oriented (e.g., Flowerdew 2015; Swales 1990) approach, designed to address the specific language needs of students, according to their specific purposes (Belcher 2009). ESP aligns with the social constructionist view that academic disciplines are distinct and generative entities (e.g., Becher 1989), influencing the discourse and research practices used by the individuals who identify with and constitute each grouping (Becher 1989). Disciplinary context is rooted in the ESP view of academic writing as a socially situated practice. ESP frames this situatedness within discourse communities, groups who share ‘relevant content and discoursal expertise’ and achieve their communicative goals via genres (Swales 1990, 27). Discourse is the vehicle through which new knowledge is constructed, validated and disseminated (e.g., Hyland 2013), and disciplines utilise different lexico-grammatical and rhetorical resources to achieve their purposes (e.g., Hyland 2013).

The ESP genre approach assumes that members of disciplinary communities communicate via genres, and therefore genre is central to ESP writing pedagogy (Swales 1990). Genre knowledge enables authors to frame messages according to the expectations of target readers (Hyland 2003), and contextual knowledge of the discipline allows authors to ground 'criticality […] in the context of the field's accepted standards of judgement' (Swales and Feak 1994, in Bruce 2008, A5). While genres enact certain textual constraints in terms of content, style and format (e.g., Johns 1997), and reflect disciplinary epistemologies (Kuteeva and McGrath 2015; Kuteeva and Negretti 2016), heterogeneity within genres is clearly recognised (Hyland 2007).

In ESP, course design begins with needs analysis, the investigation of the target academic community's discourse and the students' current capacity to engage with that discourse. Needs analysis entails the ongoing investigation of rhetorical and lexical features of texts, the context in which genres occur, variation, and how genres 'allow for personal agency' (Belcher 2009, 4). In terms of pedagogy, students first gain awareness of genres through consciousness-raising tasks, and are then given the opportunity to 'perform' genres (e.g., Devitt 2015, 44). Textual samples are evaluated, and reconstructed by students (Swales 1990), while connections between form and context are explored. The aim is that 'explicit knowledge of a genre's linguistic and rhetorical conventions [will] facilitate the process of learning to write effectively' (Tardy 2009, 102).

ESP therefore brings to academic writing pedagogy a means to help students develop control over the specific genres they require in order to succeed in the university, and within their specific disciplinary context. Through genre analysis, students are scaffolded in their acquisition of recurrent textual patterns and their understanding of the scholarly context in which genres operate. Thus prestige genres are 'demystified', allowing students to partake in the activities of their target disciplinary community (e.g., Hyland 2003).

Nonetheless, a recurrent criticism of 'demystification' is that it entails 'acculturation'; in the process of induction into discourse communities, students are said to be socialised into dominant discourses, with limited power to transform or influence the status quo (Lillis and Scott 2007). With the spread of poststructuralist thought, researchers increasingly point to the variability of conventions in academic writing within the disciplines (Hamilton and Pitt 2009; Thesen and Cooper 2013), which potentially makes activities that seek to expose recurrent

forms and conventions problematic. This is particularly acute in less discoursively rigid disciplines (Gnutzman and Rabe 2014) such as anthropology.

Academic Literacies

While there is a growing body of applications of an AcLits approach to curriculum and course design (e.g., Badenhorst et al. 2015; Lea 2004; Lillis et al. 2015; Murray and Nallaya 2015; Paxton and Firth 2014), AcLits is in the first instance a critical perspective on the researching and teaching of academic writing (Reynolds 2010). Lea and Street (1998) first conceptualised AcLits as a pedagogical model that goes beyond the learning of formal features and socialisation into disciplinary writing by 'paying particular attention to the relationships of power, authority, meaning making, and identity that are implicit in the use of literacy practices within specific institutional settings' (Lea and Street 2006, 370). More recently, Turner (2012) described AcLits as a theoretical framework for academic writing pedagogies, comprising situated reading and writing practices and wider socio-political contexts.

Similar to ESP, AcLits takes a social constructionist view but emphasises, perhaps to a greater extent, how academic writing is shaped by institutional power structures and individual meaning making. Central to this view is the notion of literacy practice, which focuses on the various reading and writing activities around the production of academic texts. This may include, for example, conversations surrounding the master's thesis (Ivanič 1998). At the same time, the concept of literacy practice entails that these literacies are shaped by the social institution of higher education as the result of historical developments (Barton and Hamilton 2000). Academic writing is thus perceived as a historically situated cultural practice.

Proponents of AcLits (e.g., Lea and Street 1998) argue that gaining control over disciplinary genres is more complex than a linear model of socialisation and transition from novice to expert. AcLits scholars draw attention to disciplinary heterogeneity and the role of the individual student in knowledge production (Lillis et al. 2015), and emphasise how institutional requirements influence student writing beyond discipline (Lea and Street 2006). At the same time, AcLits stresses that learning academic literacies involves a dialogic process of knowledge production in which students play an active role (Lillis 2003). Researching perspectives of students on academic writing has demonstrated the importance of students' prior experience (Lillis 2001; Paxton and Frith 2014), their literacy histories (Barton et al.

2007), in their development as writers. Thus, AcLits looks for ways in which writers can draw on what they bring to their writing and use these repertoires as 'legitimate tools for meaning making' (Lillis and Scott 2007, 13). Which aspects of their literacy histories become salient in their current writing also depends on students' own purposes and goals. These 'imagined futures' (Barton et al. 2007) usually include the successful completion of the thesis and gaining a master's degree as well as aims related to self-actualisation, further academic study or professional development (Kaufhold 2013).

The AcLits focus on negotiation between students, supervisors and institutional requirements emphasises the potential for transformation. While supervisors and assessors undoubtedly play a more powerful role, students own texts contribute to the shaping of the genre (Kaufhold 2015). Writing is thus perceived as transformative for both the learner and, potentially, for academic writing conventions. Finally, AcLits explores the inclusion of a wider range of semiotic resources in today's higher education, which is characterised by increasing internationalisation and diversification (Lillis et al. 2015; Thesen and Cooper 2013). Here we find some convergence with more critical perspectives of ESP, which re-imagine EAP as 'English for Academic Possibilities' (Cadman 2002).

To conclude this section, while AcLits does not claim to provide a set of pedagogical tools, it does offer an awareness of heterogeneity in the writing of the academy and the notion of transformation. Transformation highlights the idea that students with distinct literacy histories and knowledge of disciplinary epistemology develop writer identities. Through their writing, students also potentially contribute to shaping academic knowledge production.

Situating the writing workshop: Anthropology through a disciplinary and local lens

ESP and AcLits perspectives recognise that both the local and disciplinary context are central to academic writing pedagogy. This is highly pertinent for MA thesis writers, given that the genre is concurrently a 'disciplinary genre' (Johns and Swales 2002, 21), influenced by disciplinary knowledge construction, and a 'pedagogical genre' (Johns and Swales 2002, 21), shaped by departmental assessment requirements.

The notion of discipline, and how a disciplinary perspective can be incorporated into course design, is not straightforward. Indeed, there is a growing body of research that interrogates the relationship between knowledge structures and literacy practices (e.g., Freebody, Maton, and Martin 2008; Muller 2014). While descriptions of disciplines (e.g., Becher 1989; Bernstein 1999) have been highly influential in framing studies particularly in ESP research,

recent interpretations problematise assumptions of homogeneity and convention. In Trowler's (2014a, 1723) revisit of the seminal *Academic Tribes and Territories*, he observes that 'academic historians […] may display very different characteristics in different universities, though there are still some common features between them which render them recognisable as historians'. In other words, the site in which the discipline is enacted is significant in terms of gaining insight into discourse and the practices that shape the discourse, and thus in understanding the context in which students are writing. Thus, we draw on a review of the literature on anthropology writing, our own informal genre analysis of three MA theses recently completed at the university department, and an interview with the departmental director of studies (DoS).

Anthropology as a discipline

Anthropology can be broadly characterised as the study of society and cultures. However, beyond this, it is difficult to pinpoint a more distinct research agenda, object of study (Reynolds 2010), or even pervasive research paradigm (Krishnan 2009). Instead, the defining epistemological trait would seem to be ethnography (Krishnan 2009), a practice described as so integral to the discipline that the prevailing method, fieldwork, constitutes 'the initiation ritual or rite of passage necessary to join the tribe' (Reynolds 2010, 14). Indeed, the centrality of ethnography as knowledge construction has clear implications for discourse. Writing constructs rather than reports knowledge, as the result emerges from the description of events and reflections in the field (recorded as field notes), conveyed and argued in texts (McGranahan 2014) through a theoretical lens, and in light of previous literature.

Thus, unlike other disciplines, research-based writing in anthropology is often characterised by a multi-layered argument structure, which weaves together theory, ethnographic description, insights from previous studies, and a strong authorial voice (McGranahan 2014). At the same time, the acknowledgment and exploration of issues of reflexivity, the position and effects of the researcher in the research process, are laid bare. As a result, the writer tends to play a prominent role in the discourse. Vora and Boellstorff (2012) describe research-based genres in anthropology as narratives, vehicles to tell the 'story' of the research, and observe that 'there are many ways to tell a story, and many conceivable ways to structure a manuscript' (Vora and Boellstorff 2012, 579). This space for variation within the discipline (e.g., McGrath, 2016a) provides considerable creative opportunity.

Anthropology in the local context

The local context for our workshop is an international MA programme at the anthropology department of a major Swedish university. As would be expected given the previous discussion, writing holds a prominent position in the programme. For example, the DoS delivered a series of writing sessions for the students, which aimed to develop students' writing through close readings of anthropological texts and related writing exercises. Tasks included a comparison of ethnographic and journalistic writing, freewriting exercises and paragraph structure analysis. According to the DoS, the overall aim was to 'get […] creative- get [the students'] writing going' in an informal, and supportive atmosphere. The quote supports the potential for creativity in the craft of writing up ethnography (Narayan 2007).

Thus, the DoS sessions were seen as a long-term creative investment, but interestingly, the MA thesis was not discussed. Instead, it was our academic writing workshop that was envisioned as the launch pad for students' projects by the DoS. In her words, our workshop was to 'really focus on the research question and an aim for the research. What is the purpose of this project that I want to do?' It would seem that our outsider role was instrumental in this, as the DoS noted: '… I think that you are much better at that than anthropologist are'.

In terms of what constitutes a successful thesis at the department, the DoS specified two areas: focused research questions (as above) and argument construction:

> Good ethnography – building on the empirical material from their field work. And for them to have a weave, […] building on empirical material but also drawing on previous research and theory. So it's not like other disciplines.

Weaving implied the ability to coherently integrate the three components of an ethnographic description: empirical material, theory and previous literature (McGranahan 2014). Importantly, a more developed understanding and ability to weave theoretical material into the argument was viewed by the DoS as a marker of successful transition into post-graduate writing at the department:

> [An MA thesis] should be better theoretically […] it needs to be more grounded […]. They need to show that they know more of the anthropological theory, that they know more about what's been written. Everything has been written before, and everything has been studied, they need to show that they know more of their field, in terms of field sites and topic and also theoretically. Just more developed. More mature.

This argument structure was reported in the anthropology literature, and confirmed by our informal genre analysis of the three sample theses from the department. Nonetheless, while weaving was present in all three examples of MA theses, this argument structure could be constructed within a paragraph, across paragraphs or even across separate chapters, which highlighted again the potential for variation in texts.

Designing the workshop

In the following sections we introduce the workshop. The process of investigating the disciplinary and local context, our discussions with the DoS, and our own perspectives on writing pedagogy led us to formulate the following aims: First, to give students the opportunity to conceptualise their MA thesis topic through writing; second, to build on students' existing knowledge of writing in their discipline from their experiences within their MA programme and beyond; and third, to help students recognise textual and rhetorical features in samples of writing and to consider what may have motivated the author's choice. Finally, our aim was for students to relate what they had observed to their own writing.

The workshop comprised three stages: the introductory session, interviews with PhD students, and a one-day workshop. Attendance was compulsory, and there was no summative assessment. A total of 13 students took part in the workshop. Voluntary consent was obtained from all 13 to use their written work and evaluations for research purposes. The students came from a variety of language backgrounds including native speakers of English. Around half of the group completed their BA degrees at a different university in a range of disciplines across the humanities and social sciences. As was expected, abstracts that students were asked to write and submit prior to the one-day workshop indicated a heterogeneous group in terms of their research project development. In particular, the abstracts differed in the extent to which students displayed a clear research focus and depth of theoretical subject knowledge.

The introductory session

The introductory session had three objectives. First, in line with both AcLits and ESP perspectives, academic writing was to be framed as a situated social practice (e.g., Hyland, 2007, Lillis and Scott 2007). Second, students were to narrow down their project idea through writing (Badenhorst et al. 2015). Third, the exploration of the processes and practices surrounding the construction of an MA thesis in anthropology was to be launched. To this end, Tardy's (2009) model of genre knowledge was introduced, both as a meeting point

between AcLits and ESP perspectives, and as a way to frame the workshop activities for the students. Tardy conceptualises genre knowledge as a combination of four overlapping knowledge areas: 1) formal knowledge of lexico-grammatical and rhetorical patterns; 2) knowledge of the process of writing a specific academic genre; 3) rhetorical knowledge which relates to an understanding of the genre in relation to its purpose, audience and author position; and 4) subject matter knowledge.

As a warm up, students were introduced to the rhetorical triangle, a visual representation of three considerations that shape (academic) texts: the credibility of the author, audience expectations and the purposes of the text. The related key concepts in ESP of genre and discourse community (Swales 1990) were also introduced to help students conceptualise research-based writing in their context.

In order to develop formal knowledge (Tardy 2009), students were introduced to move analysis (Swales 1990). Following ESP methodology, students worked with three authentic abstracts of research articles in anthropology and identified the rhetorical stages in the discourse that combine to enable the author to achieve their communicative goal. The analysis of these texts led to a critical discussion and evaluation of commonalities and variation among the abstracts. The tasks enabled students to develop a meta-language to discuss rhetorical patterns and engage with the texts as 'discourse analysts' (Johns 1997). Next, and in preparation for the one-day workshop, students reconstructed the genre (Bruce 2008) by writing abstracts for their own MA projects. We read the abstracts and provided feedback on the rhetorical structure and any lexico-grammatical issues.

PhD interviews

The second stage of the workshop aimed to raise awareness of the practices of research-based writing in the students' context. In Tardy's terms, this constitutes developing knowledge of the process of writing a specific academic genre and the rhetorical knowledge which relates to an understanding of the genre in relation to its purpose, audience and author position. To facilitate this development we arranged for the MA students to interview PhD students in the anthropology department. In ESP terms, students were able to discuss disciplinary academic writing with a close, but more experienced member of the discoursal (and local departmental) community. From both an AcLits and ESP perspective, the interviews shed light on the ‘sometimes invisible discourse practices’ in academia (Badenhorst et al. 2015, 1; McGrath

2016b), and contributed to our third aim of emphasising the wider context in which textual practices occur.

A list of suggested interview questions was provided (see appendix); however, students were given autonomy to explore their own interests and adapt the topics. The questions can be loosely grouped into three areas: 1) probing topic conceptualisation (questions 1-3); 2) eliciting insights into the process of researching and writing an ethnographic description (questions 4 and 7); 3) considering the author and intended audience (questions 8-11). The latter included questions of discourse community (Swales 1990), voice and identity (e.g., Hyland 2007; Ivanič 1998) and the affective dimension of writing (Le Ha 2009; Lillis 2001).

The full-day workshop

The aim of the main session was to bring together textual analysis and the insights into the process and 'socio-rhetorical context' (Tardy 2009, 133) that the PhD interviews had provided, together with the MA students' prior experiences of reading and writing. To situate the workshop within the disciplinary and local context we drew on the story metaphor invoked by anthropologists when talking about their writing (Vora and Boellstorff 2012).We began by eliciting students' knowledge of generic features of an MA thesis in anthropology in order to 'sensitis[e] students to […] rhetorical structures that tend to recur in genre-specific texts' (Swales 1990, 213) and to develop a meta-language through which observations could be discussed. Thus, our starting point was the genre knowledge students brought to the workshop (Lea 2004).

Building on this knowledge, students were asked to explore sample theses written in the university department, sourced and selected by the students based on whether they considered the texts to be valuable or interesting from a discourse, content or methodological perspective (e.g., Kuteeva 2013). The workshop placed special emphasis on the analysis of rhetorical stages in introductions, and weaving the argument. Throughout, students reflected on their findings from the PhD interviews and made connections with their experiences in the DoS writing sessions.

As a final stage of the workshop, in what we see as an innovation, we asked students to visualise themselves post thesis-writing, and formulate their 'imagined futures' (Barton et al. 2007, 6). In pairs, students posed to each other the questions asked in the PhD interviews, in order to firmly establish the workshop as a basis for the accomplishment of the MA thesis (Bruce 2008). Thus, the session incorporated pedagogical tools originating in ESP

methodology to raise genre awareness, coupled with an emphasis on developing writer identity, and attention to students' literacy histories and imagined futures.

Student feedback

In this section, we report on the students' evaluation of the workshop. While student feedback is not sufficient to evaluate the workshop empirically, the data does provide insights into how students experienced the tasks and their own learning. Students were asked to comment on the most and least useful elements, and to describe what they felt they had learnt. The main themes that emerged pertained to structuring the thesis and its constituent parts, the development and use of meta-language, insights into the writing process, and institutional constraints.

The most prominent theme pertained to the activities concerned with structuring the thesis both in terms of recognising textual patterns and constructing arguments. Several students commented on the variability of the sample theses, and connected this variation to individual creativity and developing voice. For instance, one student observed:

> [T]hat the frames for writing are less rigid but that it's both a privilege and difficult as it demands a lot from the individual in terms of creativity and organization skills. This brings together the variation and the person in the process (1).

Students also referred to the argumentation structure of weaving, which had been discussed in depth during the workshop. Drawing on prior knowledge from the DoS' writing sessions, students added a 'bridging' metaphor to describe the need for elegant transitions between the elements of weaving. One student in particular related the weaving argument pattern to the process of writing and 'crafting' (Narayan 2007) the thesis:

> The writing process is much more central than I tend to think. The importance of weaving and trying to keep the theory, interviews and descriptions on the same level. To give the impression that the field is speaking. Writing demands a lot of planning and awareness of what one is doing (2).

Observations beyond the text were also made; for example, students noticed their development of a meta-language, described as 'a language for thinking about the purpose, how to "establish territory" etc' (3). Comments pertaining to the writing process, such as what to do 'when you get stuck with your writing' (4), using the abstract analysis and writing

activity to ‘conceptualise and limit the project plan’ (5), and breaking down thesis construction into ‘parts’ were also made.

Most students commented that the PhD interviews were especially useful for gaining a perspective on the research and writing process, and the role of the fieldwork. Insights expressed included an awareness of the relation between fieldwork and theory: ‘the theory is your material, even if you don’t see it’ (6). We considered this to be particularly valuable given the DoS' emphasis on the use of theory as a signifier of mature postgraduate writing. The PhD interviews provided not only insight into knowledge-making practices, such as ‘the way they structured their day’ (7), but also encouragement for project completion: ‘I guess that even though you feel like a fake or depressed or stressed, it’s still possible to finish the thesis and that it might turn out good, even though you don’t feel it yourself’ (8). Part of this encouragement seemed to involve motivating students to gain ownership of their writing, to ‘find[ing] and use[ing] your own voice as an author/researcher’ (9) as legitimate participants in knowledge construction.

While this feedback only constitutes a snap-shot impression, the comments suggest an appreciation of the range of tasks and perspectives that combined textual analysis of genres (comment 1) with opportunities to develop an awareness of knowledge construction (comments 6, 7), the process of writing (comments 2, 4, 5) and students' identity as writers (comments 8, 9). Our cautious interpretation of the students' experience is therefore one of empowerment rather than acculturation.

On the other hand, some students commented that they wanted more work on formal aspects, such as ‘useful synonyms or linking words’ or ‘common mistakes’. While this could be due to their expectations of the workshop as shaped by prior experience of English courses (see Lea 2004), these comments do need to feed in to subsequent workshops. Student feedback also highlighted the impact of institutional constraints. As a heterogeneous group working on individual research projects, some students were ready to develop their own texts already in preparation, while the less prepared would have preferred the workshop to be scheduled much later in the process, thus giving them the opportunity to more immediately apply what they had learned.

The feedback must of course be treated with some caution in that students expressed what was salient to them at the end of the one-day workshop. Nevertheless, the comments do suggest that a relatively meaningful experience for students resulted from our workshop,

which drew on both AcLits and ESP perspectives, and foregrounded the local disciplinary context, both in terms of our objectives and tasks.

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to reflect on our experience of drawing on AcLits and ESP perspectives in academic writing pedagogy. By way of conclusion, we now characterise the approach to academic writing that emerged from our collaboration. As a first observation, we note that despite our different theoretical backgrounds, our objectives for the course were easily aligned, with each of us contributing ideas as to how we could best support students. This pluralism came about from our commitment to a 'bottom-up approach', in which our pedagogical choices were to be informed but not led by our theoretical positions. In addition, we shifted agency where possible to the workshop participants, for example, in terms of the selection of sample materials, and the content of the discussions with PhD students. As a result, the pedagogy that emerged was student-centred, theoretically grounded, but eclectic, pragmatic and tailored to our particular group and circumstances.

This fluidity enabled us to counterbalance some of the difficulties that the position of academic writing provision in higher education can entail. For example, the length and timing of the workshop, resulting to a certain extent from the timing of the institutional assessment cycle, impacted our pedagogical decisions. In this case, departmental decisions allowed little scope for extended writing, revision or feedback, or observable transformation (e.g., Badenhorst et al. 2015).While ideally we would negotiate these conditions with the department in future and deepen collaboration with subject specialists (Wingate and Tribble 2012), we note that any applied writing pedagogy is influenced by the ancillary status of academic writing provision (Swales et al. 2001) in some institutions.

Several areas of the design saw no conflict between our theoretical perspectives. For example, we considered academic writing as socially situated, which entailed students' considering the wider disciplinary context, interpreted through the lens of the local university department (see, Trowler 2014b). We also found common ground in Tardy's description of genre knowledge. Other aspects drew more overtly on one or the other perspective: AcLits provided a way to conceptualise the workshop as a stage in students' literacy histories; in other words, central to our design was the previous knowledge the students had accrued from inter alia the DoS sessions, and how they would continue to develop after our workshop (e.g., the visualisation exercise). This was particularly important given our severely limited time

with the students. Within this short seminar time, ESP genre analysis (Swales 1990) played a prominent role, providing a framework to map argument structure. Rather than focusing solely on convention, a virtue was made of variation (Hyland 2007): students were encouraged to explore the range of rhetorical strategies employed by authors (and available to the students), critique them and find a rationale in the knowledge gained from the DoS seminars and interviews.

Through discussions with the DoS and analysis of MA theses produced in the department, coupled with a wider survey of the literature on anthropological discourse, we were able to design a workshop that was both discipline and context specific (Wingate and Tribble 2012), and which drew on AcLits and ESP. Nonetheless, we do not claim that that a 'best of both worlds' pedagogic model emerged. Instead, we are inclined to agree with Gustafsson (2011, 103) that in fact 'learning situations […] do not lend themselves to description or analysis in single models'. Academic writing is a highly complex and context-embedded practice. Therefore, while we stress the importance of pedagogy that is theoretically grounded, a single, hybridised 'best of both worlds' model (Wingate and Tribble 2012) is perhaps wide of the mark. Instead, academic writing practitioners should feel encouraged to step outside of their 'conceptual boundaries' (Lillis and Tuck 2016, 39) and explore what other academic writing models could contribute to their practice within a specific context, at a specific time, and for a specific group of students.

References

Badenhorst, Cecile, Cecilia Moloney, Janna Rosales, Jennifer Dyer, and Lina Ru. 2015. "Beyond Deficit: Graduate Student Research-writing Pedagogies." *Teaching in Higher Education* 20 (1): 1-11. doi: 10.1080/13562517.2014.945160.

Barton, David, and Mary Hamilton. 2000. "Literacy Practices." In *Situated Literacies: Reading and Writing in Context*, edited by David Barton, Mary Hamilton, and Roz Ivanič, 7-15. London: Routledge.

Barton, David, Roz Ivanič, Yvon Appleby, Rachel Hodge, and Karin Tusting. 2007. *Literacies, Lives and Learning*. London: Routledge.

Becher, Tony. 1989. *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Culture of Disciplines*. Buckingham: SRHE and Open University Press.

Belcher, Diane. 2009. “What ESP Is and Can Be: An Introduction.” Chap. 1 in *English for Specific Purposes in Theory and Practice*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Bernstein, Basil B. 1999. “Vertical and Horizontal Discourse: An Essay.” *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 20 (2): 157-173.

Bruce, Ian. 2008. “Theorising tertiary writing instruction: Accounting for the process, post-process, genre and critical literacies approaches.” Paper presented at the TWN Biennial Colloquium: From here to there, AUT University, Auckland, New Zealand, December 2-3.

Cadman, Kate. 2002. “English for Academic Possibilities: The Research Proposal as a Contested Site in Postgraduate Genre Pedagogy.” *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 1 (2): 85-104. doi:10.1016/S1475-1585(02)00015-2.

Devitt, Amy. 2015. "Genre performances: John Swales' Genre Analysis and rhetorical-linguistic genre studies." *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 19, 44-51.

Flowerdew, John. 2015. "John Swales's Approach to Pedagogy in Genre Analysis: A Perspective from 25 Years on." *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 19: 102-112. doi: 10.1016/j.jeap.2015.02.003.

Freebody, Peter, Karl Maton, and J.R. Martin. 2008. "Talk, Text and Knowledge in Cumulative Integrated Learning. A Response to 'Intellectual Challenge." *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy* 31 (2): 188-201.

Gnutzmann, Claus, and Rabe, Frank. 2014. "'Theoretical Subtleties' or 'Text Modules'? German Researchers' Language Demands and Attitudes across Disciplinary Cultures." *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 13: 31-40. doi:10.1016/j.jeap.2013.10.003.

Gustafsson, Magnus. 2011. "Academic Literacies Approaches for Facilitating Language for Specific Purposes." *Ibérica* 22: 101-122.

Hamilton, Mary, and Pitt, Kathy. 2009. "Creativity in Academic Writing: Escaping from the Straitjacket of Genre?" Chap. 4 in *Why Writing Matters: Issues of Access and Identity in Writing Research and Pedagogy*, edited by Awena Carter, Theresa Lillis, and Sue Parkin, 61-79. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Hathaway, Julia. 2015. "Developing That Voice: Locating Academic Writing Tuition in the Mainstream of Higher Education." *Teaching in Higher Education* 20 (5): 506-517. Doi: 10.1080/13562517.2015.1026891.

Hyland, Ken. 2003. "Genre-based Pedagogies: A Social Response to Process." *Journal of Second Language Writing* 12: 17-29. doi:10.1016/S1060-3743(02)00124-8.

Hyland, Ken. 2007. "Genre Pedagogy: Language, Literacy and L2 Writing Instruction." *Journal of Second Language Writing* 16 (3): 148-164. doi:10.1016/j.jslw.2007.07.005.

Hyland, Ken. 2013. *Disciplinary Discourses: Social Interactions in Academic Writing* (2nd ed.). Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Ivanič, Roz. 1998. *Writing and Identity*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Johns, Ann M. 1997. *Text, Role, and Context: Developing Academic Literacies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Johns, Ann M. 2011. "The Future of Genre in L2 Writing: Fundamental, But Contested, Instructional Decisions." *Journal of Second Language Writing* 20 (1): 56-68. doi:10.1016/j.jslw.2010.12.003.

Kaufhold, Kathrin. 2013. "The interaction of practices in writing a master's dissertation." PhD diss., Lancaster University.

Kaufhold, Kathrin. 2015. "Conventions in Postgraduate Academic Writing: European Students' Negotiations of Prior Writing Experience at an English Speaking University." *Journal of English for Academic Purposes,* 20: 125-134. doi:10.1016/j.jeap.2015.08.007.

Krishnan, Armin. 2009. "What are Academic Disciplines? Some Observations on the Disciplinary vs. Interdisciplinary Debate." *ESRC National Centre for Research Methods Working Paper 03/09*.

Kuteeva, Maria. 2013. "Graduate Learners' Approaches to Genre-analysis Tasks: Variations Across and Within Four Disciplines." *English for Specific Purposes* 32 (2): 84-96.

Kuteeva, Maria, and Lisa McGrath. 2015. "The Theoretical Research Article as a Reflection of Disciplinary Practices: The Case of Pure Mathematics". *Applied Linguistics* 36: 215-235.

Kuteeva, Maria, and Raffaella Negretti. 2016. "Graduate Students' Genre Knowledge and Perceived Disciplinary Practices: Creating a Research Space across Disciplines. *English for Specific Purposes* 41: 36-49. doi: 10.1016/j.esp.2015.08.004.

Lea, Mary. 2004. "Academic Literacies: A Pedagogy for Course Design." *Studies in Higher Education* 29 (6): 739-754.

Lea, Mary, and Brian Street, 1998. “Student Writing in Higher Education: An Academic Literacies Approach.” *Studies in Higher Education* 23 (2): 157-172. doi:10.1080/03075079812331380364.

Lea, Mary, and Brian Street. 2006. "The 'Academic Literacies' Model: Theory and Applications." *Theory into Practice* 45 (4): 368-377. doi:10.1080/03075079812331380364.

Le Ha, Phan. 2009. "Strategic, Passionate, but Academic: Am I allowed in my Writing?" *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 8 (2): 134-146. doi:10.1016/j.jeap.2008.09.003.

Lillis, Theresa. 2001. *Student Writing: Access, Regulation, Desire*. London: Routledge.

Lillis, Theresa. 2003. “Student Writing as “Academic literacies”: Drawing on Bakhtin to Move from Critique to Design.” *Language and Education* 17 (3): 192-207.

Lillis, Theresa, Kathy Harrington, Mary Lea, and Sally Mitchell, eds. 2015. *Working with Academic Literacies: Case Studies towards Transformative Practice*. West Lafayette: Parlor Press.

Lillis, Theresa, and Mary Scott. 2007. "Defining Academic Literacies Research: Issues of Epistemology, Ideology and Strategy." *Journal of Applied Linguistics* 4 (1): 5–32. doi:10.1558/japl.v4i1.5.

Lillis, Theresa, and Jackie Tuck. 2016. “Academic Literacies: A Critical Lens on Writing and Reading in the Academy.” In *The Routledge Handbook of English for Academic Purposes,* edited by Ken Hyland, and Philip Shaw, 30-43. London: Routledge.

McGranahan, Carole. 2014. "What is Ethnography? Teaching Ethnographic Sensibilities without Fieldwork." *Teaching Anthropology* 4: 23-36.

McGrath, L. 2016a. "Self-mentions in Anthropology and History Research Articles: Variation between and within Disciplines." Journal of English for Academic Purposes 21: 86-98. doi:10.1016/j.jeap.2015.11.004

McGrath, L. 2016b. "Open-access Writing: An Investigation into the Online Drafting and Revision of a Research Article in Pure Mathematics". *English for Specific Purposes* 43: 25-36. doi:10.1016/j.esp.2016.02.003

Muller, Johan. 2014. "Every Picture Tells a Story: Epistemological Access and Knowledge." *Education as Change*. 18 (2): 255-269.

Murray, Neil, and Shashi Nallaya. 2015. "Embedding Academic Literacies in University Programme Curricula: A Case Study." *Studies in Higher Education*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1080/03075079.2014.981150.

Narayan, Kirin. 2007. "Tools to Shape Texts: What Creative Nonfiction Can Offer Ethnography." *Anthropology and Humanism* 32 (2): 130-144.

Paltridge, Brian. 2002. "Thesis and Dissertation Writing: An Examination of Published Advice and Actual Practice." *English for Specific Purposes* 21 (2): 125-143. doi:10.1016/S0889-4906(00)00025-9.

Paxton, Moragh, and Vera Frith. 2014. "Implications of Academic Literacies Research for Knowledge Making and Curriculum Design." *Higher Education* 67: 171-182. doi: 10.1007%2Fs10734-013-9675-z.

Reynolds, Judith. 2010. "Writing in the Discipline of Anthropology – Theoretical, Thematic and Geographical Spaces." *Studies in Higher Education* 35 (1): 11-24. doi: 10.1080/03075070903131933.

Swales, John M. 1990. *Genre Analysis.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Swales, John M., Debbie Barks, Ana C. Ostermann, and Rita C. Simpson. 2001. "Between Critique and Accommodation: Reflections on an EAP Course for Masters of Architecture Students." *English for Specific Purposes* 20 (1): 439-458. doi:10.1016/S0889-4906(01)00020-5.

Tardy, Christine. 2009. *Building Genre Knowledge*. West Lafayette: Parlor Press.

Thesen, Lucia, and Ermien van Pletzen, eds. 2006. *Academic Literacy and the Languages of Change*. London: Continuum.

Thesen, Lucia, and Linda Cooper, eds. 2013. *Risk in Academic Writing: Postgraduate Students, their Teachers and the Making of Knowledge*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Trowler, Paul. 2014a. “Disciplines and Interdisciplinarity: Conceptual Groundwork.” In *Tribes and Territories in the 21st Century: Rethinking the Significance of Disciplines in Higher Education*, edited by Paul Trowler, Murray Saunders, and Veronica Bamber, 5-29. London: Routledge.

Trowler, Paul. 2014b. “Depicting and Researching Disciplines: Strong and Moderate Essentialist Approaches.” *Studies in Higher Education*, 39 (10): 1720-1731. doi: 10.1080/03075079.2013.801431.

Turner, Joan. 2012. "Academic Literacies: Providing a Space for the Socio-political Dynamics of EAP." *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 11 (1): 17-25. doi: 10.1016/j.jeap.2011.11.007.

Vora, Neha, and Tom Boellstorff. 2012. "Anatomy of an Article: The Peer-review Process as Method." *American Anthropologist* 114 (4): 578-583. Doi: 10.1111/j.1548-1433.2012.01490.x.

Wächter, Bernd, and Friedhelm Maiworm, eds. 2014. *English-taught Programmes in European Higher Education*. Bonn: Lemmens Medien.

Wingate, Ursula, and Christopher Tribble. 2012. "The Best of Both Worlds? Towards an English for Academic Purposes/Academic Literacies Writing Pedagogy." *Studies in Higher Education* 37 (4): 481-495. doi: 10.1080/03075079.2010.525630.

Appendix

1) What was your MA thesis about? How did you get to your topic?
2) What makes a ‘good’ research topic in anthropology?
3) As a reader, what do you look for in a good piece of anthropological writing? What do you expect to read? How did you achieve this in your thesis?
4) What was the hardest bit about writing your thesis? How did you overcome it?
5) What part was the most enjoyable? Why?
6) What were the stages of transforming your fieldwork notes into the ethnographic description in your master’s thesis? How did you organise your ideas and evidence?
7) What was the most important thing you learned from your master’s thesis in terms of research and writing?
8) Who did you have in mind as a reader when you wrote your thesis (if anyone)?
9) Do you see yourself as an anthropologist? When did it happen? How did you know?
10) Who is speaking when you write? Has this changed?
11) How do you feel about your MA thesis now?