Looking back and moving ahead

The development of an academic writing and language unit

When you're finished changing, you're finished.
(Benjamin Franklin, 1706-1790)

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The composition of the cohort this year is amazing: in one seminar group there are 24 students and 24 nationalities!

Lecturer comment, 2010 School of Health and Social Sciences

25,725 in London
large

student body

ethnic minorities 55% of home students in London

mature 53% of full time students

international 23%

diverse

WP International

Source: 2010-11 statistical digest
Science & Technology
Business
Health & Education
Law
Art & Design
Media & Performing Arts
Institute of Work-Based Learning

Academic Writing & Language coordination

Archway campus

2013
Method

- role
- position
- practices
- relationships

Survey focusing on practices and relationships
Interviews with colleagues (& former colleagues)
Structured questionnaire (online)
10 participants (plus PT & PB)
Informing AWL provision

Discipline-specific writing
(e.g. Medway 1996; Lees-Maffei 2012)

Composition studies / writing development
(e.g. Elbow 1998; Bereiter & Scardamalia 1987)

Linguistic ethnography
(e.g. Rampton, et al. 2004)

Argument
(e.g. Mitchell & Andrews 2000;)

Situated learning
(Lave and Wenger 1991)

Study Skills
(e.g. Cottrell 2001; Murray 2011)

Discourse Analysis
(e.g. Fairclough 1992)

WiD / WAC
(e.g. Bazerman, et al. 2005; Deane & O’Neil 2011)

Academic literacies
(e.g. Lea & Street 1998; Lillis 2003)

Genre Analysis
(e.g. Swales 2004; Nesi & Gardner 2012)

CLIL / ICL
(e.g. Jacobs 2005 & 2010)

EAP / Critical EAP / ESP
(e.g. Alexander et al. 2008; Turner 2011; Benesch 2001; Pennycook 1997)

Critical Pedagogy
(e.g. Friere 1996; Giroux 2011)

Corpus Linguistics
(e.g. Sinclair 1991; Biber et al 1998)

Functional systemic linguistics
(Halliday 1995)
Role

Student facing/institution facing

- Supporting the P&A of the student body
- Supporting the individuals that we work with

Help staff/help students

- Staff need to understand the specialised needs of their students
- Students need to understand the specialised needs of their course

Home students/International students

- Students from diverse backgrounds
- Not always suitably prepared for academic study
Practices

Teaching - Embedded/Non-embedded

Workshops – Courses, One-off, Campaign-related, The Writing Space

Tutorials (LDU-driven)

Embedded sessions – Lectures, Workshops, Seminars, Labs, Crits, Vivas
(School-driven)

Planning - Inconsistent/Systematic

Close collaboration with (some) lecturers

Boards of Studies, Departmental meetings, Validations

Core modules targeted

Schools receive unbalanced attention
Practices

Pedagogy - EAP/Ac Lits

Language focus – nuts & bolts

- **Reading/writing processes** – writing to learn/learning to write
- **Assignment driven (products)** – genre characteristics, disciplinary/lecturer expectations

Generic/subject-specific

Team - **Unified values/Varied approaches**

- **Values** - Student-focused, critical, supportive, ambitious
- **Approaches** - Range of genres, student need, personal interest
Position

**Space / no space**
- Office & Learning Lounge

**Active / passive**
- Forge own identity
- PVC, research, experts
- At the whim of institution
- LR-CLTE-LSS

**Central / Marginal**
- Part of degree programmes
- Puppets/baby-sitters?
- Adaptable
- Misrepresented

**Unique / one of many**
- Acknowledged & respected
- Numerous support services in LSS

**Validations**
- Central / Marginal
- Admissions
- P&A policy

**LR**
- CLTE
- LSS
Relationships

Important

- Help make provision effective
- Access to influence/funds
- Security

Take time/patience

- Personal connections matter
- Need to be worked on all the time (Jacobs, 2010)
- ‘Tussle and trust’

Different types/levels

- Strategy (PVC)
- Teaching (lecturers)
- GTAs/SLAs

Current priorities

- Integration with support services & SU (collaborative campaigns)
- More sustainable relationships

*bandwagon*
Conclusion

More engrained

Identity [our responsibility] institutions are fickle

Tension

Systematic (?)

Imprecise memories

Complete the picture
plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose
References


References


