

Constructing a Case for ESAP: Law and the Built Environment at CELE Nottingham

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This presentation illustrates the development and implementation of two ESAP courses, namely Built Environment and Law, run during the pre-session summer programme at CELE, Nottingham.

It outlines the stages of development from the very beginning of such a course including commissioning, planning, liaising with particular schools, drafting materials, revising and running the courses. It further elaborates on the subject specific student needs and how these inform materials development and addresses the issue of fair assessment.

In the case of the Built Environment course, the cooperation between the department and CELE was exemplary in addressing the vast amount of preliminary questions the development team had to consider when addressing the needs of the students. However, given the constraints of a 5-week programme and limited development time, there was restricted scope for developing materials from scratch. This occurred in the case of aspects particular to the Built Environment post-graduate programmes, namely the studio critiques – a specific type of assessed presentation students have to give.

In other instances it was found that adapting EGAP materials from the general pre-session course was necessary to meet the deadlines. While the input materials (texts for reading, writing tasks, etc.) were geared towards the students' area of expertise, the skills taught were more generic in nature, simply due to the fact that subject specific structures or writing moves could not be established in the developmental timeframe. This was also reflected in the assessment, which, in some instances, was identical to the tests on the EGAP course that ran parallel to this course. The development team felt that this was not the optimal solution, but as there was neither time nor opportunity to develop and pilot subject specific tests, this was the only solution. Where a compromise between EGAP and ESAP had to be made in the materials, the department was consulted, and these diversions from subject specificity were agreed upon.

Departmental cooperation for the Law course was equally good. In the development phase, the specific needs of the students were established, and while this course also occasionally resorts to the more 'generic' elements of EAP, there are some aspects that are very specific to the group of students this course caters to. Reading case law and dealing with its key elements and writing legal problem essays were some of the points that received specific attention while writing the course. Subject specific referencing was imbedded in relevant activities. This course, like the Built environment course, also draws upon subject specific lectures given by members of the respective departmental faculty, to provide listening input and points of discussion. The law course further utilises selected online sources and course books to prepare the students for their (mainly) post-graduate studies. One downside to this ESAP programme lies in the assessment. Similar to the Built Environment course, some of the skills are tested with EGAP materials due to practical reasons. However, this was also agreed upon with the School of Law.

Overall, these two programmes are quite successful and have received mostly positive feedback. But as with all other programmes (including EGAP), these are works in progress, and it is hoped that the limitations the developers have identified can be addressed as the programmes are revised and refined.