Parallel session 1

Scaffolding L2 development through virtual learning environments (Second Life/SIMiLLE): A path to enhancing EAP
Celia Antoniou
University of Essex

This presentation focuses on exploring the use and affordances of 3D virtual worlds like Second Life to enable language learning through real-time computer-mediated communication. Despite the tradition related to these environment's original use for online "role-play" gaming, these worlds offer a virtual world setting where the users through a graphic representation of themselves (avatars) can proceed in constructing their own characters with a view to interact with others. Their educational use lies in the fact that they can intelligently combine language learning tasks and language use within a real-world environment.

The presentation will describe the current investigations of the educational use of virtual world technologies to help support the creation of meaningful contexts for foreign language learning at the University of Essex. By using this type of platforms what is hoped is to address the problems distance learning students have by being unable to experience the cultural and social immersion when learning a language. A working combination of 3D virtual worlds, like SIMiLLE, that was designed in our University (Gardner, Ganem-Gutierrez, Scott, Horan, and Callaghan 2011), and Moodle, that is used as a course management system, will be analysed. The Moodle platform constitutes the bank of documents supporting the EAP instruction offered to university students that receive teacher training in our University. The role for SIMiLLE is therefore to establish the environment for action, communication and collaboration between the students. The study examines, from a sociocultural perspective, how effective will the online designed tasks be in enabling the students to recognise academic use of vocabulary when reading and speaking and what was the contribution of the inserted scaffolding clues in the SIMiLLE platform. The theoretical background of the research will be presented along with the research questions and methodology to be followed for the pilot study, including information about the platform, the tasks to be accomplished by the students and the scaffolding construct to be used to enable online support. Finally, ways forward for the research will be outlined.

Reference: Gardner, M., Gánem-Gutiérrez, G. A., Scott, J., Horan, B., & Callaghan, V. (2011). Immersive Education Spaces Using Open Wonderland: From Pedagogy through to Practice. In G. Vincenti, & J. Braman (Eds.). Multi-User Virtual Environments for the Classroom: Practical Approaches to Teaching in Virtual Worlds (pp. 190-205). Hershey: IGI.

Exploring the relevance of reusable audiovisual feedback on students' written work
Anna Drozynska
University of Huddersfield

Students should expect helpful assignment feedback which feeds forward into their future submissions. However, lecturers often bemoan the lack of attention that some students pay to feedback which has often been carefully constructed but remains unread. In order to encourage greater use of feedback, a possible solution is to provide students with greater choice over how the feedback is communicated, for example rather than written feedback, students could access it in an audiovisual format. Despite these advantages, achieving this goal may require a considerable amount of time to be invested in the development of quality reusable feedback. On the other hand, students often report a lack of comprehensible feedback on their writing which is especially problematic in case of international students. Since the University has recently witnessed the increasing numbers of students with English as a second language, it has become evident that an improved form of feedback provision should be initiated across the departments.

This paper presents the stages and findings of a project initiated by the Learning Development Group at the University of Huddersfield, focusing on designing and implementing reusable audiovisual feedback, i.e. producing a bank of frequently used feedback items which can be integrated into Quick Marks in GradeMark. This talk will initially explain the motivation for the audiovisual feedback project. It will then compare the project with similar initiatives in EAP, and also discuss both the benefits and possible limitations of the project. The presentation will conclude with general advice on the use of audiovisual feedback and an outline of the plans to further develop and refine the project. The project addresses aims of the University's Assessment and Feedback Strategy by facilitating the provision of feedback which is clear and accessible enabling students to learn and to seek further clarification.

Student expectations and experience of prototype materials for an online platform in academic writing: practical solutions for a resource in Moodle
Anna Ekert-Centowska
University of Zurich and ETH Zurich

The dominance of English as a language of science has led to increasing pressure on NNES (Non-native English speaking) scholars and students to write and publish research in English (Canagarajah, 2002; Lillis & Curry, 2006). The resulting demand for academic writing courses in English has necessitated the development of an online writing platform as one way of meeting needs of a growing student body at the Uni/ETH Zurich. The platform is an ongoing project of a self-access resource in Moodle 2.1 targeting a broad student base from a range of disciplinary backgrounds. As students are the target end-users of the platform, understanding their expectations of this resource is central to developing an effective and motivating self-study environment. This presentation summarises results of an online questionnaire and an interview with a focus group which investigated student expectations and experience of prototype platform materials. The aim is to offer suggestions for instructors developing similar self-access resources.

References: Lillis, T. & Curry, M. J. (2006). Professional academic writing by multilingual scholars. Interactions with literacy brokers in the production of English-medium texts, Written Communication, 23(1) 3-35. doi.: 10.1177/0741088305283754. Canagarajah, A. S. (2002). A geopolitics of academic writing. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Blended learning and how it contributes to learners' autonomy and independence: a study
Monika Szelag
Queen's University Belfast

This study investigates some potential ways in which blended learning could be used to support international students enrolled in the EAP component of an IFY course with particular consideration as to how it might improve students' autonomous and independent learning skills. The research concerns a group of 32 international students between the age 18 and 22 to whom I taught EAP (English for Academic Purposes) at INTO QUB, and who were studying on the IFY NCUK (International Foundation Year Northern Consortium United Kingdom) course. The research focused on the area of learning and teaching of Academic Vocabulary and Vocabulary for Specific Purposes, Academic Writing and Academic Reading. It was hoped that by studying in detail one particular course the conclusions might be applicable, transferable and scalable to other English courses offered by INTO at QUB. Carefully chosen and created supplementary materials were produced and made available for the students to use online and in their own time with the following aims: to help students to succeed on their existing course; to encourage students to be more autonomous learners; to improve the students' academic English skills; and to help prepare them for study at a British University. The materials were uploaded to the Virtual Learning Environment supported by the University called Queen's Online (QOL) and made accessible to the students online. Students were requested to keep a log of completed exercises in a folder or a portfolio. The design of the online course was guided by social constructionist pedagogy. The research methods were quantative and qualitative and my corpus included: an initial paper-based questionnaire, focus groups and a final on-line survey.

Lunchtime posters, demonstrations and presentation

Posters (Room 2151):

Enhancing the hybrid learning of EAP writing through wikis: exploring the impact and influences on learners
Ahmed Al Khateeb
University of Southampton

Turnitin-to a language or academic culture lesson
Constantine Dimitriou
Queen Mary, University of London

Principles of designing learning programs - an exploration
Tim Francis
University of Bath

Evolving a CLIL approach for language learning with students of Architecture and Design using an immersive world combined with other new technologies
Julie Watson and Andrew Davey
eLanguages, University of Southampton

Reaching out across the world: a web-based learning resource for international students coming to the UK
Julie Watson and Andrew Davey
eLanguages, University of Southampton

Demonstrations (Room 2151):

The EAP Toolkit and Prepare for Success
Andrew Davey
eLanguages, University of Southampton

Errors common: How to make the computer say yes and manage the great expectations of your pre-sessional students and colleagues from the comfort of the keyboard
Graham Smith
Pearson Language Testing

Presentation (Lecture Theatre B):

Automated scoring of speaking and writing skills
John de Jong and Ying Zheng
Pearson

Research supports that, in many ways, automated scoring gives more analytical, objective results than humans do. Unlike human judgment, which is prone to be influenced by a variety of factors, an automated scoring system is impartial. This means that the system is not "distracted" by language-irrelevant factors such as a test taker's appearance, personality or body language (as can happen in spoken interview tests). Such impartiality means that test takers can be confident that they are being judged solely on their language performance, and stakeholders can be confident that a test taker's scores are "generalisable" - that they would have earned the same score if the test had been administered in Beijing, Brussels or Bermuda.

Also, automated scoring allows individual features of a language sample (spoken or written) to be analysed independently, so that weakness in one area of language does not affect the scoring of other areas. Human raters often exhibit "transfer of judgment" from one area of language to another. For example, test takers who speak smoothly may be marked as proficient even though their grammar is very poor. Automated scoring, on the other hand, assesses the different language skills objectively. When developing its automated scoring technologies, Pearson conducts "validation studies" to make sure that the machine's scores are comparable to scores given by skilled human raters. In a validation study, a new set of test taker responses (never seen by the machine) is scored by both human raters and by the automated scoring system. During Pearson's validation studies, when the human scores are compared with the machine scores, they are found to be quite similar. In fact, the machine generated scores show higher correlations with the mean score of two or three human raters than with the rating of any one of the individual raters. This is true for both written and spoken assessments. In this paper we will discuss some of the features of various automated scoring systems and give insight in why they can be successful.

Parallel session 2

EAP programme management via text message: using smartphones to help build a teaching team
Chris Macallister
Durham University

This paper will reflect on the practical experience of using smartphone and text messaging technologies to help coordinate a summer pre-sessional course. In recent years pre-sessional courses, including ours at Durham, have seen a dramatic rise in student numbers. The result is now: an operationally complex programme that is split over several sites, an ESAP curriculum that varies between classes, and a large number of temporary teachers many of whom are new to the programme. This has posed new challenges for the pre-sessional management team in terms of communicating with staff, and maintaining a cohesive teaching community over the summer.

The presentation will focus on how text messaging was used to help meet these twin challenges. Encouraging teachers to text the management team enabled faster responses to their questions, more efficient and clearer communication, and created a stronger support network for teachers. Secondly, text messaging greatly contributed to building a cohesive teaching team. Teachers developed text messaging into an alternative means of relating to the management team. This allowed for greater one to one interaction between teachers and coordinators. It also helped pre-sessional management keep in touch with what was going on in the classroom. This paper will then go on to consider the possible hazards of using texting as a management tool; eroding of work/home boundaries, and information overload for all parties. Finally, there will be an attempt to link the summer's experiences to the wider social theories of communication, speed, and networks that McLuhan, Virilio, and Castells have developed.

eFeedback & eMarking of written assignments with Grademark - is this the future?
Garry Maguire
Oxford Brookes University

The stage of the assessment cycle which has received particular attention recently is feedback. Grademark (http://submit.ac.uk/en_gb/products/grademark), provides a paperless feedback and assessment tool within Turnitin. Does this offer greater efficiency, quality and effectiveness than alternative means? This talk reports on a year-long trial of eSubmission with Grademark in Oxford Brookes University with large student cohorts following in-sessional credit-bearing EAP modules. It presents an analysis of student and staff usage and evaluation of the tool as well as demonstrates how the tool is set up and how it functions. Its use with teaching teams focusing in particular on feedforward in academic literacy is explored. Technical issues are indicated and potential difficulties in assessment-related requirements and in implementation are highlighted. Recommendations for introducing and rolling out across an EAP department are offered for those considering its use.

EAP and 'Learn English': adapting standard British Council exercise types for academic writing skills development
Hilary Nesi and Andy Gillett
Coventry University

We are working on an ESRC-funded project to create online academic writing materials for the British Council LearnEnglish website http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/. The project is now at mid-point; we have consulted representative stakeholders (EAP teachers in universities and private language schools) and we have worked with the British Council Website Manager to design the architecture of our part of the LearnEnglish site. Our materials will draw on insights from analysis of the British Academic Written English (BAWE) corpus, and rather than producing more of the same kinds of materials that are already available commercially, our stakeholders have recommended that we take a new approach, focusing on high value but relatively neglected genres, using authentic examples of each genre from a variety of disciplines, and providing activities for both individual and whole class use to practise writing skills rather than simply grammar, vocabulary and text comprehension (the focus of most existing LearnEnglish materials).

Our challenge is to address EAP learners' needs while retaining the LearnEnglish house style and using the British Council's exercise generation tool - this produces standard CALL activities (gap-fill, matching, ordering and multiple choice). In this talk we will discuss our attempts to manipulate these exercise types and the fairly rigid LearnEnglish format to encourage appropriate language production at the discourse level. Our materials will include links to online concordancing tools, voice-over commentaries on sample texts, clips from interviews with subject specialists and students, and plenty of practice in crafting moves belonging to important university student writing genres.

An online pre-sessional course in EAP experienced from the tutor's perspective
Steve White
University of Southampton

Although the number of online courses is increasing in the context of UK higher education, online presessional courses are still relatively uncommon. Such courses can, however, provide a valuable opportunity to introduce students to key concepts and skills in EAP before they reach the UK. They can also offer students the opportunity to meet other students, experience independent learning and time management, and grow in confidence, guided by an online tutor. Over the past two years, the University of Southampton has developed and delivered an online pre-sessional course for international students hoping to study on Masters Degree programmes in the School of Management. The course consists of a 5-week online component, in which students participate from their home countries. The main focus is on building students' skills in academic reading and writing, but study skills, vocabulary and grammar development are also addressed. After completing the online course, students progress onto a 10-week face-to-face presessional course which runs on-site at the university over the summer. This presentation aims to share the experiences of one tutor on the ePresessional course. The first part of the presentation outlines the course and the role of the online tutor within it. The second section explores, from the tutor's perspective, some of the challenges which were experienced and how the course and training procedures have been developed to address them. It will also provide a snapshot of the course evaluation and student feedback.

Parallel session 3

Using the WISHEES website to support student writing in STEM subjects in the EAP classroom
Debra Hills
Queen Mary, University of London

While many EAP tutors are keen to make explicit the demands of university writing and to help students write within their disciplines, the amount of freely available authentic material is limited. The Thinking Writing team at QMUL sought to rectify this by designing and developing the Writing in Schools, Higher Education and Employment Settings (WISHEES) website. This website, created in 2011 and funded by JISC, hosts a collection of resources which show university student writing in STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) along with filmed tutor interviews. In these short videos, academics discuss the assignments they have set; what they expected students to produce and explain what they value in the sample texts. Understanding how tutors make assessment judgments is an under researched area (Bloxham et al. 2011). The guiding principle for this website is that to develop an understanding of quality, tutors and students need to see variation, the 'possible moves' (Sadler 2010) that students can produce. Thus, for each assignment, there are three authentic student texts, all at a fairly good level, showing variation in the way the authors have approached a problem. This presentation will begin with an explanation of the thinking behind the project before looking at some sample materials and discussing how these could be exploited in an EAP classroom.

References:
Bloxham, S., Boyd, P. and Orr, S. 2011 'Mark my words: the role of assessment criteria in UK higher education grading practices' Studies in Higher Education 36, 6, 655-670.
Sadler, D. R. 2010 'Beyond feedback: Developing student capability in complex appraisal.' Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education 35,5, 535-550.

Teaching lexis and cohesion online
Andy Holbrook
University of Exeter

This presentation seeks to show how a pre-tertiary foundation economics module has been blended with an EAP approach to teaching lexis and cohesion in written work using tools in a VLE (Moodle) and software freely available for download. The presentation will begin with a contextualisation of the materials and a brief description of what they are. The presentation will go on to show the materials in the form presented to students before finishing with a walkthrough of how the tools and software were used to create the materials. Constraints on the use of the materials will be noted including the paucity of adequate feedback mechanisms in traditional on-line learning and the presenter's response to that issue. The presentation will emphasise how the materials only work if a number of conditions are in place. These include:
- Direct relevance to revision for assessed work
- Support delivered by Economics teachers in the classroom
- Varying forms of feedback including, scores, models and the recognition of on-line work done by teachers through direct response through the Moodle.
- Ease of use
- Integration within the economics syllabus

The tools are the question and quiz tools provided by Moodle. Other freeware includes Hot Potatoes, Audacity and Kompozer. A full list of freeware that might be useful to EAP teachers will be provided.

Developing an online writing advisory service for distance learning students
David Read
University of Sheffield

Many English departments and English language centres attached to universities offer academic skills and writing advice to international students within their departments. This may take the form of additional classes or one to one advisory sessions with a tutor. At the English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC) at the University of Sheffield, students can bring a piece of writing (normally an essay or dissertation they are working on) and have an individual consultation with a tutor. However, these classes or tutorials are normally only open to students based at the home university and there is no provision for distance students studying in their own country, students living at a distance from the university or part-time students who cannot come during regular teaching hours. In order to offer the same advisory service to these students, the English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC) at the University of Sheffield is piloting a scheme where these students can submit their essays online and receive feedback from an experienced tutor. They also have the option of having a video conference with their tutor to discuss the feedback they got.

The pilot is using Google Apps as the means to deliver the online advisory service: A Google Site is used to provide information about the scheme, Google Calendar is used for booking the appointments, the students submit their essays using Google Docs and the optional video conference is accessed through the Hangout feature in Google Plus. This presentation will provide a description of the pilot scheme, a discussion of the benefits/drawbacks of using Google Apps as a vehicle for this kind of online learning, and feedback from both students and teachers about the usefulness of this service.

MALL and collaborative learner interaction in and out of the classroom
Simon Williams
University of Sussex

This presentation reports on learners' use of mobile applications in language learning (MALL). Language learners may own a variety of mobile devices with different functions and apps, the differences constraining their use in the classroom. In fact, the nature of the mobile devices and the activities they are used for may be of less importance than the opportunities they provide for learner mobility and the co-construction of meaning. I argue that on the one hand the recent normalisation of learners' use of mobile devices, e.g. as reference tools, is actually unhelpful in the context of the communicative language learning classroom. Externally authored, product-oriented mobile applications, such as vocabulary games, tend to function in formal settings, are characterised by teacher-student interaction, and are comparatively less communicative. Yet, on the other hand, the fact that the technology is literally in student hands is empowering in itself and worth exploring further in an EAP context, for example by allowing learners to gather their own data and include it in writing their own apps, a self-authoring innovation predicted to be the next big development in IT.

I report on work in which more process-oriented MALL activities, typifying more informal learning, provide opportunities for learner authorship and co-construction of knowledge and, in comparison to other MALL, whether collaborative or not, are more communicative. Using models of the interactive language learning classroom and forms and functions of mobile applications, I outline a set of criteria for including MALL in the English language lesson. I suggest how student devices could be more effectively incorporated, and consider the impact on student and teacher identity and the dynamics of the classroom.

Parallel session 4

Teaching with Turnitin
Carol Bailey
University of Wolverhampton

Turnitin is a web-based text-matching software currently employed by most UK universities to detect plagiarism. Increasingly, institutions are exploring its potential as an aid in teaching academic writing, in particular writing from sources. In this session I'll be reflecting on five years' experience of using Turnitin as a learning tool with international students, and (more recently) as a means of developing collaboration with subject lecturers across the disciplines.
- 2007: started using student-generated Turnitin Originality Reports as a visual aid to demonstrate in/appropriate source use.
- 2008: started using Turnitin's online marking and feedback function (Grademark) to encourage collection of written feedback, facilitate summer resit work, and thereby improve retention and progression.
- 2011: started training staff across the University in use of Turnitin as a learning tool. Facilitated pilots on core postgraduate modules in six of our eight Schools. Worked with subject lecturers to provide joint formative feedback on draft assignments.

I'll be touching on the limitations of the tool, considering ways of using it in the EAP context, discussing staff and student feedback from the pilot studies, and inviting suggestions for future use. For suggested further reading, see the references section at www.wlv.ac.uk/turnitin.

Developing digital literacy partnerships with EAP students
Edward Bressan and Lisa Hale
Oxford Brookes University

As part of its strategy to enhance the student experience, Oxford Brookes University has embarked on a project which takes a strategic and innovative approach to the development of digital capabilities of both students and staff. The partnership approach recognises that students' digital literacy expertise can be complemented and enhanced by the soft skills, coaching and communication expertise that is provided by academic staff. Both parties engage in regular dialogues, planning exercises and joint presentations to peers to further develop digital capabilities. The process is framed in collaborative learning theories which allow students to gain professional recognition of their skills and academic credit for their work while academics are able to apply their knowledge and perspectives to their courses.

Underlying this complementary exchange is an assumption that students have superior IT skills, but this may not be the case with International Students taking EAP courses. We have therefore decided to develop longitudinal partnerships with 4 EAP students from four different countries who are commencing the University English course in September 2012. At The BALEAP PIM we are specifically going to report on:
- The initial needs analysis and assessment of digital awareness/deficits and priorities of both staff and students
- How the skills developed in these partnerships are transferred to the EAP programme
- How the impact of conversations are influencing teaching and learning styles

Helping EAP students improve lexical competence with online reference resources
Tanya Parsons

Many foreign postgraduate students who enrol on pre-sessional courses at UK universities find their language level insufficient to cope with the volume of authentic reading and writing despite high scores in IELTS/TOEFL exams. In particular, they lack vocabulary to express ideas precisely and succinctly, which is a prerequisite of successful academic communication.

In an attempt to compensate for their lexical gaps, students resort to monolingual dictionaries on the assumption that translating a word would help them communicate an idea more effectively. However, this often results in mis-collocations, clumsiness in writing and even misinterpretation of writer's intention (e.g. self-defence in court, feasible problem etc.) While choosing and combining words appropriately - lexical priming (Hoey 2010) - is subconscious for native speakers, learners of English have to acquire it as a skill. When combining the translated words together is not successful, they often opt for using direct quotations as a "safety net" of the correct language. This proves that students (as well as some teachers) still see a word as the basic unit of language to be learnt. Phraseology is still occasional rather than systematic and lacks guidelines on how to teach formulaic sequences. Therefore, two important tasks for EAP teachers would be to equip students with online resources that will help them improve their collocational competence autonomously and to enhance students' awareness of how to make best use of linguistic resources they already have. In this talk I will give examples of three online resources that I have found to be particularly useful for my EAP students: monolingual dictionaries (e.g. Macmillan Dictionary Online, http://www.macmillandictionary.com), collocation dictionaries (e.g. http://www.ozdic.com/collocation-dictionary) and concordances (e.g. www.lextutor.ca). I will show how the tools can be employed for improving students' lexical competence.

Sharing 'Academic English online': Issues in open educational practice
William Tweddle, Jessica Cooper and Martin Barge
Queen Mary, University of London

Over the past two years, a working group at Queen Mary, University of London, has developed an online resource of EAP materials, "Academic English Online", designed for self-access use by students at our institution. The project team has previously given presentations on the process of developing this resource, from initial inception, through trialling and revision, to the current fully functional product. We now wish to share this resource with the wider EAP community, and it is envisaged that one point of access to these materials will be through the BALEAP website. A brief overview of the development process will be given, explaining how the materials were structured around a set of learning objects created using the LOC tool, in which we received training at Southampton. We will also present a selection of the materials to the audience, showing how we created a variety of learning interaction types, using a range of additional authoring tools: Hot Potatoes, Tanida Quizbuilder, Articulate Engage and LiveCode.

By using Google Analytics, we can show how the materials have been used by our students, when accessing them independently and when directed to them as homework on a presessional course. In addition, we will discuss, from a teacher's perspective, how elements of the materials can be used in a blended learning framework inside the classroom. Furthermore, feedback collected from students, both during the preliminary trialling process, as well as from weblogs kept on a credit-bearing course, will be presented. We conclude with a discussion of some of the issues involved in making "Academic English Online" an Open Educational Resource, in order to encourage the sharing of best practice in open online resources development within the EAP community of practice.

Parallel session 5

Open practice and EAP: taking the leap
Kate Borthwick and Livia Schanze
University of Southampton

The Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies, at the University of Southampton, has spent the last year leading the JISC-funded 'FAVOR' (Finding a Voice through Open Resources) project. The project has been a collaboration across five different universities: Aston, Newcastle, UCL, SOAS and Southampton, and it aimed to showcase the excellent and often unrecognised work of part-time, hourly-paid language teachers in universities - a category that includes many EAP tutors. The project sought to engage tutors in publishing and sharing teaching resources as open content online, as well as creating new resources aimed at helping prospective university students understand the nature of language study in Higher Education. EAP staff have played a key role in the project and have published a wide range of shareable content.

This presentation will introduce the aims and objectives of the project and report on progress achieved. It will showcase the open content created by EAP staff across the institutions participating in the project and focus on the experiences of one EAP tutor who, through the project, engaged with open practice for the first time. She will outline her rationale and methodology for open resource creation and illustrate how resources created with the Learning Object Creator tool could potentially be used to replace methodical elements of reading lessons, leaving more time for critical thinking and transfer exercises. Furthermore, she will discuss the benefits and challenges of open practice, and describe how the experience gained on the project has impacted on her professional life. The presentation will conclude with advice on how other EAP tutors can get involved in publishing open content.

Using blogs to scaffold independent learning on an EAP pre-sessional course
Vanessa Mar-Molinero and Chris Lewis
University of Southampton

In recent years the importance of the role of independent learning with its emphasis on student-centredness has been recognised as an integral part of EAP programmes. As part of the development of focussed EAP independent learning courses, the use of blended technology has proved to be particularly appropriate (Watson and White 2012). This paper will describe a case study of the EAP pre-sessional courses at the University of Southampton in which blended technology was used to enhance the development of learner independence in a specially designed programme. It will present data gathered from the various components of the programme, including: blogging as a tool for informal reflective writing; vidcasts to complement the face to face presentations; and a range of virtual resources accessed through the Virtual Learning Environment (Blackboard). This independent learning programme was specially designed as a core part of the EAP pre-sessional courses. Its rationale was to provide a scaffold for students to develop their independent study skills. The range and variety of support offered by the introduction of blended technology was intended to allow students to individualise the pace and focus of their learning. The paper will present examples of the student blogs as well as their feedback on the use of technology on the course. Some reservations are expressed over the effectiveness of blogging. I will critically evaluate the blended technology approach for independent learning, making suggestions and recommendations for improvements.

Reference:
Watson J. and S. White, (2012). "ePresessional: a blended approach to delivering pre-sessional courses in EAP for international students". Paper given at LLAS eLearning Symposium: http://www.llas.ac.uk/video/6562

E-dictionaries and training EAP students how to use them
Jonathan Smith
University of Reading

Students have moved beyond the little electronic translators often cursed by their teachers! While there are plenty of free internet dictionaries available, full-scale e-dictionaries (available in CD-Rom, network and app versions) offer a range of additional features that can help EAP students develop their range and control of vocabulary and grammar, and improve in particular their academic writing. These include for example: word search features with filters for part of speech, frequency and topic; pronunciation search, enabling students to better understand sound/spelling relationships; much more manageable information on collocation; interactivity between different components of the dictionary and with other applications such as webpages. However, as for print dictionaries, EAP students need training in order for them to understand and exploit their full potential, and this presentation focuses on techniques and tasks to train students to use e-dictionaries effectively. The different features of 4 major e-dictionaries (from Longman, Macmillan, OUP and CUP) are compared with respect to the extent to which they meet the needs of EAP students - the presenter has no links with any of these publishers!