

EAP Writing: Reflections on Divergent Perceptions and Expectations among Tutors and Students

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An atomistic and skills-based pedagogical tradition with a general focus on topic sentences, prescribed paragraph structures and rhetorical units has been seen in various quarters to dominate the instruction of English academic writing to L2 speakers in many English medium tertiary environments. While it would appear that students are for the most part acculturated to these codings and classifications, our student feedback provides evidence that initially the learners' own conceptualisation of written academic discourse actually lies closer to the linguistically complex and socially constituted understanding that is now firmly established in the literature. We suggest that such divergent perceptions may construct unnecessary in-between spaces of conflicting voices and thus contribute to the struggle of second language writers as they come to terms with the academic writing practices of their target disciplines. In addition, referring to social anthropological research, we explore how the perpetuation of an atomistic and skills-based pedagogy in the teaching of writing in the L2 tertiary environment may in fact be inherently linked to visions of professionalism.