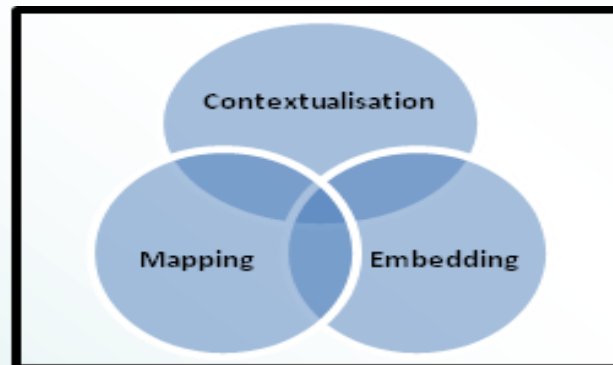

**Not just some random English class:
raising the profile of in-sessional provision
through the CEM model**



Olwyn Alexander
Diane Sloan and Elizabeth Porter

Overview of the session

Aim: to show how the CEM Model can support a systematic approach to the introduction and evaluation of in-sessional provision

- Rationale – the taught master’s programme in Higher Education
- Type of degree and aims – enhancing graduate attributes
- Stakeholders – managers, lecturers, students and EAP staff
- Strategic framework – the CEM model
- Action research at School of Management and Languages, Heriot-Watt
- Syllabus for language and study support classes
- Degree of contextualisation, embedding and mapping
- Evaluation of first year in terms of C E M
- Issues arising and key changes implemented in years 1 and 2
- Conclusion

Students on taught masters programmes

- Postgraduate numbers, taught master's programmes, growing rapidly
- Fastest growth – overseas postgraduates
 - increasing by 14% in 2008/09 and 12% in 2009/10.

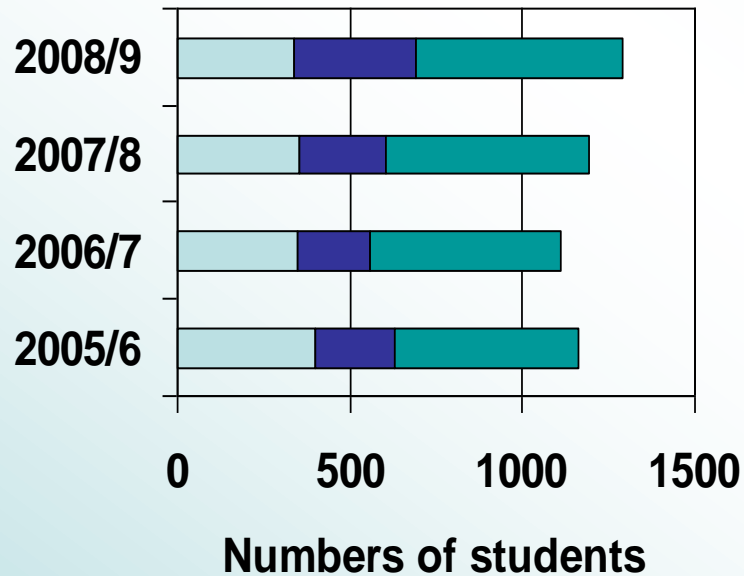
Year	Postgraduates	Overseas postgraduates (F/T)
1969	39,852	n/a
1979	100,000	n/a
1999	314,562	88,778
2009	536,815	117,920
2010	578,705	132,475

Deem and Lucas (2006) and Higher Education Student Enrolments, retrieved 17.03.11 from <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/>

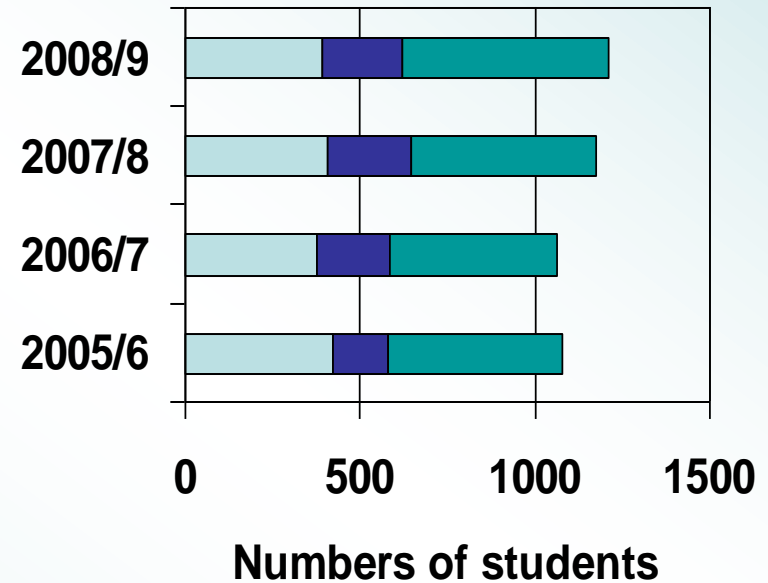
The picture at Heriot-Watt University



Postgraduate taught course



Postgraduate research



Taught Master's Programmes

- Taught Master's programmes, typically one year, can be
 - academic: a staging post between an first degree and PhD
 - vocational, e.g. *Translation and Interpreting, Strategic Project Management, Logistics and Supply Chain Management*
- Vocational
 - application of theory to professional practice for continuing professional development
 - usually stand-alone not following first degree
 - consist of assessed core subjects (67%) + dissertation (33%)
- Dissertation = research component
 - essential – distinguishes these degrees from other qualifications, e.g. diploma
 - viewed as means of enhancing graduate attributes

Enhancing graduate attributes

Graduate attributes are 'the skills, knowledge and abilities of university graduates, beyond disciplinary content knowledge, which are applicable to a range of contexts'. Barrie (2004: 262)

Research component of taught masters develops:

- a sense of 'research-mindedness' enabling a wider more analytical perspective on individual practice
- ability to identify problems, formulate questions and interpret complex data to seek answers
- ability to derive meaning from complexity and make informed judgments on the basis of evidence
- openness to learning and positive orientation to new opportunities, ideas and ways of thinking
- tolerance of ambiguity and unfamiliarity.

Stakeholders – University management

- Compete for international students
 - make up the shortfall in funding
- Also aspirational – HWU mission statement
 - renowned for its leadership on critical **global** issues
 - Scotland’s most **international** university
 - aims to produce the next generation of leaders and thinkers who **make a difference in the world**
- Student surveys, retention statistics and league tables
 - need to ensure student success



Stakeholders – subject lecturers

Logistics lecturer, 2009

- *On a 12 month course the pressure starts on day 1 and just gets worse.
Competency in English is critical for student success but is not a critical part of the assessment process.*
- *The expectation and experience from industry and universities does not seem to match the ability of students.*

Built Environment lecturer, 2010

- *Students pass an English test to get on the course but don't display that competence when they get here.*
- *Our role is not to teach them the basic skills but to enhance these.*
- *We provide support but students don't see it connected across the programme.*
- *We focus on what we teach individually and we don't ask students what their experience is like.*

Stakeholders – Students

- Students – variety of disciplines and backgrounds
 - relevant work experience usually required
 - possibly experience of higher education not recent
 - may come straight from variety of first degrees
 - may come from culturally different education system
 - may not have relevant postgraduate scholarship skills in place
- Students' motivations for studying taught master's degrees
 - tend to be extrinsic: improve career prospects
 - rather than intrinsic: grow as person / pursue research career

Stakeholders – Students

- Intrinsic motivation – more likely to value research & scholarship



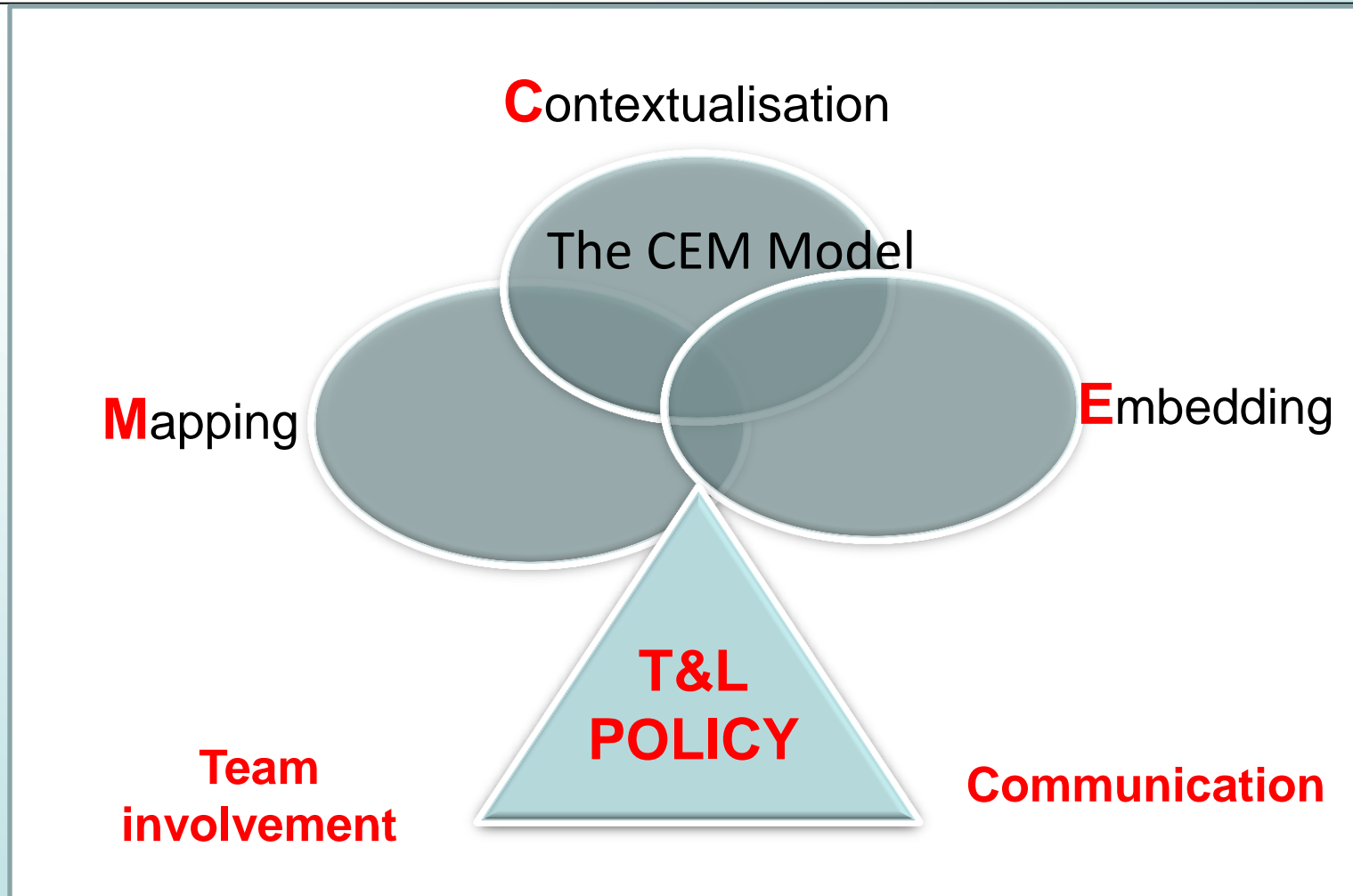
- Extrinsic motivation – tend to see research & scholarship as intrusion

Deem and Lucas (2006); Breen and Lindsay (1999)

Stakeholders – EAP staff – enhancing scholarship

- EAP staff can bring the scholarship of teaching and learning together with a critical perspective towards discipline practices.
- EAP approach to learning and teaching is
 - experiential: learning by working through a process
 - task-based: consisting of purposeful activities which prioritise meaning and outcomes
 - text-based: focusing on genres required for communication of outcomes
 - autonomous: relying on self and peers to take responsibility for processes and tasks
 - reflective: being aware of processes and tasks
 - critical: evaluating effectiveness of processes and tasks
- Scholarship classes work best if there is a partnership between EAP staff and the programme team for the master's degrees.

Strategic Framework – The CEM Model



Strategic Framework – The CEM Model

- Developed at Newcastle Business School – 3 lenses:
- **contextualization** – the degree to which the content of scholarship classes mirrors the content of degree modules
- **embedding** – the degree to which the scholarship classes and the EAP staff are part of the programme structure and team
- **mapping** – the degree to which the scholarship classes provide timely support for coursework on the degrees

Piloting and evaluating scholarship classes

- In semester 1, 2009 School of Management and Languages (SML) provided **language and study support classes** for 6 degree pathways
 - Translation and Interpreting
 - Strategic Project Management
 - Logistics and Supply Chain Management
 - International Fashion Marketing
 - Business Management
 - Accounting and Finance
- Funded by a 5% top-slice of overseas students' fees
- Evaluated through attendance figures, student questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with subject lecturers, EAP staff and students – with questions based on the CEM Model.

Syllabus



- introduction to features of academic style and text organisation – *general to specific* and *given to new*
- extracts from research papers >> synthesise definitions of emergent or contested terms in each field, e.g. *register and genre, strategy, third party logistics, meteor showers and heat waves*
- help to integrate ideas from reading into assignments and projects, with appropriate acknowledgement
- unpacking linguistic requirements of coursework tasks and analysing lecturer feedback on example submissions
- critical reading and critical evaluation against specific criteria
- linking theoretical frameworks to practical cases/examples/situations
- critiquing a research paper – through methodology
- analysing exam questions, model answers and lecturer comments

Teaching approach

- It's not just a random English class – students helped to **perform** academically and linguistically.
- Support scholarship skills by **modelling** them
 - analyse the writing style of academic articles to see what makes them difficult to read – heavily nominalised
 - provide model definition based on sources for students to critique
 - analyse the logical development of an argument in a critical review
 - explain the purpose of the rhetorical structure of academic research articles
 - make lecturers' hidden assumptions explicit – by decoding assignment instructions
 - Make lecturers' expectations explicit – by modelling student writing style – should be simpler than that of published research articles
- If lecturers' hidden assumptions and expectations are made explicit, students can more easily see the mismatch with their own.

Degree of contextualisation, embedding, mapping

Translating and interpreting studies – High

- EAP tutor in same department – many years experience of in-session EAP and awareness of scholarship
- Involved with degree over many years
- Understands linguistic foundation for degree – audited lectures
- Close academic relationship with programme leader and team
- Teaches some components of degree, e.g. derived text, research training, dissertation supervision
- Linked language and study support classes to specific module
- Coursework on module – annotated bibliography – directly related to input in language and study support classes

Degree of contextualisation, embedding, mapping

Strategic Project Planning – Medium

- EAP tutor in different department – many years experience of in-sessional EAP and awareness of scholarship
- Involved with degree over several years
- Audited lectures for two modules on the degree
- Close academic relationship with programme leader and one subject lecturer
- Teaches module on related degree, Research Skills for MSPME
- Linked language and study support classes to specific module

Degree of contextualisation, embedding, mapping

Logistics and Supply Chain Management – Medium

- EAP tutor in different department – many years experience of in-session EAP and awareness of scholarship
- Close academic relationship with one subject lecturer
- This lecturer is interested in scholarship of teaching and learning – contributed sessions to PG CAP and EAP Teacher Development
- Lecturer made available assignment tasks and relevant research papers prior to start of semester

Degree of contextualisation, embedding, mapping

International Fashion Marketing; Business Management; Accounting and Finance – Very Low

- EAP tutor in different department and has little experience of in-session EAP or awareness of scholarship
- No relationship with a subject lecturer
- Language and study support classes not linked to specific module
- Assignment tasks and relevant research papers not available or only available late in the semester – obtained from students

Evaluation – attendance figures – student half life

Degree	Attendance at first class	Time to drop to half	Attendance at final class	Comments
Translating & Interpreting	24	N/A	21	attendance high throughout the semester
Logistics	30	Week 5 15 students	8	reduction coincided with submission deadlines
Strategic Project Management	42	Week 4 16 students	5	reduction coincided with submission deadlines
Business Management	17	Week 3 2 students	0	attendance low after week 2
Accountancy	12	Week 2 7 students	1	only one regular attender
Fashion Marketing	7			attendance erratic from the beginning

Evaluation – student comments

- *For me it was helpful. I don't think that I would be – I would have been able to do this work, I have done until now without this support.*
- *Yeah, as it is not like a language class in that sense but it teaches you the structure and the text types and how to proceed when you write some bibliography or something like that. This is what it was very useful.*
- *The truth is that there isn't the adequate time to learn the right skills at the right time. The postgraduate courses have a lot of needs from the beginning of the semester, with many essays to hand in at the same time and therefore there is no time to practice.*

Evaluation – staff perceptions

Contextualisation

- *I find that the idea of asking for documents, assessment materials and so on to work with the students is great, frankly. I had no idea that the programme would be so focused or targeted, I had just a sort of vague notion that it would be an English language class.*
- *I do think that the shift towards subject specialism has really engaged the students... and [they] are much happier with the provision ... the communication is clearly key, to try and get the students to understand that this is not some random English class...*
- *I think even saying 'language,' anywhere in it, suggests that you aren't competent in the language*
- *Well I think it should be called 'scholarship' ... it's called English Language so the only students that go are ones that think they are struggling with English language... So it probably is that the branding has part to do with it as well.*

Evaluation – staff perceptions

Embedding

- *unless we can embed it [scholarship] in the teaching, the students don't integrate it and they see it as two different activities...*
- *So I would hope for next session this will all be embedded and we'll have certain things in place where the liaison links are set up more clearly as well because I do see the value of it.*
- *Also we found in the past, unless we incorporate it into some form of assessment ..., we don't either follow it up... or the students don't participate and so it sort of fell apart.*
- *I don't have team meetings... The only meeting that we have altogether are the examination boards. If there is a need for things I just speak to people individually.*
- *One of the other issues that we've got... is actually agreeing ... internally about what our approaches to things are as well... one lecturer sees it one way and another lecturer sees it another way.*

Evaluation – staff perceptions

Mapping

- *I had said to Olwyn ‘I will send over my assessments so you can do it,’ but I have to say I have forgotten to do that.*
- *Olwyn’s been asking for information from us all, all semester, but of course two of our modules are basically being developed – in less than ideal scenarios – where we’re writing as we go for some of them so it’s difficult to give her a month or two in advance in materials.*
- *Oh I think they [staff] all see it as a positive thing, but I think they all see it as some way down the list of importance when they’re trying to get their own stuff out there, they don’t see that necessarily this will always help their own stuff and there’s a pressure to – ‘I’ve got to get my stuff done first and this can be, this is a bolt-on thing,’ rather than something that’s integrated through it.*

Issues arising from year 1

Contextualisation

- The branding of the activity needs to change to reflect the focus on academic competence, i.e. scholarship, rather than language.

Embedding

- The existence of such a value-added activity represents a major marketing asset, but it has to be embedded within recruitment.
- Good relations and communication with subject lecturers are necessary but not sufficient to establish the status of the scholarship classes within each programme.
- The activity is recognised as important at School level through top-slice funding, but it needs to be embedded at programme level for students and lecturers to take it seriously.
- There is a need to integrate the model as part of academic team management through links to learning and teaching processes

Key changes for year 2

- Rebranding – not language and study support (descriptive) but enhancing scholarship (aspirational) – *get the grades you deserve*
- Lunchtime (with lunch) meeting called by EAP tutor/co-ordinator to present good practice and encourage greater buy-in from lecturers
- Presentation by EAP tutor/co-ordinator at Heriot-Watt Teaching & Learning conference to raise staff awareness
- Advertising to students and staff – designed flier in induction packs and presentation during induction week
- More experienced EAP tutors with background as a subject lecturer and/or willingness to embrace advanced level scholarship approach
- Better links with specific modules – access to texts and tasks and email contact between EAP tutors and some lecturers
- T&I Studies created parallel modules with and without scholarship >> students opted in to scholarship assessment

Issues arising from year 2

Contextualisation

- Teaching scholarship rather than language requires commitment that some English teachers are not prepared to make
- Teacher training with an apprenticeship model – time-consuming

Embedding

- Issues of status – even with good communication between subject lecturers and EAP staff, mixed messages go out to students.
- Classes often attended by the ‘worried well’ – students who really need the classes do not have time to attend

Mapping

- Students unaware that they need scholarship classes until feedback on first coursework assignment and exams returned in semester 2

Key changes proposed for year 3

Contextualisation

- tutors continue working towards building a bank of materials

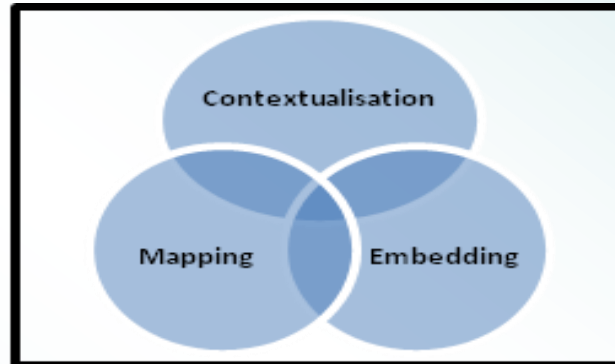
Embedding

- agreement to add formative assessment to support summative coursework for selected modules
- students opt in to assessment by attending scholarship class
- receive early feedback on language and scholarship skills

Mapping

- run classes only up to week 6 or 7 in both semesters
- offer targeted sessions once students begin research

Conclusion



- underpins design and delivery of scholarship programme
- offers a meta-language with which to talk to academic staff
- improves status of EAP staff in the eyes of academic staff
- enables systematic evaluation of programme
- enables targeted improvements

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