CAES9820
Academic English for Science Students

Centre for Applied English Studies
CAES9820 Academic English for Science Students

• English-in-the-Discipline (ED) course for 2nd-year Science students from all science disciplines

• Three components:
  – Popular science article (Written)
  – Spontaneous speaking (Spoken)
  – Independent language learning
## Learning Outcomes

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<th>Components</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
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<td><strong>Popular science article (Written)</strong></td>
<td>• identify and make use of the key characteristics of writing for a non-specialist audience, e.g. explaining complex ideas, stance, strength of claims, showing the credibility of the researcher;</td>
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<td><strong>Spontaneous speaking (Spoken)</strong></td>
<td>• discuss science and non-science topics spontaneously while demonstrating accuracy of grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, clarity and relevance to topic; and</td>
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<td><strong>Independent language learning</strong></td>
<td>• identify their own language learning needs, develop a plan to meet those needs, and reflect on their learning experience</td>
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Popular Science Article (‘Written’ + ‘Visual’ literacies)

**Aim:** Develop students’ ability to communicate their disciplinary concepts/knowledge to non-specialists

**Why?**
- As future scientists, students need to be able to communicate scientific concepts to the general public, funding body, university administrators, scientists from other disciplines, engineers, etc.

**How?**
- Students need to:
  - propose a PSA topic related to their intended major
  - read academic journal articles related to the proposed topic
  - ‘repackage’ the scientific concepts to the non-specialist readers using analogies, visuals/infographics and different rhetorical skills
Popular Science Article
(‘Written’ + ‘Visual’ literacies)

**End of Week 3**
Students submit their PSA Topic Proposal and an annotated bibliography of 2 sources (15%)

**Reading Week**
Students submit a partial draft of their PSA (0%)

**Week 9**
Writing Clinic - Students meet with the teacher and discuss the partial draft

**End of Week 12**
Students submit the final PSA (40%)

**Lesson Focus:**
- Introduction to PSA
- Select a PSA Topic
- Feedback on PSA Topic

**Lesson Focus:**
- Features of PSA
- Metaphor and analogies
- Structure of PSA
- Skills for explaining science in PSA

**Lesson Focus:**
- Analysing A-grade PSA samples
- Peer feedback on partial draft
PSA Assessment Criteria

• Organisation (30%)
• Content/Audience awareness (30%)
• Language (30%)
• Use of sources (10%)

Note: Graphics/visuals are optional. Markers may give credit in the Content/Audience awareness category if the graphics/visuals effectively explain the science or other key concepts and/or enhance the overall impact of the PSA.
Publishing Outstanding PSAs

An online journal - HKU Scientist

• An example of outstanding PSA with the use of self-created visuals