



Critical EAP



Critical Thinking



Criticality in Disciplines



Criticality Reflections



SYMPOSIUM

University of Leeds

sponsored by

LEEDS CENTRE FOR *excellence*
IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

and

LEEDS INSTITUTE *for*
TEACHING EXCELLENCE

QUESTIONING CRITICALITY

What is Criticality in Higher Education?

19 DECEMBER 2019

Venue

Research Room 1
13th Floor
Edward Boyle Library
University of Leeds
LS2 9JT

PROGRAMME

09:15 - 09:45

Registration

09:45 - 10:00

Welcome

10:00 - 12:30

Presentation of Papers, Panel and Q&A

Dr Jonathan Leader, University of Southampton

SCOPE for Criticality in HE: The Critical Thinker as Curator

Paul Makin, University of Manchester

The Art of Looking

Dr Lata Narayanaswamy, University of Leeds

Why it is time to turn the decolonial lens onto the institutional structures of Higher Education

Dr Lucy Watson, University of Southampton

Less 'in transit', more 'in-situ': A Critical EAP Approach

12:30

Lunch

13:30 - 14:30

Parallel Papers

Room one

**Louise Greener, Diana Scott, Andy McKay, Alex Gooch
Durham University**

Aristotle's Red But: Introducing a New Approach to Argument and Criticality on a Pre-Sessional EAP Course

Deak Kirkham, University of Leeds

A reflexive approach to critical thinking in EAP delivery

Room two

Antonio Martinez-Arboleda, University of Leeds

Critical Pedagogy for Transformative Criticality in Higher Education

Damian Fitzpatrick, University of the Arts London

Making Visible the Invisible: Criticality in Student Academic Writing

14:30 - 15:00

Coffee/Tea

15:00 - 16:00

Lightning Talks

Professor David Webster, SOAS, University of London

Don't Cut yourself on all that edge: Contrarian Scepticism as pro-level passive-aggressive performance

Jiani Liu, University of Leeds

Critical Thinking MOOC

Kashmir Kaur, University of Leeds

Embedding 'criticality' as a blended approach in mainstream study to promote student success

Dr Stephen Danczak, Monash University, Australia

Adapting critical research into critical teaching

Natilly Macartney, University of Klagenfurt, Austria

Structured Debating: A Tool to Develop English Students' Criticality in Austria

Amelia Harker, University of Edinburgh

The Critical Review: concept, context and purpose

Dr Hieu Kieu, Independent

Language inferiority and critical thinking for non-native English-speaking students: speaking what and thinking how

16:00

Discussion of themes arising from papers in groups

16:45

Way forward

17:00

Close

P A P E R S

10:00 - 12:30

**Dr Jonathan W. Leader
(SFHEA)
Senior Teaching Fellow
Programme Lead:
Pre-Masters
University of Southampton**
J.W.Leader@soton.ac.uk

Senior Teaching Fellow at Southampton University, Jonathan leads the Pre-Masters programme in the Academic Centre for International Students (ACIS). He designed and convenes the Critical and Contextual Thinking core module. Jonathan is a senior Fellow of Advance HE (SFHEA) and researches on the life and writings of Hannah Arendt.

SCOPE for Criticality in HE: The Critical Thinker as Curator

This presentation will begin by proposing that criticality in HE requires that one be, in effect, a curator of content, this because criticality, demands: first, the Selection (S) of appropriate and relevant perspectives to be put on display; secondly, Care (C) for those perspectives, the demonstration of equal respect for them through accurate and fair presentation; and thirdly, an eye for Organisation (O), the exhibiting of alternative perspectives in such ways as to highlight actual or potential connections and conflicts.

Biggs and Collis' 1982 seminal study, Evaluating the Quality of Learning, is pertinent here because of the importance the authors attach to guiding students towards building ever more structured 'relational' responses in their assignments. In the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, relational responses typically refer not only to conflicting ideas but often to the complex and fascinating academic relationships between competing theorists, the generators of ideas, as well as to similar relationships between their commentators and interpreters. These various significant others, who inform and support our lines of reasoning, either agree with each other (converge) or they disagree or, more interestingly, they partially agree (diverge).

What I hope to demonstrate, offering some suggestions for classroom teaching, is that greater attentiveness to the means by which academic relationships can be expressed might help students not only to improve the quality of their understandings but also to articulate with more confidence their own Positions (P) through refined Evaluations (E) of those already contributing to ongoing conversations.

Paul Makin
Language Tutor
University of Manchester
paul.makin@manchester.ac.uk

As well as being an experienced EAP tutor at the University of Manchester, Paul has a background in art with a profound interest in art making. Working across both fields has allowed him to draw parallels and help enrich EAP students' understanding of academic criticality.

The Art of Looking

An endemic problem with art is that it is too often shrouded in the misleading clichéd, abstract, and figurative language of criticism. However, there is nothing fancy about art and any common misconceptions placed around it become barriers to learning. Once barriers are removed genuine exploration can take place to trigger questioning and imagination without restraint, and allow students to make associations and comparisons to their chosen field.

With very much a practical approach, I will present a variety of paintings each with a particular focus. I attach each painting to its contemporary history; the inventions, discoveries, world events, and social change of the period. We also look at technique, content, composition, and symbols with a view to demonstrating how skills of observation, interpretation, and evaluation can develop student critical thinking.

In this paper, I intend to shed light upon critical inquiry from a different perspective and help better inform the audience about the role art and visual culture can play in EAP.

Dr Lata Narayanaswamy
Lecturer in International
Development Politics and
International Studies
(POLIS)
University of Leeds
L.Narayanaswamy@leeds.ac.uk

Since 2001 Dr Narayanaswamy has worked as a research practitioner, consultant and most recently lecturer in international development. Her research focuses on how power imbalances in knowledge systems underpin the work of feminist/intersectional movements and organisations working at the interface of inclusion and exclusion in developing country contexts.

Why it is time to turn the decolonial lens onto the institutional structures of Higher Education

Through the ‘colonial encounter’, existing power relations and imbalances have been shaped in ways that are geographically and temporally uneven yet politically enduring. Unsettling these tendencies through a more critical reflection on how the colonial encounter underpins these perceptions is key to the application of the ‘decolonial’ lens. Calls to ‘decolonise’ the curriculum are getting louder, and rightly so. Whilst this is a start, it does not, in my view, go far enough. There is a need, I would argue, for us to turn the decolonial lens onto the institutional structures and processes that shape the function and delivery of research and teaching in Higher Education (HE).

Dr Lucy Watson
Programme Leader for the
International Foundation
Year
University of Southampton
Lucy.Watson@soton.ac.uk

Dr Lucy Watson is Programme Leader for the International Foundation Year at the University of Southampton. She designs and teaches cultural studies and creative arts modules with an emphasis on social justice and contemporary global issues. Her research interests are critical pedagogy, place-based education, global citizenship and intercultural exchange.

Less 'in transit', more 'in-situ': A Critical EAP Approach

EAP as often considered a 'means to an end' (Gillett, 2011). Preparatory courses are 'pathway' programmes, evoking images of a journey with a specific destination in mind. Students in EAP classrooms are imagined as temporary visitors, 'in transit' rather than 'in situ'. This paper will argue that such framing limits the potential for engaged pedagogy and personal development for both teachers and students. Drawing on critical pedagogy (Freire, Giroux) and critical EAP (Benesch) and teaching methods derived from 'place-based learning' (Sobel, 2004), I will suggest that EAP education can be reimagined as the 'practice of freedom' (hooks, 1994). If practitioners openly acknowledge the political dimensions of EAP in the neoliberal university and the problematic ways in which international students are positioned, they can build self-awareness into the curricula. By encouraging students to analyse their own identities, privilege and position and turn their criticality on to their learning environment, the hope is that they will have more confidence to participate in and shape the space they occupy. Instead of viewing preparatory courses as 'pathways' then, this paper highlights the potential of exploring 'desire lines', the 'paths and tracks made [...] by the wishes and feet of walkers [...] free will ways' (MacFarlane, 2018).

PARALLEL PAPERS

13:30 - 14:30

Room one

Louise Greener, Head of Pre-sessional Programmes
louise.greener@durham.ac.uk
Diana Scott, Deputy Head of Pre-sessional Programmes
d.c.scott@durham.ac.uk
Andy McKay, Co-ordinator
andrew.mckay@durham.ac.uk
Alex Gooch, Former Co-ordinator
Durham University
alexander.gooch@durham.ac.uk

The presenters work on Durham University's Pre-sessional programmes. Louise Greener is Head of the programme, Diana Scott is Deputy Head, Andy McKay is Co-ordinator and Alex Gooch is a former Co-ordinator and regular contributor to the course. All four have been heavily involved in curriculum development and operational management.

Aristotle's Red But: Introducing a New Approach to Argument and Criticality on a Pre-Sessional EAP Course

Teaching criticality and argumentation is an essential component of pre-sessional EAP courses. For several years, the University of Durham's pre-sessional programme used a teaching model based on the classical rhetorical structure of argument, counter argument and refutation. However, whilst this provided students with a relatively accessible model for a short discursive essay, it failed to equip them with the tools to produce the longer more complex texts expected by departments. The argument/ counter/ refutation model has been criticised for its reduction of argumentation to a simplified binary structure (Andrews, 2009), and this was our experience at Durham, with students using the model as an essay-planning template, resulting in a plethora of five paragraph essays with simple undeveloped arguments. In response, we introduced a new approach to teaching criticality and argumentation incorporating features of formal logic and philosophical debate. The implementation of this approach proved to be a substantial task, requiring a rewriting and reorganisation of our curriculum and retraining of over sixty temporary pre-sessional tutors, many of whom were returners familiar with our old approach, and some who were resistant to change. This paper will elaborate on the issues that impelled us to change our approach. It also provides an overview of the new materials we produced, and describes the challenges of training staff to implement radical changes to our curriculum.

Deak Kirkham
Lecturer in EAP
University of Leeds
d.e.a.kirkham@leeds.ac.uk

Deak Kirkham writes about the linguistics-language pedagogy interface specifically pedagogies of complex grammatical constructions and the (ir)relevance of linguistic constructs for language pedagogy. He also studies (and occasionally participates in) classroom-complementary learning arenas both from an sociocultural identity-and-interaction perspective and from an expert and/or autonomous language learner perspective.

A reflexive approach to critical thinking in EAP delivery

Notions of criticality/ critical thinking (CT) have been subject to multiple conceptualisations (de Bono 1985, 2008; Walters 1994); its relationship to, and place/ operationalisation within, the EAP curriculum is similarly contested (e.g. Salvi 2017). At the risk of over-simplification, EAP may find itself in a locus of tension with respect to the notion of CT. As a service industry with global reach, EAP must endeavour to appeal to students from across the world. As such, it may, quite rationally, refrain from engagement with certain controversial areas, for example the PARSNIP acronym of AusELT (2017), where CT can be employed. Conversely, as preparation for discipline-specific Anglophone higher education study, EAP encounters challenging and controversial intellectual questions wherein it makes explicit and central use of CT. In this discipline-specific domain, however, the EAP tutor may not feel qualified to engage fully in CT.

In an attempt to avoid the potential pitfalls of the two CT contexts above, and drawing on a two-part reflexive ideology, firstly the loop input pedagogy of Woodward (1988, 2003) and secondly the pedagogical tradition of reflective thinking (Kolb 1984), this presentation will discuss three CT techniques that may be deployed at both classroom and course levels and which provide a framework for operationalising criticality. The proposals centre on inviting and promoting critical engagement with the matter and manner of the classroom and course roll-out themselves and in so doing draw on all CT skills and behaviours while avoiding the potential pitfalls of other potential source domains of criticality.

Room two

Antonio Martinez-Arboleda
Principal Teaching Fellow
in Spanish
Co-director for the
Centre of Research in
Digital Education
University of Leeds
a.martinez-arboleda@leeds.ac.uk

Educated as a lawyer, Antonio started his university career in 1998 teaching Spanish Language. His portfolio of subjects grew over the years, as the focus of his scholarship evolved: from Autonomous Learning and Employability into Oral History, Critical Pedagogy and Digital Education. He is a poet, editor and cultural activist.

Critical Pedagogy for Transformative Criticality in Higher Education

Criticality in Higher Education is conceived as an intellectual attribute of the product of crafted thinking, as expressed orally or in writing. The honing of critical thinking skills is a key part of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences curricula in HE. We expect students (rightly) to digest theories and narratives, to research, dissect and contrast academic arguments, and to orchestrate their own “critical” and intertextual responses to a given essay question in order to support, embody and demonstrate their learning.

Intellectually stimulating and formative as this may be, the essay/article, as the touchstone genre through which we express critical knowledge, is loaded with invisible assumptions around the role of academia in society. Inevitably, the genre defines and limits the scope and transformative nature of the criticality that students can aspire to experience and exercise. A greater variety of assessment formats is predicated as desirable, but not enough thought has been given to the role that student knowledge production can play in revitalising HE as a force for change in a society afflicted by fake news and an aggressive aversion to expertise.

This paper is a constructive critique of core aspects of academia and academic practice and an exploration of the potential for a holistic and socially-engaged criticality. Mindful of the specific obstacles faced by practitioners, it offers fully functional examples of critical pedagogy initiatives, including the use of interviews and oral history in student research and student production of digital artefacts (Open Educational Resources) for public dissemination such as podcasts.

Damian Fitzpatrick
EAP Tutor
University of the Arts
London
d.fitzpatrick@arts.ac.uk

Damian Fitzpatrick is currently working as an EAP tutor in the Language Centre at UAL where he teaches on design management and science programmes. He received his EdD from the University of Exeter on the topic of how language teachers make sense of language policy changes.

Making Visible the Invisible: Criticality in Student Academic Writing

Despite being regularly asked to ‘be critical’ in their academic writing understanding how to do this can be both difficult and frustrating for students as they often fail to see what this construct does and indeed what it actually looks like. Therefore, in an attempt to make ‘the invisible more visible’ (Lillis, et al., 2015), this paper reports on a study carried out with a group of students and their course teacher from a scientific discipline on the topic of criticality in their academic writing. Drawing on data from a combination of interviews, stimulated recalls and text analysis that attempt to explore the ‘lived experience of teaching and learning from both student and tutor perspectives’ (Ivanič & Lea, 2006 p. 7), this paper will briefly highlight some of the challenges involved with criticality that emerged from both the teacher’s and students’ perspectives. These include a lack of understanding of what it means to be critical within the discipline, being overly superficial and unable to challenge existing knowledge. The second part of the paper will look at how this data has been used to inform a set a materials that help students uncover this hidden construct of criticality.

LIGHTNING TALKS

15:00 - 16:00

Professor David Webster
Director of the Centre for
Innovation in Learning &
Teaching
SOAS, University of London
dw24@soas.ac.uk

I am a philosophy and religious studies academic who got a bit lost - and have now found myself at SOAS as Director of the Centre for Innovation in Learning & Teaching. I have spent 25 years teaching, and now work with academic colleagues on their pedagogical work, as well as overseeing a large Foundation Year programme. I am interested in how we frame the nature of learning, and the ways academic content and delivery are connected.

Don't Cut yourself on all that edge: Contrarian Scepticism as pro-level passive-aggressive performance

We often laud critical thinking, seeing a lack of it as socially dangerous, and desperately argue for students to 'question more'. This seems like an obvious truth. It is generally accepted as such with philosophy: that this is a discipline based on searching questions. Socratic dialogues set this tone- and we are off. But to where? This lightning presentation wants to reframe Socratic and other questioning methods as futile at best. From climate-change deniers, alternative facts and the distrust of experts, to 'debate me' Reddit edge-lords, we need to up our game in a more sophisticated articulation of criticality that doesn't contribute to these progress/species-endangering behaviours.

Jiani Liu
Learning Advisor
Skills@Library
University of Leeds
j.h.liu@leeds.ac.uk

Jiani is an Advisor and a Fellow of HEA from Skills@Library, University of Leeds. She has been helping students to make sense of HE, and develop their academic and information skills for over five years. Her recent projects include co-creating a MOOC on critical thinking and leading the creation of a new Step Up to Masters online transition resource for taught postgraduate students at the University of Leeds.

Critical Thinking MOOC

In 2018, Skills@Library service at the University of Leeds developed a 2-week FutureLearn MOOC, **Critical Thinking at University: An Introduction**. The intention of the course is to give students a common understanding of what thinking critically means at a university level, and to offer practical strategies to help them develop relevant skills.

This lightning talk will discuss how our use of this non-traditional teaching tool can support successful student transition to university study, and will consider how an early introduction to the significance and expectations of critical thinking at university can better prepare students to face the potential challenges of "academic socialisation" (Wette and Furneaux, 2018, p.187).

Kashmir Kaur
Lecturer in English for
Academic Purposes
University of Leeds
k.kaur@leeds.ac.uk

Kashmir Kaur is a Lecturer in English for Academic Purposes at the University of Leeds where she teaches on engineering, education and pre-sessional programmes and a Language in Context Sustainability module. Her scholarship interests intersect student identity, engagement and internationalisation including aspects such as Critical EAP, criticality in higher education, audio formative feedback and self-directed learning.

Embedding 'criticality' as a blended approach in mainstream study to promote student success

'Criticality', an opaque concept which does not necessarily have a definitive definition, is a primary requirement for success in academic disciplines. However, it is a primary challenge that students from educational, cultural and linguistic diverse backgrounds and traditions wrestle with during their studies. Their approach to and understanding of 'criticality', as observation and research (Egege and Kutieleh, 2004; HEA, 2014) has shown, can adversely impact academic performance.

This lightning talk will outline how the intervention of a stand-alone lecture/workshop introduced the MOOC 'Critical Thinking at University: An Introduction' (designed by colleagues in Skills@Library and the Digital Education Service) as a blended tool in two English for Academic Purposes pre-sessional postgraduate courses to encourage student voice. It investigates the impact it has had (or not) on the students' understanding, application and demonstration of 'criticality' in their 'linguistic and academic discourse socialisation' (Wette and Furneaux, 2018, p.187).

Dr Stephen Danczak
Learning Skills Advisor
(Engineering and
Information Technology)
Monash University, Australia
stephen.danczak@monash.edu

Stephen has been teaching chemistry and science communication at institutions across Melbourne for several years. During his PhD under the supervision of Chris Thompson and Tina Overton, he studied chemistry student, educator and employer perspectives on critical thinking and how to measure critical thinking skills within a chemistry context.

Adapting critical research into critical teaching

Qualitative analysis of undergraduate chemistry students', educators' and employers' definition of critical thinking was collected via questionnaire. These groups described critical thinking using themes of 'analysis', 'problem solving', 'evaluation', 'objectivity', and 'innovation'. These findings informed the development of a chemistry critical thinking test intended to measure student critical thinking independent of prior chemistry knowledge. Validity studies of the test revealed its suitability as a teaching tool focusing on student discourse. Questions from this test are currently being adapted to assist in teaching postgraduate engineering students in a tutorial environment as part of a professional practice unit.

Natilly Macartney
Senior Lecturer, English
Language Programme
Co-ordinator
Department of English and
American Studies
University of Klagenfurt,
Austria
natilly.macartney@aau.at

Natilly is a Senior Lecturer in the English Department at the University of Klagenfurt, Austria. In 2016, she completed an MPhil in Research in Second Language Education at the University of Cambridge. Her main research interests include English for academic purposes and English as an additional language.

Structured Debating: A Tool to Develop English Students' Criticality in Austria

This case study documents how in Austria, where debating is not a formal part of secondary education, structured debates are being utilised as a tool in the EAP classroom to develop undergraduate English students' criticality.

Structured debates stimulate rich dialogues that require participants to be curious and informed about topics, as well as consider opposing points of view; attributes fundamental to Davies and Barnett's critical thinking dispositions (2015, p.13). Yet debates may have the potential to cultivate more than cognitive skills. If students debate topics close to their own realities, they may develop an increased sense of agency extending beyond the classroom.

Amelia Harker
English Language
Education Tutor
University of Edinburgh
Amelia.harker@ed.ac.uk

Amelia Harker is an English Language Education Tutor at the University of Edinburgh where she teaches English for Academic Purposes, Intercultural Communication and Teacher Education. Her research interests, as a sociologist of education and teaching practitioner, focus on Internationalisation, Student Voice, Critical Pedagogy and Criticality in higher education and beyond.

The Critical Review: concept, context and purpose

The purpose of the critical review is both micro and macro. The micro processes involved develop learners' higher order thinking skills and methodological awareness and can assist in moving beyond passive acceptance of knowledge claims towards active engagement with them. On the macro scale the critical review can enable the advancement of the academic field by identifying areas which require revision or further development. It is hoped that that by guiding students to understand the reasons for and skills involved in writing a critical review and the context in which the review is based will help them navigate institutional expectations.

Dr Hieu Kieu
Independent
hieukieuthi@gmail.com

Dr Hieu Kieu finished her PhD at the University of Huddersfield on the topic of globalisation and reforming higher education in Vietnam. She is interested in researching the language inferiority of international students based on her recent experience as an EAP tutor in various institutions in the UK.

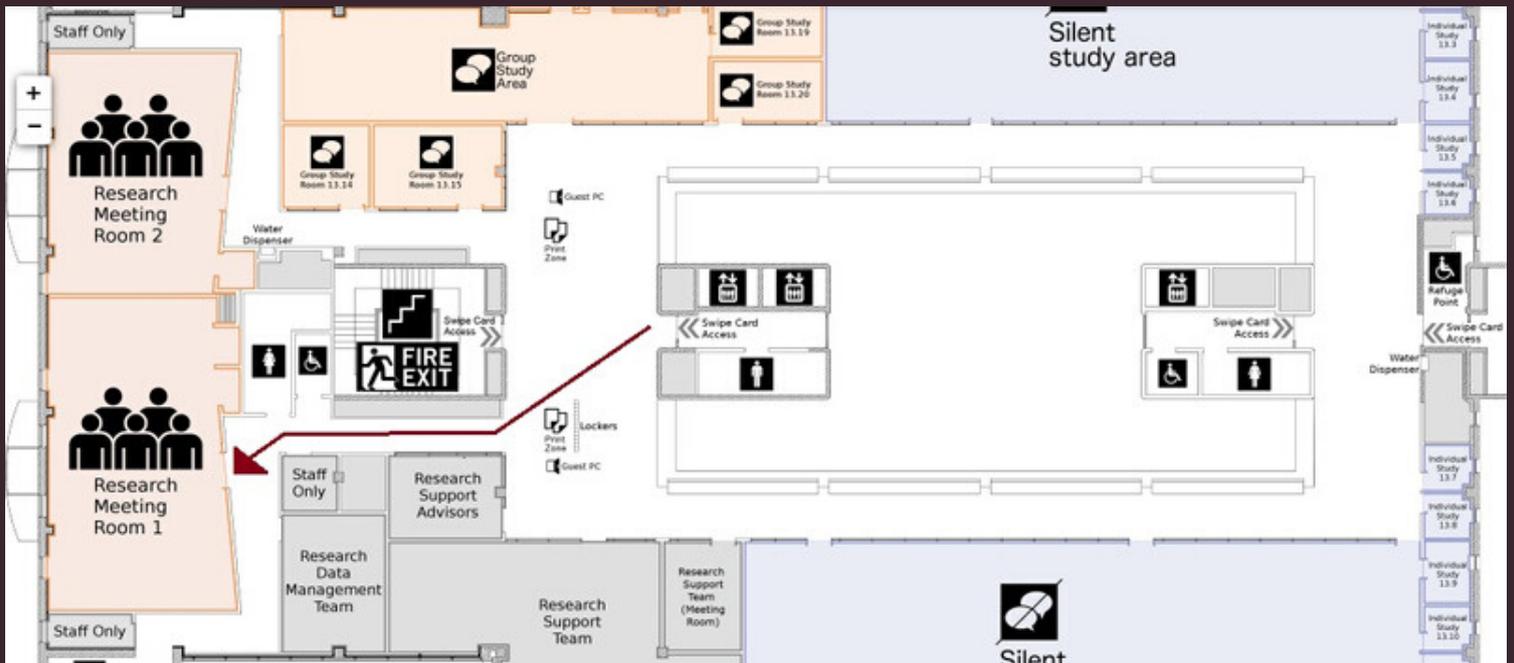
Language inferiority and critical thinking for non-native English-speaking students: speaking what and thinking how

Often, first-time international students, particularly students from non-native English-speaking countries are somehow struggling with familiarising themselves with different academic conventions including critical thinking. Critical thinking is usually brought out as one of the key requirements for the academic success. However, before thinking critically, these students might struggle with their own concept of language inferiority: worrying that they are not good enough (competent shame), questioning what others will think (social shame) and devaluing themselves as learners (existential shame). Coming to the UK, these international students carry their own Englishscapes adding to the diversity of global Englishes where the answer to the question “Who does English belong to?” is everyone globally. Using Markus and Nurius’s (1986) theory of possible selves, Shajahan’s (2019) discussion of shame and Appadurai’s (2004) capacity to aspire, this talk wants to link English language inferiority with students’ capacity to think critically and suggest possible implications for critical thinking in EAP teaching and academic skills support.

LOCATION

<https://www.leeds.ac.uk/campusmap>

- **Research Meeting Room 1 is on Level 13.**
- **Enter through the main Entrance of the Edward Boyle Library.**
- **Visitors - collect entry cards from Edward Boyle library reception.**
- **Leeds University colleagues - bring your staff ID cards.**
- **Go through the barriers and either take the lift or stairs.**
- **Come out of the lift and turn right through the door.**
- **You will need to scan your entry/ staff ID card to get access to the corridor.**
- **Take the corridor straight ahead to the left side.**
- **Research Meeting Room 1 is at the bottom of the corridor.**





Critical EAP



Critical Thinking



Criticality in Disciplines



Criticality Reflections



University of Leeds
Criticality Symposium
CriticalitySymp@leeds.ac.uk