# **BAAL Corpus Linguistics SIG 14th January 2021 – Presentation abstract**

# **Core Corpus Skills for Discipline-specific Vocabulary teaching**

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Today’s event will show that corpus linguistics training can enable EAP teachers to prepare hands-off or hands-on concordancing activities and bring discovery-based learning to their classroom. In this talk, I will show how ESAP teachers, given appropriate training, can develop domain-salient vocabulary lists for their students, and in doing so gain insights into the discourse of the discipline they are supporting.

Vocabulary lists, such as the AWL, play a prominent role in EAP. It is, after all, largely vocabulary which distinguishes academic English from the general register, and one variety of ESAP from another. In addition to the AWL, other general academic wordlists have been compiled (e.g. NAWL, AVL), as well as academic wordlists for medicine, engineering and many other domains. The wordlists have typically been compiled using corpus linguistics approaches, and may be considered both authentic and representative of the domain and register.

A potential improvement on the use of the above resources would be to develop wordlists based on specific content modules delivered to the learners at their institution. In this study, the teacher used Sketch Engine to create DIY corpora based on the learners’ Accounting & Finance Moodle module content. This included lecture slides and seminar handouts, which contain much terminology salient to the domain. Sketch Engine was then used to generate wordlists from the DIY corpora, and these were presented to learners. The learners then used the wordlists to populate a personal vocabulary portfolio, in which they were encouraged to include definitions, collocational information and example sentences.

The process of developing the portfolio, as well as subsequent consultation of the product, helped EAP learners to acquire vocabulary which was highly salient to their course of study in a meaningful way; in terms of the BALEAP Competency Framework, I will link the approach with the Academic Practice (Disciplinary Differences) statement, given its focus on discipline-specific vocabulary, as well as the EAP Students (Student autonomy) statement, which is probably key to most corpus work in EAP. It is hoped that the presentation will serve to inspire Can-Do statement proposals on Academic Disciplines (particularly discipline-specific terminology, collocation, and formulaic language), Student Learning (especially fostering student autonomy through the use of new technology), and Teaching practice (employing a range of learning technology resources in class and online to increase accessibility and enhance learning).