



# IScP Framework Empowering EAP Teachers as EMI Faculty Developers: Discourse Analysis

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## Abstract

When universities adopt English as the language of instruction, the challenges that follow are not only about whether instructors and students speak the language fluently. Equally important are the ways teachers approach their pedagogy, the support they receive from their institutions, and the professional development opportunities available to them. This paper looks at how English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instructors can be prepared to take on a new role, not just as language teachers, but as EMI faculty developers. Using a framework based on Inclusive Student-Centred Pedagogies (IScP), the study discusses how these professionals use their background in academic literacy and subject-specific communication to support colleagues through collaborative practices like peer observation, syllabus redesign, and co-planning of lessons. The research draws on a focus group of EAP instructors who joined an IScP programme, analysing their reflections through both thematic and discourse analysis. The results show that these instructors promoted a more balanced and student-oriented vision of EMI, one that moves past language concerns alone. They emphasized inclusive and participatory teaching strategies that help students from different backgrounds feel supported and capable of succeeding.

**Keywords:** Inclusive student-centred pedagogies; EMI; EAP; Faculty development; Discourse analysis



## Introduction

English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) is becoming more common in universities outside English-speaking countries (Unangst et al., 2022). However, this shift brings several challenges. While many point to faculty members' limited English proficiency as a key issue (Galloway & Rose, 2021; Uehara & Kojima, 2021), recent research shows that other factors are equally critical. These include teachers' readiness to use effective teaching methods (Katsampoxaki-Hodgetts et al., 2023) and the support they receive from their institutions (Dang et al., 2021; Sahan, Rose & Macaro, 2021).

In this context, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) professionals are often expected to support EMI implementation. Yet, they may not feel prepared for this role, especially when it comes to adapting their teaching to meet the needs of diverse student groups (Yang et al., 2019; Pun & Macaro, 2019). This paper looks at how EAP instructors can be trained to take on the role of EMI faculty developers by following the Inclusive Student-Centred Pedagogies (IScP) framework. This framework is based on the 'Learning by Design' approach developed in multiliteracies pedagogy (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Katsampoxaki-Hodgetts, 2024).

A key focus of the study is how tools like peer observation, reflection, and lesson redesign can help teachers grow professionally and create more inclusive curricula. The goal is to understand how participating in the IScP training influences EAP instructors' views on inclusive teaching and whether it helps them develop as EMI academic developers. The main research question guiding this study is: *How does engagement with the IScP EMI Pedagogy Framework influence EAP practitioners' conceptualizations of inclusive pedagogical strategies and empower them as EMI academic developers?*

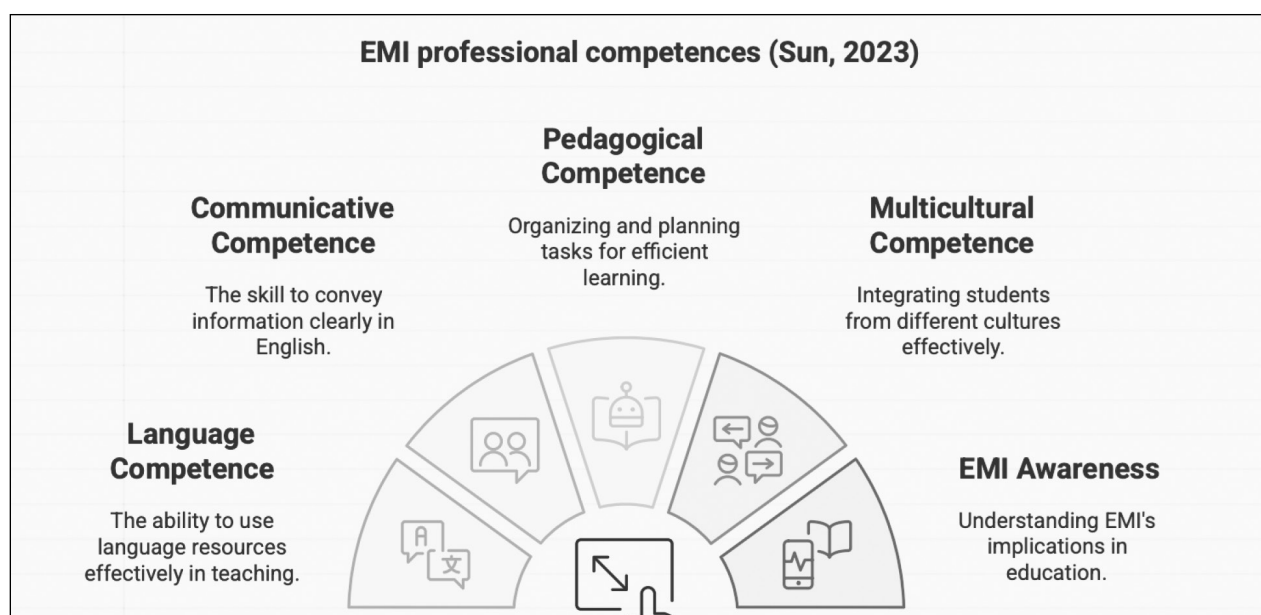
## Literature review

The increasing adoption of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in higher education institutions in non-Anglophone contexts has generated substantial debate about its implications for teaching quality and learning outcomes (Unangst et al., 2022). While faculty language proficiency is often cited as a key barrier to EMI effectiveness (Uehara & Kojima, 2021; Galloway & Rose, 2021), this issue is closely intertwined with broader pedagogical and institutional challenges. Limited English skills may undermine teachers' confidence and hinder student engagement (Tuomainen, 2018), yet focusing solely on language masks the importance of pedagogical preparedness and structural support (Dang et al., 2021; Sahan, Rose & Macaro, 2021).

EMI teachers frequently report feeling unprepared to teach diverse learners, often relying on traditional, lecture-based approaches that limit interaction and student participation (Yang et al., 2019; Lo & Macaro, 2012; Pun & Macaro, 2019). These methods conflict with the growing emphasis in higher education on inclusive and student-centred pedagogies. Dang et al. (2023) argue for a pedagogical shift in EMI, calling for more formative, reflective teaching practices aligned with inclusive values. Saroyan and Trigwell (2015), along with Richter et al. (2011), emphasize the role of professional learning in enabling such shifts. Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), which allows instructors to present complex concepts in accessible ways, is critical to teaching effectively in EMI settings (Yang et al., 2019).

Institutional support can also determine the success of EAP teachers' training as EMI faculty developers. Many institutions fail to offer adequate support systems while teachers are left to navigate EMI challenges alone and without capitalising on collaborative initiatives among teachers that can foster professional development and improve instructional practices (Nur et al., 2023). Effective institutional frameworks can provide resources and opportunities for reflection, which are essential for teachers to adapt to the challenges of EMI (Tuomainen, 2022). Moreover, the need for ongoing professional development is paramount in addressing the challenges faced by EAP teachers in EMI contexts. Cross-fertilization between EMI and EAP scholarship and the need for a joined research agenda that systematically investigates the benefits of discipline-specific academic language and literacy development (Wingate & Hakim,

2022) paves the way for continuous professional development programs that focus on both language and pedagogical skills. This is also in line with Sun (2023) who characterizes pedagogical, multicultural, communicative and language competences as professional EMI competences (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Schematic representation of EMI professional competences in Sun (2023).

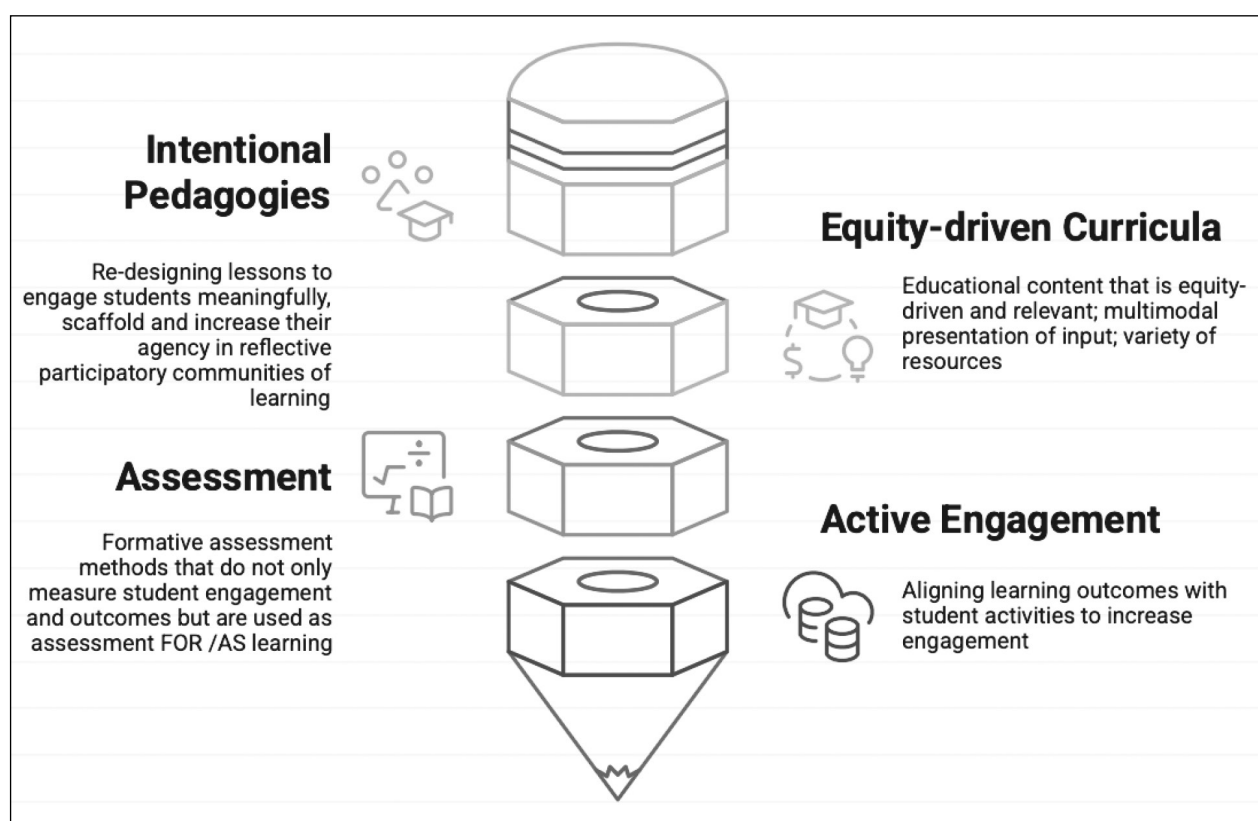
In this light, peer observation and self-reflection in collaborative communities of practice (Sánchez-García, 2024) are often employed to not only enhance teaching and learning curricula design but also classroom discourse, teacher-student interaction, use of resources, engagement and student scaffolding or agency opportunities. Peer-observation as described in Katsampoxaki-Hodgetts (2025a) promotes a culture of continuous professional growth, and as such it can address the diverse pedagogical needs of faculty in various disciplines. In fact, in a collaborative model, faculty can observe each other's teaching practices with the aim of self-reflection and improving their own conceptualisations of how they can design discipline-specific curricula following opportunities for constructive feedback and collaborative discussions about Inclusive Student-centred Pedagogies (ISCP) (Miranda et al., 2021; Katsampoxaki-Hodgetts, 2025a). Peer-observation as an opportunity for self-reflection does not only align with research that applies in English Language Teaching (Koutsika et al., 2023) but also teacher education programmes that foster inclusive learning environments (Oskineegish, 2019) and various educational contexts such as pharmacy (Bartlett et al., 2022).

This study adopts the Inclusive Student-Centred Pedagogies (IScP) framework, proposed by Katsampoxaki-Hodgetts (2024), which builds on multiliteracies pedagogy (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). IScP combines inclusive pedagogy, focused on creating equitable learning environments for all students (Hockings, 2010) and on the premise that teachers design their lessons intentionally and proactively with diverse student populations in mind while prioritizing learner agency, reflection, and engagement (Byra et al., 2013). It integrates the four "Learning by Design" knowledge processes: *Experiencing*, *Conceptualising*, *Analyzing*, and *Applying* (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). In terms of faculty development, IScP encourages EMI instructors to use structured peer observation protocols, redesign syllabi, and adopt inclusive lesson design templates as tools for reflective teaching and curriculum improvement (Katsampoxaki-Hodgetts, 2025a).

IScP also aligns with Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which advocates for flexibility in instruction and assessment (Rao & Meo, 2016). It supports higher education instructors in providing multiple means of representation and engagement, addressing the diverse needs of EMI learners (Hua, 2020).

Through reflective tasks and lesson redesigns, EAP professionals can align learning outcomes, engagement strategies, and assessment tools in meaningful ways (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Hixon, 2021). This integrated approach not only improves teaching practice but can shift instructors' mindsets toward equity and inclusion (Aas, 2023). The IScP framework, grounded in multiliteracies pedagogy, offers a structured, reflective pathway for EAP professionals to act as EMI faculty developers of inclusive education (Katsampoxaki-Hodgetts et al., 2024).

Inclusive student-centred pedagogy (Katsampoxaki-Hodgetts, 2025a) stresses the importance of adapting teaching methods to accommodate diverse learner needs, which is particularly relevant in EMI contexts where students may have varying levels of English proficiency among other needs. As defined by Katsampoxaki-Hodgetts (2022), inclusive student-centred pedagogies incorporate active engagement components in the Higher Education (HE) syllabus design so as to align expected learning outcomes with evidence-based and measure activities that students in HE are engaged in. This is in line with Hockings (2010) who calls for intentional alignment of pedagogies, curricula and assessment to be designed to engage students in meaningful and relevant equity-driven learning experiences that are accessible to all (Figure 2).



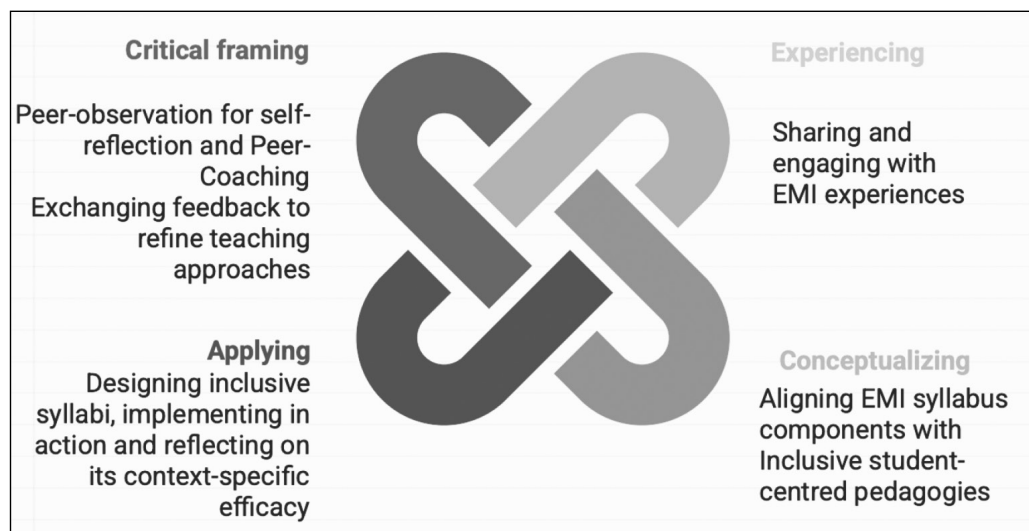
**Figure 2.** *Intentional Alignment of IScP Curriculum with learning outcomes, engagement opportunities and assessment to increase access, engagement and success opportunities for all (Hockings, 2010).*

Adapting teaching strategies to enhance both language proficiency and content understanding can create a more inclusive learning environment (Rifiyanti, 2023); yet, it may not necessarily empower students as producers of new knowledge and critical thinkers. This can be achieved with pedagogical approaches that prioritize learner engagement and inclusivity (Macaro et al., 2017), hands-on involvement bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in diverse classrooms (Darko et al., 2021), and by providing autonomy and choice, which are essential components of student-centred learning environments (Byra et al., 2013).

The lack of sufficient planning and the expectation that educators will “automatically [teach] well ...without any training or education at all” (Airey, 2011, p. 44) further exacerbates the pedagogical challenges of EMI. At the same time, reflecting on syllabus re-design can serve as a professional development intervention that can promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in multicultural classrooms (Hixon, 2021). Teachers can reflect on their syllabus design in an attempt to align all syllabus components with IScP. They can do so collaboratively or individually; teachers observe, and reflect on their lessons, thereby facilitating a shift in teacher mindset and enabling them to incorporate higher-order thinking skills and inclusive practices into their teaching (Aas, 2023). Structured lesson design templates are prompting teachers and further supporting them in creating inclusive learning experiences (Katsampoxaki-Hodgetts, 2025b). These templates often advocate for the application of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles in lesson planning, the adoption of flexible and authentic learning and assessment opportunities that cater to the diverse needs of learners (Rao and Meo, 2016), providing tailored pedagogical practices that can significantly enhance educational experiences (Hua, 2020). Further, by utilizing templates that integrate inclusive theories, EAP teachers can ensure all syllabus components are cohesively aligned, such as suggested by Biggs and Tang (2011).

In this study, EAP practitioners and researchers participated in a faculty development opportunity based on the Multiliteracies model ‘*Learning by design*’ framework (by Katsampoxaki-Hodgetts, 2024; inspired by Cope and Kalantzis, 2015). Participants were not involved in implementation and evaluation of their syllabus design efficacy in context-specific communities of learning; they took part in all three other phases as described in Figure 3.

Building on the preceding discussion, this study aims to examine how engagement with the IScP EMI pedagogy framework empowers EAP practitioners to serve as EMI academic developers while simultaneously informing inclusive teaching practices.



**Figure 3.** IScP ‘*Learning by Design*’ EMI Pedagogy Framework designed by Katsampoxaki-Hodgetts (2024).

## Study design

This study employed a qualitative approach, combining thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA) to explore how EAP practitioners reflect on their roles as EMI academic developers after participating in a faculty development program grounded in Inclusive Student-Centred Pedagogies (IScP). These methods allowed for a layered exploration of both the *content* of participants’ reflections and the *language* through which professional roles, inclusivity, and institutional power dynamics were

negotiated. This dual approach was selected to address the research question: *How does engagement with the IScP EMI Pedagogy Framework influence EAP practitioners' conceptualizations of inclusive pedagogical strategies and empower them as EMI academic developers?*

## Research Context and Participants

The initial cohort consisted of eight EAP practitioners and researchers, four of whom had prior EMI teaching experience. All participants were engaged in a structured faculty development program on EMI pedagogy and inclusive teaching. Three participants agreed to participate in the final focus group discussion. While the small sample size may limit generalizability, the goal of this study was not statistical representation but in-depth insight into how EAP professionals conceptualize inclusive EMI teaching after structured reflection. Given their consent, participants were purposefully selected based on their dual expertise in language and pedagogy, which positioned them to meaningfully bridge EMI challenges in diverse, multilingual settings (Hakim & Wingate, 2023).

We acknowledge that having only three participants in the focus group is a limitation. However, this design allowed for deep, focused exploration of participants' professional narratives. Additionally, the small group format enabled open discussion, critical reflection, and meaningful peer interaction, features aligned with the study's interpretive framework.

## Data Collection Methods

### From Reflective Practice to Focus Group Discussion

Prior to the focus group, all participants submitted written reflections on two key components of the training: (a) peer observation and inclusive pedagogy, and (b) lesson design using the IScP template. Participants first observed an EMI lesson and reflected on inclusive strategies used (or omitted). They then participated in informal peer-coaching meetings and created inclusive lesson plans aligned with IScP principles. These tasks encouraged critical self-reflection and collaborative learning.

The final focus group discussion served as the primary data source and explored participants' evolving roles as EMI academic developers, their experiences with inclusive curriculum design, and the perceived challenges and enablers within their institutions. The discussion format was chosen for its ability to capture dynamic meaning-making, co-construction of ideas, and negotiation of professional identities (Farnsworth & Boon, 2010).

To mitigate social desirability bias, given that all participants attended the same training, participants were also assured of anonymity and encouraged to share both affirmations and critiques of the training experience.

### Justification for Analytical Methods

Thematic analysis, based on Braun and Clarke (2006), was selected to identify patterns and themes in participants' reflections about inclusive pedagogy, professional identity, and EMI teaching. This method helped organize participants' experiences in ways that directly address the research question.

However, thematic analysis alone cannot uncover the institutional power dynamics embedded in teacher discourse, an essential layer in EMI contexts. Therefore, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used to examine how participants represented themselves, their institutions, and their roles as EMI developers. Drawing on Fairclough (1989, 2013), Wodak (1999), and Kress & van Leeuwen (1990), CDA offered a deeper look into how language shaped and reflected professional ideologies and social positioning. CDA was particularly suited to this study because EMI contexts often involve implicit hierarchies related to language authority, content ownership, and academic identity, areas that thematic analysis alone might overlook.

## Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis followed the six-step process of Braun and Clarke (2006):

- *Familiarization*: Reading the data repeatedly to gain a holistic understanding.
- *Generating Codes*: Identifying meaningful units around EMI pedagogy, inclusivity, peer learning, and institutional structures.
- *Constructing Themes*: Organizing codes into themes such as pedagogical empowerment, barriers to inclusivity, and collaborative design.
- *Reviewing Themes*: Ensuring internal consistency and external distinction of themes.
- *Defining and Naming Themes*: Finalizing categories with illustrative quotes.
- *Relating Themes to Research Aim*: Ensuring that each theme contributed directly to the study's central question.

## Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

CDA was conducted according to Fairclough's three-dimensional framework:

- *Textual Analysis*: We examined participants' lexical choices, modality (e.g., expressions of certainty or hesitation), metaphors, and how social actors were positioned (e.g., "we," "they," "students," "management"). Participants often positioned themselves as intermediaries between institutional expectations and student needs, revealing their perception of agency within hierarchical structures.
- *Discursive Practice*: We analyzed how ideas about inclusive pedagogy and faculty development were reproduced and negotiated. Participants referred intertextually to EMI and EAP scholarship and used academic discourse to validate their design decisions and professional identities.
- *Social Practice*: This layer addressed broader ideological tensions, such as how EAP practitioners experienced marginalization in EMI initiatives or advocated for institutional change through inclusive curriculum design. For example, one participant remarked, "I feel like we are always correcting things post hoc, never involved from the start," signaling power asymmetries in EMI course planning.

## Focus Group Questions

Sample focus group prompts included:

- "What insights from this training would you recommend to EMI policy makers?"
- "How has your teaching changed after engaging with IScP?"
- "What challenges arise when collaborating with other faculty on EMI design?"
- "How do you interpret inclusivity in the context of lesson design?"
- "Can diverse media be inclusive by default, or is intention required?"

Participants shared both conceptual reflections and practical takeaways, such as adapting assessments to include oral presentations, reflective journals, or media-based assignments to offer students multiple pathways to demonstrate learning. For example, Participant 1 (P1) noted, «*I reflected on the interactive teaching methods, making sure that I use, for example, think-pair-share or group discussions.*» This illustrates how participants not only discussed inclusive EMI pedagogies in theory but also considered their application through active learning techniques that promote engagement and student voice.

## Limitations and Future Research

This study captures immediate reflections following participation in a training programme. While it offers valuable insights into short-term impact, it does not measure long-term change. This is a limitation, and we propose future follow-up interviews or reflective surveys after several months to assess the sustainability of pedagogical shifts.

Additionally, the sample size, though sufficient for in-depth qualitative analysis, limits transferability. Future research could expand to include participants from diverse institutions and cultural contexts to explore variations in how IScP is interpreted and applied.

## Findings and Discussion

### Thematic Analysis

This section presents the findings from the thematic analysis of the focus group discussion following the EMI faculty development program (Table 1). While some themes featured more prominently in participants' reflections than others, all of them are interrelated and collectively shape the teachers' experiences and perceptions. This interconnectedness also reflects broader discussions in the literature on EMI and inclusive pedagogies, evincing how individual themes both influence and are influenced by one another.

**Table 1.** *Thematic analysis of the focus group discussion with themes and direct quotes from participants (P1-3).*

Themes	Direct Quotes
<b>Inclusive, student-centred approaches in EMI</b>	P2: Incorporating student voices in curriculum design ensures their needs are met. P1: Focusing on engagement helps students feel part of the community. P3: Multimodal approaches are foundational to inclusive teaching practices.
<b>Multimodal resources and collaborative teaching-learning</b>	P1: Using diverse media makes learning accessible for all students. P3: Collaborative multimodal projects enhance both learning and community. P2: Flexibility in modes of communication supports diverse student needs.
<b>Institutional support for EMI development</b>	P1: Without institutional backing, sustaining EMI initiatives becomes almost impossible. P3: Peer observation programs thrive with structured institutional support. P2: Long-term EMI development depends on supportive policies and funding.
<b>Training path</b>	P3: The sequential stages of the program gave clarity and purpose to our learning. P2: Lesson planning connected theory to practice in inclusive pedagogy. P1: Reflective reports fostered critical engagement with diverse perspectives.
<b>Collaborative and self-directed practice</b>	P3: Peer observation was key in reflecting on and improving our teaching methods. P2: Collaborative learning enhances both teacher and student development. P1: Structured reflection leads to deeper insights into inclusive practices.
<b>Inclusive evaluation</b>	P1: Giving students multiple ways to showcase learning is critical for inclusivity. P2: Providing choice in assessments fosters creativity and student engagement. P3: Diverse assessment methods accommodate students' varied strengths.
<b>EMI-EAP-ESP teacher collaboration</b>	P1: Collaborating across departments helped us create more inclusive EMI practices. P2: Peer observation with mentorship could deepen insights for both EMI and EAP teachers. P3: It's key to establishing structured collaboration to affect policies, not just individual practices.

Themes	Direct Quotes
<b>Shifting focus from language to pedagogy</b>	P2: EMI is not just about perfect English; it's about engaging students in learning. P1: Shifting focus to pedagogy highlights the importance of inclusive methodologies. P3: Inclusive teaching strategies make EMI impactful beyond linguistic skills.
<b>Tailored, flexible, and contextualized development</b>	P3: Each institution needs to adapt EMI training to meet its specific needs. P1: Short, targeted workshops are more accessible for busy faculty members. P2: Workshops focusing on regional EMI practices foster contextualized learning.
<b>Reluctance of EMI teachers</b>	P1: Take so much time and effort and perhaps resources or funding. P2: It can be more time-consuming. P3: limited group of people that wish to develop their EMI awareness.
<b>Challenges in inclusive evaluation</b>	P3: It's difficult to evaluate multimodal assignments without clear rubrics. P1: Some students find options in assignments confusing without precise guidance. P2: Resistance often stems from seeing these practices as language-focused.
<b>Impact of training experience</b>	P2: The workshops helped me see teaching from a more inclusive perspective. P3: Reflective tasks clarified the importance of pedagogical focus over language. P1: Training confirmed shared challenges and strategies across EMI contexts.
<b>EMI as a research field</b>	P3: EMI deserves recognition as a legitimate research domain, not just teaching. P1: Highlighting EMI as a research field can broaden faculty engagement. P2: Showcasing EMI's impact encourages institutional support and innovation.

One recurring idea was the importance of placing students at the heart of EMI practice to ensure that teaching is responsive, participatory, and aligned with learners' backgrounds and needs. Participants repeatedly emphasized that actively involving students in shaping curricular and instructional decisions fosters a sense of co-ownership:

**P2: Incorporating student voices in curriculum design ensures their needs are met.**

This theme reinforces the value of participatory approaches to pedagogy that center students as co-creators of their learning experiences in so-called pedagogical partnership (Cook-Sather & Matthews, 2021) and underpins many of the subsequent themes. For example, multimodal teaching practices (see below) often arise as a way to broaden accessibility and engagement for a diverse student body, improving student motivation and academic performance (Custodio Espinar & López-Hernández, 2023).

Participants described the value of integrating multiple modalities, textual, visual, auditory, and interactive, to create accessible and engaging learning experiences:

**P1: Using diverse media makes learning accessible for all students.**

In doing so, they also endorsed collaborative teaching strategies that leverage group work and peer interaction. Such collaboration helps deepen understanding of diverse learner needs, linking this theme to institutional support structures (Macaro & Tian, 2023). Where institutions enable professional development and resource-sharing, teachers are better equipped to incorporate multimodal approaches in a systematic, reflective manner. As acknowledged by participants, institutional endorsement, through policies, resources, and recognition, is essential for sustaining inclusive EMI initiatives and fostering meaningful change:

**P1: Without institutional backing, sustaining EMI initiatives becomes almost impossible.**

Teachers' motivation and ability to innovate rely on supportive frameworks that recognize and reward pedagogical development. This aligns closely with other themes, particularly 'Training Path' and 'Collaboration', as effective professional development often hinges on structural backing (Ismailov et al., 2021).

A clear, well-structured sequence of learning activities, ranging from theoretical introductions to practice-based components, proved invaluable for respondents:

**P3:** The sequential stages of the program gave clarity and purpose to our learning.

Such a structured path typically involves conceptualization, lesson design, peer observation, and reflection. This continuity naturally intersects with 'Institutional Support', since teachers frequently need formal guidance and time allocation to engage in each stage thoroughly.

Collaboration, particularly through peer observation (Llinares & Mendikoetxea, 2020) and reflective practice (Farrell, 2019), emerged as a powerful driver of ongoing pedagogical improvement:

**P3:** Peer observation was key in reflecting on and improving our teaching methods.

Working with colleagues allows teachers to test new strategies, share feedback, and refine their practice. This collaborative ethos resonates with the idea of 'Inclusive, Student-Centred Approaches', just as students benefit from co-created learning experiences, teachers also gain from a collective spirit of inquiry and reflection.

Adapting assessment methods to allow multiple forms of participation and demonstration of learning is another critical pillar of inclusive EMI practices:

**P1:** Giving students multiple ways to showcase learning is critical for inclusivity.

Participants saw inclusive evaluation as a practical application of the broader push to focus on pedagogy over language accuracy. However, they noted that creating valid, equitable rubrics and managing diverse assessment tasks can be challenging (Ajjawi et al., 2023):

**P3:** It's difficult to evaluate multimodal assignments without clear rubrics.

This challenge points to the importance of 'Institutional Support' and 'Collaboration', which can provide the resources and guidance necessary for fair, consistent practice.

Collaboration between EMI, EAP, and ESP practitioners emerged as a significant theme, highlighting its pivotal role in fostering inclusive practices. The participants emphasized how cross-departmental collaboration allowed for shared resources, professional learning, and alignment of goals to enhance EMI teaching. This stresses the importance of expertise across disciplines to address the diverse needs of EMI learners effectively, as discussed also by Dearden (2018).

Teachers emphasized that interdisciplinary cooperation among EMI, EAP, and ESP practitioners helps integrate various expertise, resources, and perspectives:

**P1:** Collaborating across departments helped us create more inclusive EMI practices.

This overlap across departmental lines not only broadens pedagogical strategies but also addresses the diverse needs of EMI learners (Dearden, 2018). In this way, teacher collaboration is closely tied to the idea of a 'Training Path' that includes structured sharing of insights and competencies.

Participants repeatedly pointed out that EMI should go beyond linguistic accuracy to support deeper pedagogical engagement and inclusivity:

**P2:** EMI is not just about perfect English; it's about engaging students in learning.

This stance is a reminder that while language proficiency is vital in EMI settings, it should not overshadow methodologies that foster critical thinking, collaboration, and accessibility, particularly for linguistically and culturally diverse student populations (Tuomainen, 2023). Hence, this theme is intimately linked with 'Inclusive, Student-Centred Approaches' and 'Multimodal' practices, which emphasize the quality of the teaching and learning environment over isolated language concerns.

Respondents advocated for EMI professional development designed around local needs and circumstances, rather than one-size-fits-all approaches:

**P3:** Each institution needs to adapt EMI training to meet its specific needs.

Flexibility in workshop scheduling, content focus, and institutional goals ensures that EMI initiatives resonate with the real-world context of teachers and students (Alhassan, 2021; Fenton-Smith, 2017). This echoes the importance of 'Institutional Support', as effective adaptation often requires policy alignment and resource investment.

Despite the clear enthusiasm for inclusive practices, participants acknowledged some degree of reluctance among peers. This hesitation may stem from time pressures or a belief that inclusive methods are tangential to core disciplinary teaching (e.g. Fitzpatrick et al., 2022):

**P2:** Some teachers resist inclusive practices due to lack of time or perceived irrelevance.

The interconnected nature of the themes suggests that building supportive structures, offering relevant 'Training Paths', and emphasizing 'Collaboration' can help reduce such reluctance and demonstrate the tangible benefits of inclusive EMI practices.

While inclusive evaluation was celebrated for accommodating diverse learners, several participants noted the complexity of designing and grading multimodal tasks:

**P3:** It's difficult to evaluate multimodal assignments without clear rubrics.

Professional development on assessment literacy, shared guidelines among departments, and ongoing reflective practice are therefore crucial. This again points back to 'Collaborative' frameworks and 'Institutional Support' in maintaining consistency and fairness across a range of innovative assessments.

Additionally, participants reported a shift in perspective following their engagement with the faculty development program:

**P2:** The workshops helped me see teaching from a more inclusive perspective.

Such testimonies underline the transformative power of holistic, well-structured teacher development programs (Sathy & Rogan, 2022). As with other themes, sustained impact relies on opportunities to consolidate learning through collaboration, structured reflection, and policy-level support.

Finally, respondents believed that EMI should not be restricted to the practical arena of teaching but also recognized and developed as a research domain:

**P3:** EMI deserves recognition as a legitimate research domain, not just teaching.

This research emphasis resonates with the need for broader 'Institutional Support' and professional recognition. This resonates with Macaro and Rose (2023), who argue that even though EMI is now a well-established field of education research and applied linguistics, several areas still require urgent attention and further high-quality research.

## Textual Analysis

Through critical examination of the participants' language, the discourse analysis reveals the underlying power dynamics, ideological positions, and collaborative strategies that shape their experiences as EMI academic developers. The results of the focus group discussion textual analysis are illustrated in Table 2. P1-3 in the direct quotes and the subsequent analysis refers to the focus group discussion participants 1-3.

**Table 2.** *Textual analysis as part of Critical Discourse Analysis examining EAP practitioners as EMI faculty developers.*

Questions	Modality, lexical choices, and metaphors Representation of social actors and actions	Quotes from participants
<b>Insights for policy makers</b>	Lexical choices: 'reflective', 'inclusive' Metaphors: 'change the lens' Representation of actions: EAP teacher advising policy changes	P1: We should be changing this because it's far more enriching and less threatening... I told her we should change the lens here.
	Modality: strong commitment ('definitely', 'crucial') Lexical choices: 'support systems', 'engagement' Representation of actions: advocates for tailored support systems	P2: The key insights perhaps I would communicate is the need for support systems... tailored to what they want and what they need.
<b>Academic development processes</b>	Lexical choices: 'inclusive design'; Metaphors: 'bridge the gap' Representation of actions: faculty engaging as designers	P3: We should be designing materials that engage students and bridge the gap between their backgrounds and academic demands.
<b>Impact on teaching and attitude</b>	Lexical choices: 'interactive teaching', 'continuity' Representation of actions: reflection on methods like think-pair-share	P1: I reflected on the interactive teaching methods making sure that I use, for example, think-pair-share or group discussions.
	Modality: tentative ('perhaps', 'maybe') Lexical choices: 'collaboration', 'reflection' Representation of actions: discussing professional growth	P2: The training made me reflect deeply on collaboration and how it enhances professional growth.
<b>Empowerment through multiliteracies pedagogy</b>	Lexical choices: 'empowered', 'ownership' Representation of actions: highlighting empowerment through active learning	P3: Using the multiliteracies model has empowered me to give ownership back to students.
<b>Challenges in faculty collaboration</b>	Modality: speculative ('might', 'could') Lexical choices: 'barriers', 'different practices' Representation of actions: navigating cross-disciplinary differences	P2: Collaboration might face barriers due to different teaching practices across disciplines.
<b>Diversity and inclusive design</b>	Lexical choices: 'community', 'belonging' Representation of actions: focusing on inclusivity through design	P3: Students need to feel like they belong. Inclusive design is about community building.
<b>Learning communities</b>	Lexical Choices: 'peer learning', 'mutual growth' Metaphors: 'reflective spaces' Representation of actions: emphasizing collaborative learning	P1: We need reflective spaces where we can grow mutually through peer learning.
<b>Assessment choices and inclusivity</b>	Lexical choices: 'flexible assessments', 'student agency' Representation of actions: advocating for alternative assessment practices	P3: Giving students the option for flexible assessments promotes agency and inclusivity.

During the textual analysis (Table 2) participants emphasized the need for institutional support systems tailored to the diverse needs of faculty members transitioning to EMI roles. P1 used metaphorical language, such as ‘change the lens’, to describe a shift toward more enriching and inclusive practices, emphasizing reflective policy design and adopting new perspectives to EMI teaching, especially outside the language teaching context. After all, teaching through English can often be seen as regular teaching, without much attention to the language, intercultural elements or student support (Tuomainen, 2022). P2 reinforced this idea with strong modality (‘definitely’, ‘crucial’) to underline the importance of structured, needs-based support systems.

When discussing academic development, the focus group discussion participants focused on inclusivity and engagement. P3 employed metaphors such as ‘bridge the gap’ to illustrate the necessity of aligning instructional design with students’ diverse backgrounds. This demonstrated a commitment to creating materials and practices that resonate with learners’ experiences and academic demands, reinforcing the role of faculty as designers of inclusive curricula. The participants also reflected on how the completed training program influenced their own pedagogical approaches and self-perceptions as educators. P1 highlighted the use of interactive teaching methods, such as ‘think-pair-share’, as tools for fostering student engagement and continuity in learning. P2 described the reflective nature of the training, using tentative modality (‘perhaps’, ‘maybe’) to acknowledge the incremental professional growth achieved through collaboration and self-reflection.

The IScP EMI framework was seen as transformative. Peer observation is described with both appreciation and hesitation, evident in phrases such as ‘a very practical collaborative social learning type of environment’ (P1) and ‘frightening or intimidating’ (P2). These choices suggest the teachers view peer observation as essential but also acknowledge its challenges. The benefits and challenges of teachers’ peer observation have been well recognized (e.g. Fletcher, 2018). At times teachers have felt being watched and evaluated by others is uncomfortable, can lead to increased self-criticality and a tendency to focus only on the negative feedback (Blackmore, 2005). P3 described feeling ‘empowered’ to prioritize student ownership of learning, demonstrating how the framework shifted their focus from content delivery to active learning and inclusivity. This type of student-centred approach to instruction can be said to be the foundation of effective teaching in higher education and an approach to which many high-quality teachers subscribe (Skelton, 2007).

However, participants also anticipated challenges in collaboration, particularly cross-disciplinary differences. P2 used speculative modality (‘might’, ‘could’) to highlight potential barriers, such as varying teaching practices and institutional norms. This can be at least partly because many EMI developers are ESP and EAP experts while many EMI lecturers can be primarily focussed on their own fields (Kırkgöz & Dikilitaş, 2018). Therefore, while participants valued collaborative practices, institutional resistance and interdisciplinary challenges emerged as barriers. These types of issues with EMI implementation have been evident in various countries and institutions as the various stakeholders of EMI inevitably also possess different goals and intentions for EMI (e.g. Orduna-Nocito & Sánchez-García, 2022). For instance, language policies, including EMI, are often created by institution heads and administration without extensively planning the implementation in collaboration with the teaching staff (Gabriëls & Wilkinson, 2024).

Discussion from P3 on diversity focused on creating a sense of belonging for students, using terms such as ‘community’ and ‘inclusive design’. The importance of supportive and reflective learning communities was a recurring theme. This aligns with the broader emphasis on fostering environments where students feel valued and supported (e.g. Tuomainen, 2023), illustrating how inclusive design principles can address the varied needs of EMI learners. P1 used metaphors such as ‘reflective spaces’ to describe environments where faculty and students could engage in mutual growth.

Finally, the participants discussed the need for flexible assessment practices to enhance inclusivity. P3 advocated for alternative methods, emphasizing ‘student agency’ and ‘flexible assessments’ as

key to addressing diverse learning preferences. This reflects a shift from traditional evaluation methods to more student-centred approaches that promote equity and autonomy, as also discussed by Levesque-Bristol (2023).

### Discursive Practice Analysis

Building on the textual analysis, the discursive practice analysis of the focus group discussion indicated how participants construct and reproduce ideas about inclusivity and pedagogical development, connect their reflections to broader EMI and EAP scholarship, and co-construct meaning through dialogue, negotiation, or contestation. These are illustrated in more detail in Table 3.

**Table 3.** *Discursive Practice Analysis as part of Critical Discourse Analysis examining how EAP practitioners construct and reproduce ideas about inclusivity and pedagogical development as EMI faculty developers, with intertextual connections to broader EMI and EAP scholarship.*

Question	Discursive practices (Inclusivity, pedagogical development, intertextual connections)	Co-construction of meaning (agreement, disagreement, negotiation)	Quotes from participants
<b>Insights for policy makers</b>	Inclusivity: Advocated for reflective teaching practices emphasizing non-threatening approaches. Pedagogical development: Emphasized faculty growth through supportive rubrics. Intertextual connections: Connected reflections to institutional inclusivity policies.	Agreement with P2 on the value of tailored support systems for faculty members.	P1: We should be changing this because it's far more enriching and less threatening... I told her we should change the lens here.
	Inclusivity: Highlighted tailored support systems addressing faculty diversity. Pedagogical development: advocated for workshops and informal mentoring. Intertextual connections: Referenced best practices from EMI literature.	Expanded on P1's point by emphasizing the necessity of scaffolding for diverse EMI contexts.	P2: The key insights perhaps I would communicate is the need for support systems... tailored to what they want and what they need.
<b>Academic development processes</b>	Inclusivity: Proposed bridging gaps between cultural and academic backgrounds through curriculum. Pedagogical development: Highlighted the role of multimodal design. Intertextual connections: Linked curriculum strategies to EAP theories.	Negotiated with P1 on practical approaches to creating inclusive materials, agreeing on reflective practices.	P3: We should be designing materials that engage students and bridge the gap between their backgrounds and academic demands.
<b>Impact on teaching and attitude</b>	Inclusivity: Focused on multimodal teaching strategies for engaging diverse learners. Pedagogical development: Emphasized tools like think-pair-share. Intertextual connections: Reflected on interactive methods in Multiliteracies pedagogy.	Agreement among participants on the role of interactive methods in fostering inclusivity.	P1: I reflected on the interactive teaching methods making sure that I use, for example, think-pair-share or group discussions.

Question	Discursive practices (Inclusivity, pedagogical development, intertextual connections)	Co-construction of meaning (agreement, disagreement, negotiation)	Quotes from participants
<b>Impact on teaching and attitude</b>	Inclusivity: Valued collaboration for equity in EMI teaching. Pedagogical development: Highlighted the reflective growth achieved through training. Intertextual connections: Related insights to collaborative growth in EMI literature.	Agreement with P3 on the significance of reflective practices, while expanding on collaborative benefits.	P3: The training made me reflect deeply on collaboration and how it enhances professional growth.
<b>Empowerment through Multiliteracies pedagogy</b>	Inclusivity: Highlighted empowerment through inclusive practices. Pedagogical development: Focused on shifts to learner-centred models. Intertextual connections: Referenced Multiliteracies as transformative.	Agreed with P2 on the transformative impact of the pedagogy, negotiating aspects of learner empowerment.	P3: Using the Multiliteracies model has empowered me to give ownership back to students.
<b>Challenges in faculty collaboration</b>	Inclusivity: Identified barriers in achieving interdisciplinary collaboration. Pedagogical development: Discussed institutional constraints and varied disciplinary practices. Intertextual connections: Related challenges to broader EMI constraints.	Disagreed with P1 on ease of collaboration, suggesting institutional barriers must be addressed first.	P2: Collaboration might face barriers due to different teaching practices across disciplines.
<b>Diversity and inclusive design</b>	Inclusivity: Advocated for designing belonging to EMI lessons. Pedagogical development: Emphasized inclusive engagement strategies. Intertextual connections: Aligned with EAP scholarship on inclusive design.	Negotiated with P2 on multimodality, agreeing on its value but debating its role in fully inclusive design.	P3: Students need to feel like they belong. Inclusive design is about community building.
<b>Learning communities</b>	Inclusivity: Advocated for peer-based learning communities. Pedagogical development: Highlighted reflective growth through collaboration. Intertextual connections: Discussed collaborative practices in EAP pedagogy.	Agreement with P2 and P3 on the significance of collaborative communities, emphasizing mutual growth.	P1: We need reflective spaces where we can grow mutually through peer learning.
<b>Assessment choices and inclusivity</b>	Inclusivity: Advocated for flexible assessments to enhance student agency. Pedagogical development: Emphasized innovative assessment design. Intertextual connections: Connected to alternative assessments in EMI literature.	Negotiated agreement with P2 on the challenges of flexible assessments, emphasizing student agency.	P3: Giving students the option for flexible assessments promotes agency and inclusivity.

In favour of institutional frameworks that support reflective and inclusive teaching practices, P1 used metaphors such as ‘change the lens’ to advocate for shifting faculty development from critique to growth-focused practices. P2 extended this by highlighting tailored support systems, drawing on international EMI best practices. Both participants agreed on the importance of non-threatening, reflective approaches, but P2’s contribution expanded the scope to emphasize scaffolding faculty diversity. Also, engagement through multimodal resources was emphasized. The negotiation between P3 and P1 highlighted shared commitments to inclusive design, with P3 focusing on practical approaches and P1 reinforcing the value of reflective practices.

Participants unanimously recognized the transformative role of interactive methods and the framework used during the training; apparent in phrases such as “The way it was done... quite illuminating”. P1 and P2 discuss peer observation in a way that minimizes hierarchy, positioning the observed teacher not as a ‘subject’ but as a colleague in a reflective process. This contrasts with the more traditional model where the observer holds a position of authority (Byrne et al., 2010). Additionally, P2’s reflection on using a rubric ‘to identify strengths and areas of improvement for them, not for us’ suggests a shift towards a more collegial and egalitarian model, where teachers work together to improve practice rather than being evaluated in a top-down manner (Nguyen, 2023). This is also apparent in the use of ‘bridge’ metaphor identified during the textual analysis.

However, P2 identified interdisciplinary barriers to collaboration, disagreeing with P1’s perception of collaboration as relatively straightforward. Also, there was little agreement or ambiguity regarding whether focusing on multiliteracies should be synonymous to IScP as the negotiation with P2 around the role of multimodality revealed complementary perspectives: P3 emphasized community-building, while P2 questioned the sufficiency of multimodal approaches alone.

The reflective activity involving syllabus redesign pushed the participants to think critically about how to structure their lessons and ensure inclusivity. Despite the initial confusion or resistance to this activity, upon completion, participants recognized its value: helping them to consolidate learning and prioritize what was most important in their teaching.

**P2:** ...initially puzzled **but** later saw the value

**P3:** ...an essential critical thinking tool

## Social Analysis

In the social analysis conducted on the focus group discussion, the interactions reflected a shift from perceiving EMI primarily as a linguistic challenge to understanding it as a broader pedagogical endeavor. EMI was viewed to be centred on creating equitable learning environments and an ideological commitment to moving beyond surface-level concerns, such as pronunciation and grammar. Table 4 illustrates the results of the social analysis.

One participant stressed how inclusive practices inherently connect to teaching methodology, observing that focusing on inclusion ‘indirectly leads you to methodology, which is the real change and the real challenge here for EMI teachers’. Additionally, participants noted the critical role of scaffolding and multimodal resources in fostering inclusivity. This perspective aligns with the principles of multiliteracies pedagogy, which advocate for diverse modes of representation and engagement to meet students’ varied needs (Drewry et al., 2019). However, some participants cautioned against equating multimodal communication solely with inclusive design, suggesting that inclusivity also encompasses the creation of supportive learning communities and flexible assessment practices. For instance, Harun and Singh (2024) maintain that challenges in multimodality must be addressed with rigorous

**Table 4.** Social analysis as part of Critical Discourse Analysis examining the ideological implications of participants' reflections on inclusivity and EMI teaching, alongside the power dynamics within institutional hierarchies and collaborative EMI communities.

Question	Ideological implications	Power dynamics / Hierarchy as EMI developers	Direct quotes
<b>What are the key insights you would like to communicate to a local policy decision-maker about EMI faculty development?</b>	Inclusive practices should focus on reflective teaching and using rubrics to highlight strengths, emphasizing diversity.	EMI teachers often focus on language delivery rather than teaching methodology. Peer coaching processes revealed this gap.	P1: The change for me was complete... We should be changing the lens here to focus on reflective teaching.
	The need for tailored, inclusive support systems for EMI teaching that emphasize pedagogy over language fluency.	Institutions lack formal support systems for EMI teaching. Cultural and linguistic differences among students require more attention.	P2: Many think EMI is just teaching in English, but students need engagement and a sense of belonging.
	Inclusive pedagogy focuses on student engagement, fostering belonging, and reflective practices.	Peer coaching highlights the discomfort EMI teachers feel in addressing non-language issues, such as inclusivity.	P3: Inclusive education is about shifting focus from language delivery to how students learn.
<b>How has this training experience changed your attitude to and your ability to teach EMI?</b>	Reflective tasks revealed gaps in addressing diversity and multimodal teaching strategies.	Reflective tasks and peer observation exposed resistance to integrating inclusive methodologies among EMI faculty.	P1: Writing reflective reports made me realize the importance of diversity and multimodal teaching.
	The training reinforced the importance of collaboration and inclusivity in EMI teaching.	EMI faculty's resistance to adapting teaching practices reflects systemic challenges in prioritizing pedagogy over research demands.	P2: I don't have like one particular development process in mind, I'm open to whatever the staff wants. P2: Peer observation and international student dynamics were the most enlightening parts for me.
	Shifting focus to student engagement and inclusive teaching as a cornerstone of EMI education.	EMI teachers undervalue pedagogical elements and rely heavily on EAP faculty for support.	P3: It's about engagement, allowing students to feel part of a learning community.
<b>What challenges do you expect to face during EMI faculty collaboration?</b>	Challenges include integrating diverse media and scaffolding to support inclusivity.	Resistance from EMI teachers to embrace pedagogical changes required for inclusivity.	P1: Creating materials to accommodate diversity is crucial, but it's often undervalued.
	Scaffolding and multimodal strategies are fundamental for inclusivity.	Limited institutional resources and resistance to innovation hinder progress.	P2: Inclusivity depends on flexibility in teaching, but traditional mindsets often block innovation.
	Collaborative learning communities can address diverse student needs and foster inclusivity.	EAP faculty face challenges in being recognized as pedagogical experts by EMI colleagues.	P3: Peer coaching showed how EAP faculty can support EMI teachers, but recognition is lacking.

planning, flexible and comprehensive assessment practices and ensuring prowess of and access to technology by students.

The social analysis also revealed that tensions between EAP and EMI roles within institutional hierarchies were evident as EAP participants expressed concerns about being perceived narrowly as language instructors (also discussed by Ding, 2019), emphasizing that their expertise encompasses broader pedagogical and literacy strategies. One participant reflected, 'They may be reduced down to language teachers... which is not really true because there is a whole pedagogy that goes along with it.' This perception highlights a hierarchical challenge that requires greater recognition of EAP educators' contributions to EMI faculty development.

The peer observation and coaching components of the training further exposed power dynamics. Participants shared the difficulty of providing constructive feedback without appearing intrusive or critical, emphasizing the need for mutual respect and a non-hierarchical approach to professional development. As one participant noted, 'You do it as an equal; you don't do it from a place of superiority.' This promotes egalitarian relationships among faculty members.

The teachers' discourse reflects an effort to navigate power dynamics in their professional roles. They often position themselves as facilitators rather than authorities, evident in comments like, 'I don't have one particular development process in mind, I'm open to whatever the staff wants' (P2), suggesting a democratic, bottom-up approach to faculty development. P1 and P3 also echo this in their discussions about allowing peers to reflect on their teaching rather than imposing changes, further reinforcing the idea of non-hierarchical peer collaboration.

However, there are subtle references to institutional authority. For instance, P1 highlights that the peer observation program's success is linked to institutional support: 'if you have the support from the institution then it's easier.' This indicates that, while teachers may wish to foster autonomy, the success of such initiatives still depends on institutional backing, revealing an existing power structure within the educational system.

## Conclusions

This study emphasized the significant role of EAP professionals in overcoming many challenges associated with EMI in various higher education contexts. By integrating discipline-specific academic language and multiliteracy development, EAP teachers are able to support EMI faculty in designing authentic curricula and inclusive assessments that enhance student learning and support diverse learners. For instance, through the IScP framework presented in this paper, EAP teachers can serve as effective EMI faculty developers, fostering inclusive and engaging learning environments that expand from content delivery.

The emphasis on collaboration between EAP, ESP and EMI practitioners highlights the importance of cross-departmental partnerships in enhancing higher education teaching practices and addressing the diverse needs of today's EMI learners. Methods such as peer observation and reflective practice in professional development foster a collaborative and participatory approach to teaching. In this study the focus group participants valued the opportunity to engage in reflective practices and collaborative learning and noted these approaches encouraged sharing diverse experiences and strategies.

Faculty development programs play a crucial role in instructing teaching staff how to implement inclusive pedagogies. Flexibility in curriculum design and assessment methods is essential to ensure that learning experiences are adaptable to institutional contexts and responsive to local challenges and the diversity of students. While inclusive evaluation practices are also critical, the challenges of assessing multimodal assignments and developing clear rubrics must be addressed to ensure fairness and clarity in assessment.

Although cooperation is key to developing EMI, there are also tensions between EAP and EMI roles, as EAP teachers may feel their expertise is still undervalued, reducing their contributions to mere language

instruction. This reflects a broader issue within institutional hierarchies, where EAP teachers seek recognition as pedagogical experts beyond their language-teaching roles. Still, from the results of this study it is evident that institutional support is crucial for developing and sustaining EMI initiatives.

In practical pedagogical terms, teachers and faculty developers can strengthen inclusive, student-centred approaches by integrating collaborative lesson planning and peer observation protocols (Katsam-poxaki-Hodgetts, 2025a) that explicitly target diverse learners' linguistic and cultural needs. For example, co-developing interactive group tasks, guided by structured reflection and mutual feedback, ensures that students of varying backgrounds can participate meaningfully and feel valued as contributors to the learning process. Similarly, employing multimodal resources (e.g., videos, visuals, interactive apps) and offering flexible assessment options not only address different learning preferences but also foster learner agency and autonomy. These measures can be adapted across disciplines through supportive institutional frameworks, enabling EAP, ESP, and EMI instructors to share expertise and refine inclusive practices collectively. By situating students at the centre of instructional design and implementation, EMI practitioners further enhance engagement and reduce the overemphasis on language accuracy, ultimately creating a more equitable and impactful learning experience for all.

As with any qualitative research design, the results of this study are not necessarily generalizable and a focus group discussion as the data collection method has potential for bias, influence of group dynamics or tendency towards normative discourse (Smithson, 2000). No significant power imbalances were detected in the discussion or the subsequent data analysis that could have influenced the focus group members' responses, affected their openness or guided the discussion. Instead, here the focus group discussion provided a unique view into expert EAP and EMI practitioner perspectives that can be valued by similar practitioners across higher education and help in developing EMI faculty support and development locally, nationally and internationally.

To conclude, inclusivity is a broad concept and can be interpreted in a variety of ways and applied in many contexts. In EMI and higher education, it is not only about employing diverse teaching methodologies or multimodal resources and tasks, but also about fostering supportive learning communities and implementing flexible assessment practices. In this study, the importance of peer observation, reflective spaces, and flexible assessment practices were consistently highlighted as essential to promoting inclusive teaching. The results of this study also underscored the transformative potential of the IScP EMI framework in promoting inclusive and student-centred teaching approaches. Future research efforts should continue to focus on expanding such development programs and exploring their impact on long-term teaching and learning outcomes in EAP and EMI settings.

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