'Why do my colleagues dislike me?' A personal reflection on gaining 'institutional competence' as a tutor of English for Academic Purposes within a higher education institution

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Tutors of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) can find themselves unprepared for the challenges of navigating interpersonal relationships within larger academic settings. The ability to handle and rationalize unexpected or unwanted behaviour, including dissent, criticism and bullying by senior colleagues, forms part of what may be labelled 'institutional competence'. This reflective article adopts a personal critical incident approach to examine ways in which institutional competence may be achieved by gradually making sense of professional encounters which, at first, may seem overwhelmingly confusing. Through an in-depth self-reflexive analysis of five personal critical incidents, an attempt is made to show how the tutor's experiences, whilst potentially distressing, fit into a wider, socio-ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The discussion remains critical of the pervading bullying culture within authoritarian, neo-liberal higher education institutions. However, it suggests a positive route through those negative experiences by allowing apparently negative perceptions of our work as EAP tutors to be contextualized within a wider institutional and sociological context. This can help to de-personalize incidents and can assist tutors in adopting a more compassionate approach to themselves. The article concludes by formulating some specific action points arising from the examination of critical incidents.

1. Introduction

The aim of this reflection is to consider some of the challenges I have faced as a teacher of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in working with colleagues at an institutional level. I will reflect on this with reference to my experiences within a UK university over the last 20 years. In order to conduct the reflection, I have drawn on Gibbs' (1988) reflective cycle. After describing my experiences in as much detail as possible, I document my initial feelings about the events described. I then evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of my position within these experiences, before standing back to analyze my experiences with greater self-reflexivity, relating them to wider issues and concerns for the EAP tutor. Following a brief conclusion, a suggested action plan is then put forward. I hope that this reflective account will be useful to practitioners and their institutions in a wider range of contexts and teaching situations, both within and outside the UK.

It will already be clear that what interests me most in this reflection is not so much how we, as practitioners, can become more effective language teachers, but how we gain the knowledge and

personal skills needed to confront unplanned, unpredictable types of events which we will inevitably encounter during our careers. Implicit in this reflection is the attempt to understand what decision-making strategies are needed when trying to reach suitable judgements about potentially difficult, indeed insoluble ethical puzzles, and how these can be improved by considering situations more self-reflexively, and gaining a greater understanding of wider socio-political issues that govern our work. Gaining a better understanding of the socio-political context can also help us to heal from often painful experiences involving anger and rejection, and to see a more positive way forward into our professional futures.

In 2002, some time before I received a formal diagnosis of borderline personality disorder, I wrote an article for *English Language Teacher Education and Development* which outlined the skills needed upon entry into the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) profession (Sharpling, 2002). The current reflection will allow me to revisit some of the points made in the earlier paper. In particular, a key objective of my earlier article was to document the major challenges in achieving what may be termed 'institutional competence': that is, an ability to navigate effectively across a large institution where approaches and practices vary markedly from department to department, and where an EAP teacher typically has lower status than their academic counterparts in other, or even the same department. Whether the concept 'institutional competence' is teachable or learnable remains a matter of conjecture. Perhaps it is most often achieved through a process of trial and error, risk taking, and an assimilation of the positive or negative evaluations made by others about our work (Schon, 1987). In any event, no judgements we ever make, however sound they may seem, can be absolute or clear cut; judgement is subjective, and closely linked to our values, ideas and beliefs. Judging a situation correctly is therefore a finely balanced act, and often involves the tutor in deciding what is the right thing to do and making decisions 'on a wing and a hoof', often with little time, space or resources to consider them more fully.

2. Description

Having introduced the concept of institutional competence at a general level, I will now list below, in chronological order, five examples of complex situations I have been involved in over the last twenty years while working as a tutor within a university in the UK. These 'critical incidents' have been selected on account of their personal impact, although they should merely be seen as 'snapshots' of a wide and varied career and have been chosen to be representative of the kind of challenges we, as tutors, typically face in our day-to-day teaching lives, especially earlier on in our careers.

> (1) In 2000, during a series of email exchanges, a Head of Department became angry because I had provided textual advice to a student which he considered went too far beyond what support, to him, may have been reasonable. The process escalated into direct contact between the academic in question and the higher-level organization. This incident raised the worrying spectre of the professional competence and judgement of the EAP tutor being called into question at a disciplinary level. After I had explained the matter to the member of staff, the incident was allowed to rest, although the academic never spoke to me again, and left the university a few years later.

> (2) A research student came to me in 2006 to say that they were being pressured by their supervisor into submitting their PhD thesis before they felt it was at a suitable level. As the student's EAP tutor, I knew them well and agreed that they were indeed a long way away from being able to submit their thesis. The student became very upset in my office, maintaining that their supervisor had claimed that failure to submit the PhD would affect their reputation as a supervisor and prevent them from getting research funding in the future. I was able to intervene in this situation, and through discussion with another member of the student's

department, was able to negotiate a further extension for the candidate. Despite the emotional labour occasioned by this event, the outcome immediately improved the student's mental health and reduced their level of stress and anxiety, to the extent that they were later able to pass their PhD viva successfully.

(3) In 2010, I recall that a Head of Department called me into their office and told me that in their view, I was not qualified to run a writing retreat for other academics aiming to develop their publications, albeit I had been asked by the wider institution to run this event. The matter was exacerbated because a member of staff from my own department, whom they considered senior to me, was planning to take part in the review. I was requested to contact the organizer and pull out of the event. Although I was divided about which course of action to take, I decided to follow this requirement, contact the event organizer, and withdraw from the event. After having done so, I felt very angry with myself for having given in so easily to what seemed to be unjustified pressure.

(4) In 2011. I 'inherited' a series of writing workshops for postgraduate Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) research students from another department. The previous tutor became angry that they were no longer involved in the module and burst into my office without warning to voice their irritation. This tutor's intervention culminated in the higher-level organization asking me to produce my teaching resources to demonstrate that I had not plagiarized what had been done before. After due reflection, I determined that I should resist all efforts to force me to disclose my teaching materials in this manner. The matter was dropped, and I was never asked to produce my materials again.

(5) In 2019, during a one-to-one academic writing tutorial, an international student told me that they were locking themselves into their bedroom and were not eating or sleeping but asked me specifically not to tell anyone. This raised the issue of confidentiality needing to be waived because the student was clearly at risk of harm. The situation was also potentially triggering for a tutor who has mental health problems themselves. I resolved this situation by calling the department and speaking to a personal tutor who was then able to contact the student to ensure well-being. Some months later, the student returned to my office and although I thought they had been annoyed by my intervention, and felt that it was culturally insensitive, they thanked me for my proactiveness, and brought me a small present.

3. Feelings

In any type of experience, feelings come first. They are characteristically regarded as transitory, short-lived emotional responses to immediate lived experience (Matthews, 2024). They are not 'unreal' in the sense that they have a tangible link to the present moment and have a number of physical as well as psychological effects. But they are often likened by psychologists to passing clouds blowing across the sky: here one minute, gone the next. The way we feel is closely associated with factors such as how far others see us in a negative light, the psychology and personality of the individual experiencing the incident, their level of resilience to criticism, and aspects of their upbringing and childhood (including early trauma) which intrude into, and shape adult life. The nature, duration and intensity of feelings varies from person to person and situation to situation.

To be a little more systematic here, I have attempted to engage my feelings about the five critical incidents retrospectively, using a simplified, younger person's version of Rosenberg's (2015) 'feelings wheel' to categorize my immediate processing of each incident. Structurally speaking, the wheel is configured with the basic initial emotions of 'happy', 'sad', 'angry' and 'scared' at the hub of the wheel, and more complex emotions and feelings associated with those basic emotions arranged around the

wheel's rim. There are a number of versions of this wheel in use within therapy settings, but I have found that accessing my feelings at a younger age, as I do here, has been very helpful in healing from hurt and rejection in my life, and the more limited number of options available on this wheel also helps to achieve an overall picture of consistency.

Figure 1: A simplified version of Rosenberg's 'feelings wheel' for children aged 5 to 12.

In three out of the five episodes listed above (incidents 1, 3 and 4) my initial feelings were largely negative. Anger was a prevailing sentiment in all of these events, and the behaviour of others often came as a direct, unjustified affront to my perceived sense of professionalism and professional competence. I was angered, for example, that my senior managerial colleague had thought me unworthy of being able to run a writing retreat, and I also resented being asked to make my teaching materials available for inspection, feeling that I was being singled out for negative treatment. This incident made me feel that I was on the receiving end of bullying tactics from senior colleagues, and that the institution was allowing bullies to get away with destructive behaviour unchecked. Such incidents made me feel deeply depressed and unhappy. Where senior colleagues unfairly vetoed or complained about my practice, I lost a significant amount of confidence and self-esteem over a lengthy period of time, well beyond the initial duration of the incident.

In the two other incidents (2 and 5), more positive feelings were in evidence, even if the outcomes arose directly from a sense of confusion and a slight impulsiveness on my part to resolve complex issues. These events showed that I could be more proactive in my decision making. Having felt negative about some earlier incidents and overcome these emotions in time, my sense of resilience seemed to increase somewhat, and I felt better placed to engage proactively across a larger organization, with care taken to safeguard the sensibilities of individuals. This said, my anger prevailed in regard to the research student's treatment by being pressurized into submitting a thesis that they were not happy with purely to safeguard the reputation of the supervisor, and equally, I felt I was impatient and frustrated during my phone call about the students who was depressed, since it seemed difficult to instill a sense of urgency into the situation at the start of the discussion.

In essence, then, incidents 2 and 5 elicited paradoxical feelings, whereas in incidents 1, 3 and 5, my feelings were uniquely negative.

My selection of the feelings elicited by each event are charted in Table 1 below.

Table 1: feelings experienced after the five 'critical incidents', in list form.

Incident	Feelings elicited
1	*Angry*: offended, irritable, bitter, resentful, betrayed Scared: Intimidated, insecure, stressed, anxious, overwhelmed *Sad*: low, regretful
2	*Scared:* worried, stressed, anxious, stunned, depressed *Happy*: confident, brave, empowered, excited
3	*Angry*: rageful, frustrated, indignant *Sad*: lonely *Scared*: nervous, intimidated, stunned, depressed, disappointed
4	*Scared*: intimidated, insecure, worried, overwhelmed *Sad*: lonely *Angry*: offended, resentful, indignant, bitter, frustrated, rageful
5	*Scared*: panicky, worried, stressed, anxious *Happy*: empowered, brave, confident

Figure 2: A word cloud representation of the feelings evoked by the five critiocal incidents.

Up to this point, I have shown how critical incidents facing the EAP teacher can raise many immediate feelings, of vastly varying intensity and durations. Feelings of confusion about the best course of action, as in incidents 2 and 5, dissipated much more quickly as my professional persona became instigated; incidents 1, 3 and 4, involving negative perceptions and interpretations of my role by others, elicited feelings that were much harder to resolve, and which were of lengthier duration and higher intensity, affecting well-being over a much more protracted period.

My understanding of other people's feelings is also of worthy of note in these exchanges. People such as myself who experience symptoms of borderline personality do not naturally see nuances or subtleties in our own, or others' experience and emotions, and may engage in binary, or 'black and white' thinking. Looking back, I believe this type of thinking was in operation in incidents 1, 3 and 4. Arguably, even if those I communicated with in these incidents had acted inappropriately and out of turn, they most likely did not consider these incidents in as much depth as I did; my view of them was more extreme and debilitating, whereas their view of me may have been benign, At the time, however, I made numerous negative evaluations about my own position and the work I was involved in.

4. Evaluation

I will now move on to evaluate my experiences. Evaluation, according to the Gibbs' (1988) cycle, involves conducting a more balanced appraisal of one's strengths and weaknesses within a situation. This can happen months or even years after the event. One of the main strengths of my actions in all five of these scenarios was my ability to be proactive and to make quick decisions in the interests of the students and the wider academic community. I was aware of the fact that my decisions could sometimes be impulsive, so I had to try to reflect on different courses of action and to think critically before arriving at a preferred solution. I also experienced imposter syndrome, in that I kept regarding my assumptions of my own professionalism as misguided in the light of other colleagues' apparent, negative evaluations of my work (Addison and Breeze, 2022).

One of the main drawbacks of my position in all five critical incidents was that I was disinclined to discuss my course of action with others. A key reason for this was the assumption that the process of supporting students would become unduly bureaucratic, as well as the fear that my proactivity and agency would be questioned and rejected by the higher level institution on account of my lower status. My approach, however, seemed to cause anger, offence and irritation, as well as frequent interpersonal difficulties with those in higher authority. I felt, in particular, that as a tutor with a strong academic track record, I did not need to explain all my decisions to others. Equally, however, I was not sufficiently aware that I needed to appreciate that other colleagues might be feeling sensitive, and may have felt threatened by an approach that sought to support students without entering into a full dialogue with colleagues as stakeholders.

I have summarised the main strengths and weaknesses of my position as EAP tutor in each scenario, as per Table 2 below:

Table 2: An evaluation of the strengths and weakneses of the tutor's position during the five critical incidents.

Event	Main strengths	Main weaknesses
1	• Well-intentioned desire to support a student who required linguistic support and intensive essay writing assistance. • Decision to be proactive and to support a student in need, with the aim of improving retention rates at the university and helping the student to achieve personal goals. • Attempt to help the student to pass the assignment was eventually successful.	• Senior member of staff should have been consulted first rather than informed about the support after the event? • Intervention and exchange could have made the member of staff in question feel threatened and vulnerable to criticism from their superior. • Senior staff member's complaint, however unjustified, made me feel vulnerable and anxious about my position at the university.
2	• Had confidence in terms of being able to 'read' the situation and knowing how to cascade the issue to more senior colleagues. • Had sufficient understanding of the subject to be able to assess the quality of the thesis.	• Potential offence may have been caused to the student's supervisor by a junior member of staff intervening in a situation for which they were not directly responsible.
3	• Proactivity in deciding to set up a writing event at university-wide level in concertation with others across the institution.	• My role and experience may not have been held in high esteem by the member of staff in question. • Staff member appeared to doubt my professional ability. • My experience of being able to publish my own work was called into

	• Belief that I had the skills and experience to impart useful writing strategies to colleagues across departments. • Ability to negotiate effectively with cross-university stake holders.	question, despite having a comparatively successful publication track record. • Staff member appeared to be using their power to place pressure on me to withdraw from an event that I had been requested to run by another university member.
4	• Felt a justifiable sense of resolve not to share my materials with others. • Maintained my personal belief that this was not a 'me' problem and that there was no obvious precedent to being asked to pass on my teaching materials to others. • Kept in mind my sense of integrity and professionalism at all times.	• Sense of professionalism and face was challenged unfairly by another department without due justification. • Disparity in status between me and higher level institutional. representative meant that discussion was not held on an equal 'playing field'. • My professionalism was undermined, leading to the perception of unfair treatment and harrasment.
5	• Knowledge of university systems. • Awareness that confidentiality can be breached in certain limited situations. • Knowledge of the personal tutor system and who the key person is that is involved. • Persistence in reaching the right outcome. • Belief that students have the right to feel supported, and eventually empowered.	• Student might have felt offended by this course of action, especially given their culture and beliefs. • Not fully aware of the intercultural issues in making this type of referral. • Student's department might have felt that I was acting out of turn. • Follow-up support for the student may or may not have been suitable.

As can be seen from Table 2 above, when I was operating across departmental boundaries, I had opportunities for personal agency and effectiveness, but I also experienced continual constraints in terms of perceptions of my competence by others, both within my own department and across the wider institution. An analysis of this issue and the reasons for the paradoxical position of the English for Academic Purposes tutor will follow in the next section.

5. Analysis

Analysing an event or series of interchanges presents a unique opportunity to step back from the immediate emotions of a situation and to view a given issue more self-reflexively. In doing so, perspectives widen, and it becomes easier to situate specific events within a broader socio-economic framework that helps to 'explain away' events that have caused upset without the need to take them personally: in essence, to de-personalize negative experience. Analysis is a key feature of therapeutic approaches to teacher reflection. The process I shall use is reminiscent of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) social ecological model, whereby our immediate position as individuals comes to be seen as part of a more complex, dynamic ecosystem, where individuals are linked to each other and to the wider social, economic and political systems that govern institutions, and shape their underpinning ideology.

One of the most noticeable wider issues that has helped to shape my experiences is the recognition that the 'institution' is a high pressure, increasingly managerial system where staff at all levels face persistent challenges and pressures. This high pressure system can easily breed a bullying

culture where metrics, reputation management and 'saving face' are valued more highly than the personal well-being of staff. This was the case in incident 4, where bullying was in evidence across departments, and also in incident 2, where the supervisor was keen to protrect their reputation by placing pressure on the research student to submit before trhey were ready. Well-being has also become a strong agenda for neoliberal universities, but as incident 1 suggests, a proactive EAP tutor can make all the difference in promoting students' well-being, even if it seems to be beyond their immediate remit.

An interesting exploration of the concept of 'authoritarian neo-liberalism' is undertaken in a recent paper by Woodman (2017), regarding 'Warwick University plc'. In the sort of circumstances that Woodman (2017) elaborates on here, bullying can readily occur, from above, from below and from side to side within an organisation, and staff experiencing mental health conditions may be seen as 'easy targets' by self-driven managers, and their needs may be ignored. It is all too tempting, especially where a tutor has borderline personality, to see oneself as the direct cause of a negative experience for others, and as an object of resentment, whereas in fact, those people who appear to provide negative evaluations of us should have an equal reponsibility to treat colleagues with respect and dignity. Dignity at work policies exist in the workplace, but it is known that they are not always followed and that perpetrators can easily get away with victimising colleagues. However, gradually appreciating the pressures within an authoritarian neoloberal system to retain students and garner student satisfaction, whilst ensuring that academic standards are met, can at least help to set the bullying in context.

According to the dictates of authoritarian neo-liberalism, in a department within a larger organisation, reputation is of paramount importance: if events are run, say, which appear to detract from a department's reputation or if decisions are made which potentially compromise a department's integrity, this is likely to be even more keenly felt within a neo-liberal institution that is inherently anxious to please its stakeholders, and to pander to its fee-paying students. Such issues are explored further in the literature by writers such as Sassower (2019) and Craig (2015). They are also manifest in the first case, where a Head of Department did not wish to admit that a fee-paying student in their department was struggling with their English, and also the third case, where the member of staff used 'reputation' as a reason for questioning my ability to run the retreat and to link with stakeholders beyond the immediate department. This analysis of those critical incidents helps to comprehend, albeit not to justify, any bullying tactics.

Figure 3, below, shows how my position links to the wider institution, and society as a whole.
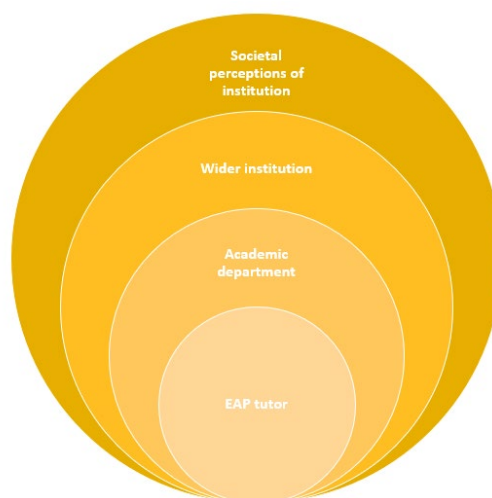

Figure 3: Inter-relationships between EAP tutor, wider institution and society.

The above figure shows that the EAP tutor is embedded within a wider series of concentric circles, each of which represents an additional layer of influence. At its widest level, the influence comes from the societal perception of universities in general (the exosystem), and the institution in particular (mesosystem), embodied in artificial products such as league tables, reputation managed press releases, and the view that the institution is 'tough' on those who are not rigorous or who fail to toe the line. This, in turn, shapes the policies and practices of the wider institution, which are implemented with regard to departments. As can be seen from the diagram, the individual EAP tutor is in the smallest circle, and is caught up within a complex, interconnected eco-system. In these circumstances, it is easy to see how navigating the institution can be problematic and daunting.

Secondly, allied to the issue of pressure being encountered higher up the institutional ladder is the thorny issue of the status of the English for Academic Purposes tutor within institutions. In my 2002 paper, I argued that tutors who are largely involved in language support do not have high status or pereceived agency, regardless of their academic background. We are often, as I explained in my earlier paper (Sharpling, 2002), pawns in a well-intentioned 'game' of providing support to students and departments that can easily backfire, leading to accusations of malpractice against which it is hard to defend oneself. In these circumstances, our professional judgement can often be called into question.

The lower status experienced by English for Academic Purposes tutors within larger universities also arises, as is already well known, from the separation, in the mind's eye of academic departments, between those who teach content-based disciplines and those who teach language, an issue explored in further detail by Bond (2020). For relatively archaic reasons, often historically connected with the traditional division of foreign language departments into those who teach languages (seen as a lower order, threshold skill) and those who teach literature and culture (a higher order skill), language teaching is sometimes regarded as a less 'worthy' discipline, a mere instrumental process designed to enable students to reach a stage where they are able to access higher order thinking. This endemic view within institutions persists despite good philosophical reasons for appreciating that language and thought are inherently linked, and indeed, often indissociable. Nevertheless, in my experience, academic tutors across institutions often tend to see language as a mere cosmetic 'add on', designed to make the content of the work more understandable. They frequently describe teaching EAP as 'correcting the grammar' whereas the whole process is much more complex than this. In my experience, this has often led to academic tutors appraising work as being insufficient 'because of' language, rather than because of difficulties with logical thinking and answering the question. The tension between content and language is represented in the diagram in Figure 4 below.
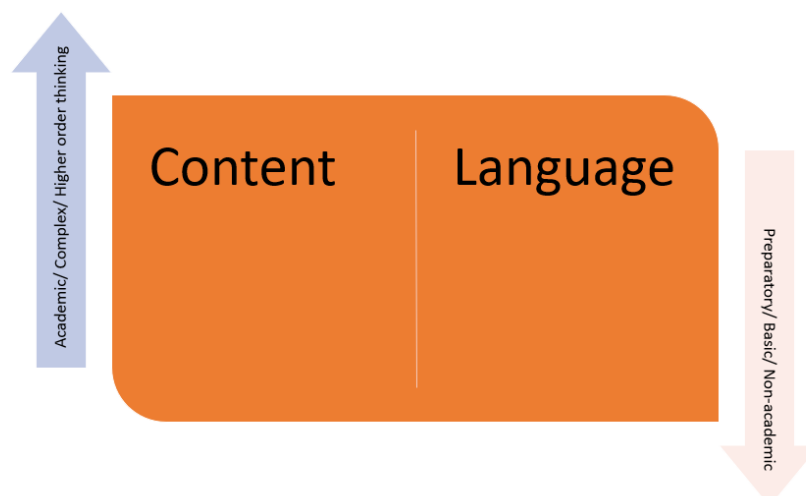

Figure 4: Perceived tension between language and content in HE institutions.

In the above figure, we can see how content and language, which we could regard as one and the same, pull away from each other and push in different directions, with the content being pulled upwards into the sphere of higher order thinking, and the language pulled downwards as it comes to be relegated to something preparatory, and essentially basic.

A third way of widening out my discussion by way of analysis has been for me to examine my own values, beliefs and attitudes when working across departmental boundaries. One of the difficulties I experienced continually at the start of my career was having the perception that the instuition is unduly bureaucratic and that solutions could be more easily arrived at through quick, decisive action than lengthy discussion Yet with the benefit of hindsight, and bearing in mind the complexities of the club-culture-based institution of the modern neoliberal university, it would have been better to realise that decisions often have to be made jointly, in concertation with others. Transparency and keeping others informed remains a highly important, valued aspect of the work of an EAP tutor, and enables one to gain respect from senior colleagues and the wider institution. At the same time, if we are not given the opportunity to exercise agency or to use our academic skills to the full, this also works in detriment to ourselves and the institution. Other key aspects that I learned were making sure that decisions were carefully thought through and fully considered. This might involve processes such as taking a step back, or letting the interlocutor know that a decision will be made once all the necessary stakeholders have been contacted. These processes, although valuable, may be more difficult for someone experiencing a mental health condition.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, in this reflection, I hope to have shown that many of the challenges I have faced in my career have been social and environmental, rather than simply linguistic or pedagogical. These are scenarios for which a tutor often receives little or no advance training on designated professional courses, and which can be highly detrimental to their shorter and longer-term well being. The emotional labour of a tutor in aiming to promote student retention whilst navigating the tightrope of often strained relations with academic departments, is not a topic that is frequently discussed on the average Masters programme or teaching certificate. It is often left to the tutor, innocent and uninitiated as they are, to trace a path through a maze of interpersonal complexities. By adopting a critical incident approach where confusing or memorable events are more fully analysed, I hope to have shown how better sense can be made of difficult situations within institutions. In doing so, a sharper understanding may be gained about where bullying and harrassment occur, and tutors can gradually gain more confidence in handling complexity in a proactrive way. This is especially challenging for tutors with a diagnosed condition such as borderline personality, but it comes with practice.

On the basis of my reflection, I would now like to propose the following action points which, with reference to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) social ecological model cited earlier, seek to link personal, institutional and professional issues, the better to address the broader ecological issues facing the tutor and the environment they find themselves in.

7. Action plan

7.1 Professional

I would welcome greater recognition for English for Academic Purposes as a discipline both within its own department and across instititions. This includes recognising the academic and personal attributes of English for Academic Purposes staff, their agency, and valuing more strongly the teaching that they undertake. I also believe that greater emphasis on well-being issues in teacher training courses would be helpful, for example exploring the values of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and

Mindfulness as a counterbalance to the fequent negative evaluations and bullying that we may be at the receiving end of.

7.2 Institutional

I would like to see a working environment where members of staff of all grades are listened to and are allowed to provide constructive criticism to management without the fear of victimisation and reprisals from more senior staff. I would also like to see more appreciation of the agency of English for Academic Purposes tutors, their background, and the skills and knowledge they have gained in order to do what they are doing, as well as a welcoming of their resourcefulness and their ability to solve problems quickly and efficiently. All too often, the views of such tutors are brushed aside; tutors are sílenced in meetings, or even excluded from them, and play little role in decisions about language policy across institutions. This could change if there were a greater understanding of what tutors do, and what knowledge they bring to the institution. Tutors in English for Academic Purposes need to 'sell themselves' more, be less deferential when working with senior colleagues, stand their ground when they know they are right, and celebrate their achievements more vociferously.

7.3 Personal

I would like to see more training and development in personal skills for EAP tutors to enable them to handle unfair criticism and negative evaluations of their work, as well as greater efforts to try to integrate tutors into a wider 'team' as agentic, decision-making individuals. Conflicts within linguistics departments are still, all too often, handled in a disciplinary, 'top down' manner with little active learning taking place as a result of critical incidents, as well as too much emphasis being placed on massaging and preserving institutional reputation.

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