

Third Disciplinary Literacy Symposium

17th & 18th June 2026
University of Bath & Online



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Sponsors



Welcome

We are delighted that you will be joining us at the University of Bath's **Third Disciplinary Literacy Symposium**, hosted by the University's [Disciplinary literacy & corpus-based pedagogy: The BAWESS project](#), which is dedicated to exploring disciplinary literacy in schools. The Symposium will take place on 17th and 18th June 2026 at the University of Bath and online. It will bring together leading educational specialists, linguists and academics, who will present and discuss their latest work in the areas of disciplinary literacy for curriculum learning in the context of linguistically diverse schools from a range of contexts around the globe.

This event is aimed at secondary school teachers and researchers working in the field of language education. The Symposium promises excellent opportunities for discussion, knowledge exchange, professional development and networking.

Venue

- In-person: University of Bath, Claverdown, Bath, BA2 7AY
 - Wednesday: 1W 2.101
 - Thursday: 3E 2.1
- Online: Streaming links will be emailed to online delegates on the morning of Wednesday 17th June 2026

Themes

The Symposium draws on empirical research underpinned by theoretical insights to create a dialogue and raise awareness of the potential of disciplinary literacy to support access to the curriculum with a particular focus on:

- Disciplinary knowledge and literacy
- Genres and genre-based pedagogy
- Cross-disciplinary collaboration
- Teacher/researcher collaboration
- Corpus-based pedagogy
- Data Driven Learning

Speakers

BAWESS
Project

The Third Disciplinary Literacy Symposium

17th & 18th June 2026, University of Bath

Bringing together world-leading experts in education and linguistics



UNIVERSITY OF
BATH



Ana Llinares



Philip Durrant



Gail Forey



Anne McCabe



Chloe Butlin



Tom Morton



Maria Brisk



Geraldine Mark



Hilary Nesi



Duygu Candarli



John Polias



Verity Neeves



Winfred Xuan



Ruslana Westerlund



Reka Jablonkai



Dana Therova



Meg Gebhard



Evelyn Hargett



Marlén Izquierdo



Beth Curtis



Natalie Cheers



Helen Handford



David Beauchamp

Programme

DAY 1 - Wednesday 17 th June 2026 (University of Bath & online)		
8.30 - 9.15: Arrival / Registration		
9.15 - 9.30: Opening		
Time	Talk	Speakers
9:30 - 10:00	Demystifying disciplinary literacy	Chloe Butlin
10:00 - 10:30	The Professional Learning Cycle: an adaptive tool to guide responsive co-planning for positive impacts on student learning	Verity Neeves, Evelyn Hargett
10:30 - 11:00	Working with words to meet academic needs	Hilary Nesi
11:00 - 11:30: Tea / Coffee break		
11:30 - 12:00	Addressing the language challenges of the transition from primary to secondary school using corpus linguistics	Duygu Candarli
12:00 - 12:30	A framework for capturing task-type variation in school and university writing	Phil Durrant, Beth Curtis, Larissa Goulart
12:30 - 1:00	Variation across ages, modalities and register in a corpus of multilingual 14–25-year-olds	Geraldine Mark
1:00 - 2:00: Lunch / Networking		
2:00 - 2:30	What's in the THEME?: Sentence starters in disciplinary texts	María Estela Brisk
2:30 - 3:00	Improving students' science literacy through harmonising the patterns of meaning-making in the science classroom	John Polias
3:00 - 3:30	Spiral Progression in Logical Meaning-Making: Clause Complexing in Chinese High-Achieving Students' Expository Writing Across School Levels	Winfred Xuan Wen Hui
3:30 - 4:00: Tea / Coffee break		
4:00 - 4:30	Disciplinary literacy, CLIL, and corpus linguistics	Marlén Izquierdo
4:30 - 5:00	A Corpus-Based Study of the Nominal Group in Highly Rated Student Writing	Anne McCabe, Lise Fontaine
5:00 - 5:30	"It's not the next Tesla ...": how can an entrepreneurial approach serve children's linguistic needs	Rob Sharples
5:30 – Close		

DAY 2 - Thursday 18th June 2026 (University of Bath; 3E2.1)**8:30 - 9:00: Arrival / Registration****9:00 - 9:05: Opening**

Time	Talk	Speaker
9:05 - 9:30	The BAWESS Project: updates and insights from SFL and corpus linguistics	Gail Forey, Reka Jablonkai
9:30 - 9:50	Developing a whole-school culture of disciplinary literacy: Professional learning, inquiry and implementation	Natalie Cheers, Hadrian Briggs, Ali Parr
9:50 – 10:10	Reengineering the Physics curriculum through language, explanation and meaning	Craig Devlin, Andrew Leather
10:10 – 10:30	Making evaluation visible: Appraisal theory and analytical writing in Religion & Philosophy	Emma Bridgman, Anna Jenkin
10:30 – 10:40	Q&A (all morning sessions)	All morning speakers

10:40 – 11:00: Tea / Coffee break / Networking

Time	Workshop	Presenters
11:00 - 12:30	Playing with disciplinary discourses: Insight for teaching disciplinary writing to diverse students	Meg Gebhard

12:30 – 1:30: Lunch / Networking

1:30 - 2:30	WIDA ELD Standards as a Disciplinary Literacy Framework through SFL: Tracing Trash: Explaining How Litter Travels Through Our Local Waters	Ruslana Westerlund, Kelly Ann Cooney
2:30 - 3:30	Transforming Learning Outcomes: The Power of the Teaching and Learning Cycle	Gail Forey, Natalie Cheers, Helen Handford
3:30 - 4:30	Introducing data driven learning and corpus-based pedagogy for disciplinary literacy	Reka Jablonkai, Dana Theroova, David Beauchamp

Time	Talk (DT Chair)	Speaker
4:30 - 5:00	CLIL students' disciplinary literacy across disciplines and educational levels: a corpus-based longitudinal analysis	Ana Llinares, Tom Morton

5:00 - Close

Abstracts

Demystifying disciplinary literacy

Chloe Butlin; Content and Engagement Specialist (Literacy), Education Endowment Foundation

As outlined in the EEF's [improving literacy in secondary schools](#) guidance, literacy is key to learning across all subjects in secondary school and a strong predictor of outcomes in later life. As pupils progress through an increasingly specialised secondary school curriculum, there is a growing need to ensure they are trained to access the academic language and conventions of different subjects. Strategies grounded in disciplinary literacy aim to meet this need, building on the premise that each subject has its own unique language: ways of knowing, doing, and communicating.

This session focuses on an EEF campaign and [web resource](#) designed to support teachers and leaders to understand how to teach pupils to read, write and communicate effectively in their subjects, by prompting them to reflect on:

What is unique about your subject discipline in terms of reading, writing, speaking and listening?

- What is common with other subject disciplines?
- How do members of this subject discipline use language on a daily basis?
- Are there any typical literacy misconceptions held by students, for example, how to write an effective science report?
- Are there words and phrases used typically, or uniquely, in the subject discipline?

We will also consider how best to support professional development (PD) in this area through curriculum conversations and ensuring that the development of disciplinary literacy is coherently aligned with curriculum development.

The Professional Learning Cycle: an adaptive tool to guide responsive co-planning for positive impacts on student learning

Evelyn Hargett; Doctor of Education Research Candidate, University of Bath

Verity Neeves; Head of Disciplinary Literacy and Oracy & Teacher of English, Royal Wootton Bassett Academy

Instructional coaches can play a significant role in building teacher capacity to facilitate language and literacy instruction using the genre-based pedagogies of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) when guided by an effective tool. By transforming the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC) into a Professional Learning Cycle (PLC), an instructional coach uses a systematic approach that leverages best practice for constructive interactions, the identification an area of professional development focus for creating an action research plan while grounding decision making and reflective dialogue on student data for impact. While its design is cyclical, the application allows for personalisation, and responsiveness to the needs of the teacher for student learning. The ongoing support established through the PLC's integration of modelling, deconstruction and joint construction provide the tools that can alleviate fear and/or resistance. This becomes the factor that empowers the teacher for risk-taking in the classroom when trialling new techniques or approaches to learning and teaching. The PLC demonstrates that schools can move beyond the one-stop workshop model. Instead, that workshop can be seen as the launchpad to a cycle of teacher development through sustained, effective support that has the power to transform teacher practice and impact student learning.

Working with words to meet academic needs

Hilary Nesi; Coventry University

This talk will discuss ways of categorising vocabulary, the kinds of words that fit these categories, and the kinds of words to focus on in preparation for higher education. Topics will include:

- Frequency and word list creation;
- The distinction between lexical (content) and grammatical (function) words, and the interesting subset of words that are counted as lexical but serve a functional purpose and have no real indexical meaning (and so cannot be satisfactorily defined);
- The distinction between so-called “academic vocabulary” and the technical terms needed in specific disciplines;
- Appropriate contexts for everyday, “academic”, and technical words.

Vocabulary is a vast field of study, but I hope to be able to introduce some concepts that participants will find worthy of further exploration.

Addressing the language challenges of the transition from primary to secondary school using corpus linguistics

Duygu Candarli; University of Southampton

Alice Deignan, University of Leeds

This presentation reports a corpus-based investigation of school language, synthesising findings from complementary studies to show how disciplinary school language changes across school stages and disciplines. First, we will outline processes and challenges involved in compiling a large corpus of school language as part of an ESRC-funded research project (The linguistic challenges of the transition from primary to secondary school) in England. Corpora consisting of school language that school students encountered have been scarce and mostly limited to textbooks, compared to higher education settings (see Candarli, 2025). This project has addressed this crucial gap and drawn on systematically constructed corpora of spoken and written school texts, including worksheets, presentations, and assessment materials. We will outline key findings on how linguistic demands vary across disciplines and change at the transition to secondary school. Specifically, we will show that changes in the demands of school language do not just lie in academic vocabulary but also in shifts in meaning and discourse (Deignan et al., 2023). For instance, words familiar from everyday use often take on discipline-specific meanings, and texts increasingly rely on condensed expression. Extending these insights into rhetorical moves in teachers' PowerPoint presentations, we will also demonstrate systematic variation in genre structure across disciplines and school stages, which may pose potential challenges to comprehension at the transition (Candarli & Deignan, 2025). Together, these studies offer practical applications for teachers and teacher trainers by making the language of schooling visible, raising awareness of hidden language demands, and supporting discipline-specific approaches to literacy. We advocate for greater cross-learning and collaboration between primary and secondary school teachers and highlight the need to scaffold disciplinary literacy and language as central to academic success.

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A framework for capturing task-type variation in school and university writing

Phil Durrant, Beth Curtis, Larissa Goulart; University of Exeter

School and university students are asked to write on a wide range of topics, for diverse audiences, and diverse purposes. They may be asked to write emails or research reports; critique a poem or narrate a trip to the zoo; explain a design process or recommend a course of action to an imaginary client. Teachers and researchers have long recognised the importance of helping students come to terms with the demands of different types of writing, and hence of creating explicit models of task-type variation.

However, while many taxonomies have been proposed (e.g., Berge, Evensen, & Thygesen, 2016; Horowitz, 1989; Nesi & Gardner, 2012; Rose & Martin, 2012), researchers often report difficulties applying them to new texts, and have noted substantial inconsistencies in the range of labels used and in how common terms are defined (e.g., Durrant & Brenchley, 2023; Goulart, 2024; Römer & O'Donnell, 2011).

Writing Tasks at School and University is a UKRI-funded project that takes a new approach to understanding variation in academic writing, building on recent work in corpus linguistics (Biber, Egbert, & Keller, 2020; Egbert, Biber, Keller, & Gracheva, 2024). It moves away from construing text types as distinct categories towards a notion of contextual variation as quantitative and multidimensional. Texts are rated on a range of parameters relating to, for example, communicative function (e.g., argues; narrates); sources (e.g., primary data; academic texts; personal experience); and reader-writer relationships (e.g. informal; personal; professional). Factor analysis is used to identify key underlying patterns of variation and texts are mapped across the resulting dimensions.

Amongst other benefits, this allows researchers to account for the facts that text types are internally diverse and inherently dynamic, rather than homogeneous and fixed; that many texts do not belong to a single traditional category; and that mature writing is often achieved by transgressing categorical boundaries (Bazerman et al., 2018). By mapping texts across multiple dimensions, it also enables researchers to identify key axes of underlying variation - so promoting a stronger theoretical understanding of text types - and to quantify degrees of similarity and difference between texts with regard to those axes.

This presentation focuses specifically on the development of a set of parameters to capture the range of academic writing across disciplines in secondary school and university. It will describe the process of creating these parameters and evaluate their effectiveness using a sample of English, History and Science texts, sourced from the GiG (Durrant & Brenchley, 2023) and BAWE (Alsop & Nesi, 2009) corpora. These parameters are suggested as a flexible framework to account for task-related variation in researching, teaching, and assessing school and university writing.

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Variation across ages, modalities and register in a corpus of multilingual 14–25-year-olds

Geraldine Mark; University of Cardiff

This talk will focus on a written and spoken corpus gathered in Malta, where Maltese and English are both official languages. The data under investigation has been collected from senior and upper secondary schools, vocational and first year undergraduates where participants have been using both languages, and others, to varying degrees, since their early years (between three and five years of age). The corpus aims to inform an empirically-based description of English language users in this multilingual context. The data cuts across different pedagogical contexts which move from compulsory to non-compulsory curricula, and which culminate in an academic proficiency/literacy programme that aims to promote writing skills not yet developed at university entry level. In investigating the data I explore how language usage varies across age groups, task, interaction, and register. I illustrate changes in usage with respect to growing sensitivity to task and register across the variables, as well as showing the effect of oral input and interaction on writing in this specialised linguistic context.

What's in the THEME?: Sentence starters in disciplinary texts

María Estela Brisk; Emeritus Professor, Boston College

An analysis of the content and structure of the THEME in clauses found in history, science, and literature high school texts revealed that “what is the sentence about” expressed in the first section of clauses, is varied, often complex, and singular to each discipline. Written language has unmarked Themes, usually the subject of the clause and marked Themes – phrases or clauses before the subject. These marked Themes add information, moving the text in a new direction (Christie, 2012). Student work on the other hand showed sentences that mirror more the oral language with an abundance of simple nouns and pronouns in the THEME position (Brisk, 2021; Eggins, 2004). Awareness of how different disciplinary texts use THEMES to organize text is essential for readers to comprehend the text and for writers to make the text come together in a clear way (Boche, 2014). For example, while science connects the content of the texts with Themes that are technical terms to develop the content of the paragraph, history uses marked Themes indicating circumstances of time and place. This feature of the written language is difficult for all students but particularly for multilingual learners. Suggestions of how to teach the use of Themes to improve reading comprehension and writing will be presented.

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Improving students' science literacy through harmonising the patterns of meaning-making in the science classroom

John Polias; Director of Lexis Education

In this presentation, I will exemplify how students' literacy in science can be improved by their teacher using the various patterns of meaning-making in science in a way that creates harmony, or resonance. These patterns exist in the language of science, the visuals, the content organisation, and how we teach that content. To do this, I will consider several notions and patterns: scaffolding at three levels (macro-, meso- and micro-); pedagogical resonance in the classroom (ensuring that the patterns in the way science is taught resonate with the patterns in the content); and multi-semioticity (providing multiple access points to the meanings in science).

Spiral Progression in Logical Meaning-Making: Clause Complexing in Chinese High-Achieving Students' Expository Writing Across School Levels

Winfred Xuan Wen Hui; Hong Kong Metropolitan University

Mapping the linguistic repertoires of high-achieving students in their L1 and/or L2 writing is essential for educators and language professionals to better understand learners' language use and development (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Xuan, 2017). This understanding serves as a key indicator for teachers and curriculum designers in developing materials and implementing instruction. Numerous studies in the UK and Australia have mapped high-performing students' linguistic performance, particularly their deployment of active linguistic resources for meaning-making in both general language and disciplinary knowledge construction (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Rose & Martin, 2013; Durrant, et al., 2020). However, while much research delineates linguistic resources across different subject areas, grade levels, and genres, the progression of linguistic resources within the same writing task or genre across educational levels remains relatively underexplored. Such developmental insights are crucial, as Martin and Rose (2008) emphasize the importance of spiral curriculum progression within the same genre in scaffolding learners' control of increasingly complex meaning-making resources. Drawing on this framework, the present study examines the use of clause complexing resources for realizing logical meaning-making in expository writing across three educational levels in Mainland China. Data were collected from 160 high-achieving students (selected as top performers in their cohorts) who completed the same expository writing task under closed-book test conditions: 50 junior secondary, 50 senior secondary, and 60 third-year university students. The analysis focuses on differences in clause complexing (taxis and logico-semantic relations) among these groups. The findings provide developmental insights into how high-achieving Chinese EFL students deploy clause complexing resources for logical meaning-making across different school levels. These insights offer practical value for curriculum designers and EFL teachers by suggesting that making these linguistic resources explicit in instruction can enhance the teaching of logical meaning-making. Consequently, this approach can better support learners in mastering advanced written discourse in Chinese EFL writing classrooms.

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Disciplinary literacy, CLIL, and corpus linguistics

Marlén Izquierdo; University of the Basque Country

Disciplinary literacy has long been acknowledged as a significant and relevant trait of research on CLIL. Indeed, this approach is believed to be an ideal teaching practice for building students' content-specific disciplinary literacies (DLs) by simultaneously integrating cognition and language within a multilingual learning environment (Hüttner & Dalton-Puffer (2024). CLIL researchers, who originally focused more on language, have gradually shifted their attention towards content, and efforts to enable a genuine integration of content and language (Dalton-Puffer, 2013; Ruiz de Zarobe y Cenoz, 2015) are ongoing and, among others, aim to address a call for "more systematic data on the patterns of use [...] and the application of [new] proposed models" (Bagalová & Kováčiková, 2025, p. 17). When undertaken from a functional model, CLIL research acknowledges the role of language as pivotal, both for the teachers' role as providers of subject knowledge and for the learners' need to become acceptable and competent users of the (specialised) language. CLIL learners, therefore, "will need to acquire the lexical and grammatical forms which are necessary for expressing the key ideas related to their subject" (Llinares et al. 2012, p. 16). The aim of this talk is to advocate for the use of corpus data as a robust and reliable way of analysing how CLIL learners integrate their disciplinary knowledge in their language production, on the assumption that "a subject and its language are inextricable" (Llinares et al. 2012, p. 111). To this end, CLIL-Bio L3 Learner Corpus has been compiled to conduct product-oriented CLIL learner disciplinary literacy analysis at both the genre and register levels. Looking into the learners' ability to write a subject-specific text, as well as into their usage of subject-specific elements will shed light on their discourse competence. This line of research, which gives attention to the learner, is expected to complement extensive research on CLIL classroom interaction where greater emphasis is made on the process and agents of teaching (Dalton-Puffer et al. 2010; Ruiz de Zarobe and Lyster, 2018).

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A Corpus-Based Study of the Nominal Group in Highly Rated Student Writing

Lise Fontaine; Université du Québec

Anne McCabe; St Louis University Madrid

The nominal group is a strong linguistic indicator of development in school-based student writing. It plays a key role in introducing people, concepts, things, events, and phenomena and then sustaining them across the discourse (Martin, 1992), making it a vital resource for managing reference within texts (Fontaine, 2015). At the level of the clause, the nominal group can realise a participant in transitivity, the Subject in the mood system, and the Theme in textual organisation, “making it the only unit that can express the main elements for all three metafunctions” (Fontaine, 2015, pp. 187–88). Numerous studies from ideational, interpersonal, and textual perspectives have shown how developing writers exploit the meaning-making potential of the nominal group. From the ideational metafunction, increased use of nominal rather than clausal renderings through ideational grammatical metaphor has been used to trace writing development in longitudinal studies following targeted instruction (Liardét, 2016), with similar patterns observed in immersion contexts without explicit instruction, including content and language integrated learning settings (Whittaker & McCabe, 2020). McGrath & Liardét (2018) use the BAWES corpus to identify grammatical metaphors in successful writing across university disciplines. Other studies have analysed nominal groups in Theme position for coordination of metafunctional meanings. Berry (1995) compares schoolchildren’s varying degrees of success, linking these to unfolding Theme choices. Martínez-Insua (2022) compares ideational, interpersonal, and textual Theme choices across texts written by first- and second-language writers of English. This paper reports on a pilot study of the nominal group in the BAWESS corpus, through an analysis of highly rated texts across disciplines and age groups (GCSE and A-level). It aims to characterise how successful secondary-school students draw on the metafunctional resources of the nominal group, contributing to developmental descriptions of student writing. Future research will use these preliminary findings to explore variation across attainment levels, disciplines, and age groups.

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"It's not the next Tesla ..." : how can an entrepreneurial approach serve children's linguistic needs

Rob Sharples; University of Bristol

Universities feature 'enterprise and entrepreneurship' prominently in their marketing and strategic plans, but the reality is that academic and commercial work can be an uneasy combination. The differences in approach, values and goals can often mean that academic entrepreneurship produces neither robust scholarship nor commercial success. That may be its strength.

In this paper, I focus on our work to support academic language development and argue that a hybrid (academic-entrepreneur) approach creates new opportunities for meaningful impact. I use a series of case studies - including my own - to show the uneasy tension in practice and demonstrate the potential impact it can have on schools and pupils.

I close with practical recommendations for participants to get started on their own entrepreneurial projects in linguistics and language education.

The BAWESS Project: updates and insights from SFL and corpus linguistics

Gail Forey & Reka Jablonkai; University of Bath

The British Academic Written English Secondary School (BAWESS) corpus, developed under the ESRC-funded Disciplinary Literacy and Corpus-Based Pedagogy project (2025–2028) addresses this important omission in the current body of research, by investigating language use and writing development in English exam-year texts with a corpus-based approach. In this talk, we present the methodological and practical challenges of building a learner writing corpus in hard-to-access educational contexts, with a particular focus on the early stages of corpus design and compilation. We propose practical strategies and a replicable framework for corpus-building and text collection in such hard-to-access contexts that draws on teacher–researcher collaboration involving UK and international secondary schools. We present a framework for data collection in hard-to access contexts.

Developing a whole-school culture of disciplinary literacy: Professional learning, inquiry and implementation

Natalie Cheers, Hadrian Briggs, Ali Parr; Royal High School Bath

Over the past two years, Royal High School Bath's involvement in the British Academic Written English Secondary School (BAWESS) project and engagement with Lexis Education's *Teaching English in Multilingual Classrooms* (TEMC) programme (Dare & Polias, 2020) have shaped the development of a whole-school approach to disciplinary literacy. Drawing on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Data-Driven Learning (DDL), and disciplinary literacy research, this work has sought to move beyond generic literacy strategies towards a more explicit understanding of how language constructs knowledge across disciplines and responds to diverse learner needs.

The initiative has evolved from professional learning into a significant school improvement strategy. As teachers have explored the linguistic demands of their disciplines, concepts such as genre, register, appraisal, lexical cohesion, and disciplinary vocabulary have become increasingly explicit within curriculum design, lesson planning, and classroom practice. These understandings have informed both subject-specific innovations and the development of coherent whole-school approaches to literacy.

This work has contributed to the development of a new whole-school literacy policy and revisions to the school's teaching and learning framework. Elements of the Teaching and Learning Cycle are now embedded within planning expectations, lesson observations, and professional dialogue. The presentation reflects on the opportunities and challenges of implementing disciplinary literacy across the curriculum and considers how sustained professional learning can support meaningful pedagogical change while improving access to disciplinary knowledge for all learners.

Reference

Dare, B., & Polias, J. (2020). *Teaching English in Multilingual Classrooms (TEMC)*. Lexis Education.

Reengineering the Physics curriculum through language, explanation and meaning

Craig Devlin & Andrew Leather; Royal High School Bath

As students move through secondary Physics, they are required to explain increasingly complex ideas through increasingly specialised forms of language. Yet while conceptual progression is carefully sequenced, the linguistic demands of scientific knowledge often remain implicit. The ability to construct explanations, establish relationships between concepts, and move between everyday and technical ways of expressing meaning can present significant challenges for learners.

Participation in Lexis Education's *Teaching English in Multilingual Classrooms* (TEMC) programme prompted a re-examination of the Key Stage 3 Physics curriculum, with particular attention to the role of language in making scientific meaning. Informed by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), the project sought to align conceptual and linguistic progression rather than treating literacy as a separate or generic concern.

Curriculum redesign centred on the language of scientific explanation, lexical cohesion and conceptual word chains, and students' movement along the register continuum from everyday descriptions of phenomena towards increasingly abstract and technical forms of scientific discourse. Examples drawn from curriculum materials and early classroom implementation illustrate how disciplinary language is being made increasingly visible across key topics.

Early examples from curriculum planning and classroom implementation suggest that integrating linguistic and conceptual progression can support students' engagement with scientific ideas and their ability to communicate understanding with greater precision. More broadly, the project invites reflection on the role of language in shaping scientific knowledge and progression within the secondary curriculum.

Making evaluation visible: Appraisal theory and analytical writing in Religion & Philosophy

Emma Bridgman & Anna Jenkin; Royal High School Bath

Teachers of Religion & Philosophy often support students in developing evaluative writing through the use of exemplars, writing frames, sentence starters and skills analysis. While these practices are widely used, the linguistic resources they help students develop are often less considered. This project explores whether appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2003) can provide a useful framework for understanding the qualities teachers recognise and reward in successful evaluative writing.

Combining broader ideas from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), the study analysed a small collection of Year 10 examination essays. These essays were produced for GCSE RE 'd' questions, with the requirement to produce responses blending explanation and persuasion genres. The texts were analysed using two complementary approaches. First, teachers closely assessed the work using existing frameworks, identifying those elements they considered successful. These passages were then examined through an appraisal lens, focusing on engagement, force and focus.

The findings suggest a strong relationship between teacher-valued features such as consideration of alternative interpretations/voices, evaluation of significance and nuanced, sustained judgement, and specific appraisal resources within student writing. Rather than a substitute for existing pedagogical practices, appraisal theory is here presented as a framework for understanding and refining these tools. The presentation considers how a shared language for structuring and developing writing to introduce ideas within evaluative paragraphs may help make disciplinary expectations more explicit and support the development of increasingly sophisticated analytical writing.

Reference

Martin, J.R. and White, P.R., 2003. *The language of evaluation* (Vol. 2). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Playing with disciplinary discourses: Insight for teaching disciplinary writing to diverse students

Meg Gebhard; University of Massachusetts

This playful workshop is designed for newcomers to systemic functional linguistics (SFL) who wish to develop a deeper understanding of how language choices and images function in different ways to construct disciplinary meanings in the types of texts secondary students are typically required to read, write, and discuss in school. Through a hands-on activity, participants will be invited to produce four short texts about the same event but written for different purposes and audiences. These texts include a recount on social media, a personal narrative written in a literary style, a medical report, and a scientific explanation. Second, participants will share their texts and discuss the linguistic choices they made, or attempted to make, depending on their disciplinary and professional backgrounds. Third, through a guided discussion of the linguistic choices participants made, members of the workshop will be guided in developing an explicit awareness of some of the essential differences between literary and scientific discourse. Last, this workshop will conclude with insights into how teachers can provide students, especially those new to producing disciplinary texts, with explicit instruction and strong forms of scaffolding to better enable all students, regardless of their previous schooling experiences and background knowledge, to manage the demands of writing in subject-specific ways.

WIDA ELD Standards as a Disciplinary Literacy Framework through SFL: Tracing Trash: Explaining How Litter Travels Through Our Local Waters

Ruslana Westerlund & Kelly Ann Cooney

How can the WIDA ELD Standards serve as a disciplinary literacy framework for science instruction? This session explores how a functional language approach grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) supports multilingual learners in developing scientific explanations. Using the unit *Tracing Trash: Explaining How Litter Travels Through Our Local Waters*, participants examine how language and content learning can be integrated to deepen both NGSS understanding and academic language development.

Participants explore how the WIDA Key Language Use of **Explain** aligns with scientific practices such as modeling systems, analyzing cause-and-effect relationships, and constructing evidence-based explanations. Through student tasks and mentor texts, educators identify key language features of scientific explanations, including causal language, technical vocabulary, expanded noun groups, and logical sequencing.

Students investigate local waterways through texts, media, and field experiences, moving along the mode continuum from everyday language to more precise academic explanations while engaging in Science and Engineering Practices such as developing models, analyzing data, and constructing explanations.

Transforming Learning Outcomes: The Power of the Teaching and Learning Cycle

Gail Forey; University of Bath

Helen Handford: Wolverhampton City Council

Natalie Cheers: Royal High School Bath

This workshop provides opportunities to engage with the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC), informed by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), as a vehicle for developing disciplinary literacy. The TLC can transform outcomes as it is a highly effective tool for scaffolding learning. You will be involved in activities that highlight how teachers can explicitly scaffold students' engagement with disciplinary knowledge and literacy simultaneously, supporting learners to read, write, and think like experts in the field. Through practical strategies, participants will learn how to design units of work that build knowledge and language in an integrated and systematic way.

Introducing data driven learning and corpus-based pedagogy for disciplinary literacy

Reka Jablonkai, Dana Therova, David Beauchamp; University of Bath

This is an introductory workshop in the four-part Data-Driven Learning (DDL) workshop series run by the BAWESS research team. This session introduces participants to user-friendly corpus tools and corpus-assisted approaches for enhancing disciplinary literacy in the context of secondary school exam classes (e.g., GCSE, IGCSE, IB, A Levels). Participants will become familiar with the DDL approach, in which learners and teachers act as 'language detectives' to explore various features and patterns of authentic language data to uncover recurring linguistic characteristics that are typical of specific subject areas. By examining these real examples of language use, teachers can develop a deeper understanding of how disciplinary knowledge is constructed through language and apply these insights to inform curriculum design, scaffold students' writing, and support more effective literacy instruction across subjects.

CLIL students' disciplinary literacy across disciplines and educational levels: a corpus-based longitudinal analysis

Ana Llinares, Tom Morton; Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

Most corpus-based research on bilingual education and CLIL compares students' general language proficiency with that of peers in non-CLIL L2 settings (e.g., Möller, 2017). However, few corpus studies examine CLIL students' disciplinary literacy in the subjects studied through the L2. Addressing this gap, we present a corpus-based analysis of disciplinary literacy across disciplines and educational levels in bilingual secondary education. We conceptualise disciplinary literacy as students' ability to construe discipline-specific knowledge through Cognitive Discourse Functions (CDFs; Dalton-Puffer, 2013), while managing abstraction, concreteness, and technicality.

Following previous SFL-based studies of students' production of CDFs (e.g., Llinares & Morton, 2024; Nashaat-Sobhy & Llinares, 2023), we compare students' performance in the CDFs *define* and *explore*, representing factual and exploratory knowledge building, across disciplines and schooling levels. The data derive from a four-year longitudinal project involving CLIL students from 20 secondary schools in Spain participating in a bilingual education programme. The corpus comprises 200 written texts produced by the same students in Year 7 and Year 10 (50 texts per discipline and school year) in science and history. The texts were analysed using complementary SFL frameworks: Hao's (2020) discourse-semantic model and the concepts of mass (Martin, 2020) and presence (Martin & Matruglio, 2020). O'Donnell's (2008) UAM Corpus Tool supported systematic comparison of coded segments. In addition, subject teachers evaluated the same texts using comparative judgement (Jones & Wheadon, 2015), allowing exploration of relationships between discourse-semantic patterns and teachers' holistic assessments.

Preliminary analyses suggest greater variation across CDFs and disciplines than between educational levels. Initial patterns also indicate that stronger discourse-semantic realisations of disciplinary knowledge are not always associated with higher teacher ratings. We outline implications for how disciplinary literacy development is recognised and valued in CLIL contexts, and for combining corpus-based analysis of learner texts with teachers' judgements in research on disciplinary literacy, assessment, and bilingual education.

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Biographies

David Beauchamp

David Beauchamp has a long background in teaching and assessment, having worked for Cambridge Assessment's Research Division and worked for many years as a language teacher overseas and in the UK. His PhD was gained from Coventry University and was a corpus and SFL analysis of institutional communications during the COVID pandemic. He now applies this academic and professional experience to the analysis of student writing as part of the research team for the BAWESS project at the University of Bath.

Emma Bridgman

Emma Bridgman is Head of Religious Studies and Philosophy at Royal High School Bath, part of the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST). She is committed to developing research-informed teaching practice, testing educational theory and adapting it within her subject area. Emma has a particular interest in the diversity of learners and how students learn, with a focus on inclusive and effective pedagogy. She places particular emphasis on the use of scaffolding to support student understanding and success, especially for multilingual learners engaging with complex disciplinary language and concepts. She has also led whole-school CPD focused on student voice among multilingual learners and the development of scaffolding strategies to support success across the curriculum. She has previously taught Psychology alongside Philosophy and brings almost three decades of secondary teaching experience to her work as a subject leader and practitioner.

Hadrian Briggs

Hadrian Briggs is Deputy Head (Academic) at Royal High School Bath, part of the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), where he leads on teaching and learning and staff development across the school. He remains committed to the classroom, teaching Religion and Philosophy in the Senior School and Philosophy in the Sixth Form. Following two recent periods of Acting Headship, he has worked closely with staff to embed character education across the school. He is currently developing a coaching culture around teaching and learning, drawing on Rosenshine's Principles, the Graydin coaching model, and insights from Systemic Functional Linguistics to support disciplinary literacy across the curriculum. Hadrian has over 25 years' experience in secondary education in the South West, including 20 years specialising in girls' education. He also works as a Team Inspector for the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

Professor Maria Brisk

Maria Estela Brisk, a native of Argentina, is an Emeritus Professor of Education at Boston College. Her research and teaching interests include writing instruction, systemic functional linguistics genre pedagogy, bilingual education, bilingual language and literacy acquisition, and teacher education. She is the author of numerous articles and books.

Chloe Butlin

Chloe Butlin is a literacy specialist at the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). Her role is to coordinate the development and maintenance of high-quality, relevant resources and tools related to guidance reports and other evidence summaries across the EEF and the Research Schools Network. Her role also includes gaining expert insights from across the profession to help to shape this content.

Duygu Candarli

Duygu Candarli (Ph.D.) is currently a Lecturer in TESOL and serves as the Knowledge Exchange & Enterprise and Impact Champion in the Department of Languages, Cultures & Linguistics at the University of Southampton, UK. She specialises in corpus linguistics, academic discourse, second language writing, and writing assessment. She has published in international journals, including *Reading and Writing, Corpora, Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, and *Language Assessment Quarterly*. She is the co-author of *The Linguistic Challenge of the Transition to Secondary School: A Corpus Study of Academic Language* (Routledge, 2023).

Natalie Cheers

Natalie Cheers is Head of International Students at Royal High School Bath, part of the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), and serves as GDST Network Chair for International Students and EAL. She is also a consultant on the University of Bath's BAWESS project. Natalie supports multilingual learners both academically and pastorally, and works with staff to embed inclusive, language-aware practices across the curriculum. She has taught in secondary and higher education in the UK, Europe and Asia. She is currently a PhD student at the University of Bath, where her research focuses on corpus linguistics, disciplinary literacy, systemic functional linguistics, and the relationship between classroom practice and teacher knowledge. Natalie contributes to training across GDST on English as an Additional Language and international admissions, and is a Lexis Education tutor, delivering the TEMC course to teachers across its schools.

Kelly-Ann Cooney

Kelly-Ann Cooney (she/her) is a dynamic, culturally responsive educator who leads with equity at the forefront to improve district systems. She uses data and research-based best practices to build teacher capacity while working with administration to transform instruction and systems. Kelly works with local and state education agencies to support the implementation of high-quality instructional materials that center the assets and needs of multilingual learners. She partners with teachers and district leaders to unpack WIDA 2020 using Systemic Functional Linguistics across content areas and English as a Second Language curriculum. She is also a consultant for the English Learner Success Forum and Understood.org, where she continues to influence policy and practices in multilingual learner education. Kelly has presented at the Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages (MATSOL), the Massachusetts Association of Bilingual Educators (MABE), and WIDA conferences. She currently serves students, families, and educators in Fall River Public Schools as the Director of Multilingual Learner Education. Kelly's career spans over 30 years, including teaching abroad in Japan and France and in the United States as an elementary teacher, English as a Second Language teacher, French teacher, and English Language Arts teacher.

Beth Curtis

Beth Curtis is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the University of Exeter working on the UKRI-funded project, *Writing Tasks at School and University*. She has a background in teaching and teacher education, and her research interests include writing development, assessment and creative approaches to research.

Craig Devlin

Craig is Head of Physics at Royal High School Bath (GDST), with over 17 years' teaching experience. He holds a degree in Astrophysics from Cardiff University and has taught in linguistically diverse school contexts, including in Cardiff where over 35 first languages were represented. As a bilingual practitioner, he has taught Physics through both Welsh and English. Having recently completed the TEMC course, he is embedding its principles in his teaching, with a particular focus on disciplinary literacy in Physics and the use of a shared metalanguage to support student understanding. Craig co-founded the school's action research group and is currently working with Hadrian Briggs and Natalie Cheers to embed a lesson framework, grounded in the teaching and learning cycle, across subject departments. He is committed to girls' education and to continually refining his practice.

Philip Durrant

Phil Durrant is Professor of Applied Linguistics and Education at the University of Exeter and a former teacher of English for Academic Purposes. His research focuses on the language of school and university and on learner corpus approaches to understanding language development.

Professor Lise Fontaine

Lise Fontaine is a Professor in the Department of Lettres et Communication Sociale at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivieres (UQTR) and also serves as Director of the undergraduate program committee. Her academic work is centered on linguistic theory, with specific interests in functional grammar, lexicons-grammar, semantics, and referring expressions. Fontaine applies linguistic approaches in interdisciplinary contexts as well.

Prof. Gail Forey

Gail is currently Associate Dean (Education), Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of Education, at the University of Bath. She has published in the areas of written and spoken workplace discourse, Systemic Functional Linguistics, discourse analysis, language education and teaching development. Gail is committed to conducting applicable epistemically just research which has a positive impact on education. Adopting this approach, she is currently the Principal Investigator for the [*Disciplinary Literacy & Corpus-Based Pedagogy: The BAWESS \(British Academic Written English Secondary School\) Corpus \(The BAWESS Project\)*](#).

Meg Gebhard

Meg Gebhard taught multilingual learners and directed a program in Massachusetts before earning her doctorate from the University of California, Berkeley in 2000. Her research focuses on content-based literacy development for multilingual learners and teacher professional development in the context of high-stakes school reforms. Currently Professor Emerita of Applied Linguistics at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, she directed programs certifying candidates to teach English as a second language and secondary English. Her publications, many co-authored with K-12 teachers and doctoral students, have appeared in *TESOL Quarterly*, *The Modern Language Journal*, *Linguistics and Education*, *Journal of Second Language Writing*, and *Journal of Staff Development*. Her most recent book, co-edited with Kathryn Accurso, *In Pursuit of a Multilingual Equity Agenda: SFL Teacher Action Research* (Routledge), provides teachers with a practical guide to designing and critically reflecting on content-based instruction using Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (SFL) theory.

Helen Handford

Helen Handford is a teacher, trainer and consultant with over 20 years' experience in developing disciplinary literacies in diverse primary and secondary school contexts both in the UK and overseas. She is currently based in the West Midlands, UK, and is a literacy advisory teacher for the City of Wolverhampton Council's school improvement team, a tutor trainer for Lexis Education and a trainer for The EAL Academy.

Evelyn Hargett

Evelyn Hargett is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Bath. She carries over 22 years' experience teaching and leading in the primary years international education sector across Mexico, Iraq, Turkey and Spain. Evelyn's expertise lies in learning and teaching English within a multilingual, culturally and exceptionally diverse content-based classroom. As a lifelong learner, her ongoing curiosity about the ways to support language and literacy development through inquiry-based learning for conceptual understanding has been the focus of much of her research across two Masters of Arts and now her doctoral programme of studies at the University of Bath. Evelyn believes a functional approach to language and literacy supports all learners' ability to thrive as confident communicators.

Marlén Izquierdo

Marlén Izquierdo (León, 1981) is Associate Professor at the University of País Vasco in northern Spain. Her research fields of interest are corpus linguistics, contrastive linguistics, CLIL, and ESP/EAP. She participates actively in international conferences and has organised events of scientific dissemination. Her most recent publications include papers in refereed international journals and chapters in collective volumes. She has coedited two volumes of the Studies in Corpus Linguistics series by John Benjamins. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9248-6452>

Dr Reka R. Jablonkai

Reka R. Jablonkai is an award-winning Senior Lecturer in Education and Applied Linguistics at the University of Bath. Her research interests include corpus-based discourse analysis, corpora and AI in language teaching, multilingual educational contexts, and disciplinary literacy. She is Co-I of the ESRC-funded BAWESS project. She is lead editor of the *Routledge Handbook of Corpora and English Language Teaching and Learning* (2022). She worked as a teacher trainer and visiting scholar in various contexts, for example, in Italy, Lithuania, Germany, Slovenia, and Turkey.

Anna Jenkin

Anna Jenkin is Head of Year 7 and teaches History and Religious Studies at Royal High School Bath (GDST). She holds a PhD in French and History from the University of Sheffield and Paris IV–Sorbonne (Entente Cordiale British Embassy Fellowship/Arts and Humanities Research Council), as well as an MSc in the History of Science, Medicine and Technology from the University of Oxford. Anna has taught across the humanities at secondary, undergraduate and master's level. She has a particular interest in project-based learning and its potential to foster innovation and independent scholarship. She co-ordinates the school's EPQ programme and supports problem-based learning in Year 7. As Head of Year 7, Anna is currently developing a new programme of foundational academic skills to support students transitioning into senior school study.

Andrew Leather

Andrew teaches Physics at Royal High School Bath, part of the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), where he has been a member of staff since 2002. He holds a BSc in Natural Sciences (Physics with Environmental Science) and a PGCE from the University of Bath. Following several years in senior pastoral leadership, he has returned his full focus to teaching and learning. Andrew is known for his engaging teaching of particle physics at A level and for leading the school's Electronics Club, where students explore hands-on projects beyond the curriculum. A reflective practitioner, he embeds principles from systemic functional linguistics into his teaching to support students' understanding of disciplinary language in Physics. He is committed to developing thoughtful and resilient learners, encouraging an approach to Physics that embraces challenge, values mistakes as part of the learning process, and fosters curiosity and independence in problem-solving.

Ana Llinares

Ana Llinares is a full professor in the English department at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain. She teaches second language acquisition and content and language integrated learning (CLIL), both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. She coordinates the UAM-CLIL research group (<http://www.uam-clil.org>) and has published widely on CLIL at primary and secondary school levels. She is vice chair of the European COST project "CLIL Network for Languages in Education" and co-editor of the *Journal of Immersion and Content-Based Language Education*.

Dr Geraldine Mark

Geraldine Mark's research interests are in corpus linguistics and its diverse applications, particularly in relation to language development and variation. Among her publications are *English Grammar Today* (2011 CUP), the *English Grammar Profile*, an online resource of grammar development in L2 English, and *Corpus Linguistics for Language Learning Research* (2025, John Benjamins). She is a visiting lecturer at the University of Malta.

Professor Anne McCabe

Anne McCabe is Professor Emerita of English at Saint Louis University's Madrid Campus, where she has taught courses in rhetoric, academic writing, linguistics, public speaking, and English as an additional language. Her research focuses mainly on linguistics applied to language education and she is a member of the UAM-CLIL research group (<http://www.uam-clil.org>).

Tom Morton

Tom Morton is an honorary research fellow in the Department of English, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and a lecturer (teaching) in Applied Linguistics/TESOL at the Institute of Education, University College London. His research focuses on classroom discourse, teacher cognition, and disciplinary literacies in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and English Medium Instruction (EMI) secondary and higher education contexts.

Verity Neeves

Verity is Head of Disciplinary Literacy and Oracy and a Teacher of English at a large secondary and sixth-form academy in the South West of England. She is passionate about developing practical, research-informed approaches to improving literacy and oracy across the curriculum and leads whole-school initiatives to embed them at the heart of all subjects. At this year's symposium, Verity will share work developed with Evelyn Hargett on centring genre in students' extended writing.

Professor Emerita Hilary Nesi

Hilary's work involves teaching and researching English for academic purposes, corpus development and analysis, and the design and use of dictionaries and reference tools. She was principal investigator for the project to create the BAWE corpus of British Academic Written English, and she is Associate Editor of the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*. She is the co-editor of *The International Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics (Volume 14)*, which will be available in June 2026.

Alison Parr

Alongside her role as Acting Head of Learning Support, Alison teaches Chemistry at Royal High School Bath, part of the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), where she has been a member of staff since 2011. She holds a BSc in Chemistry and Law from the University of Exeter, a PGCE from the University of Bath, and a NASENCO qualification from Middlesex University. Following 10 years working as a forensic scientist, including giving evidence in court on complex fire cases, Alison made the transition to teaching around 16 years ago. Over time, she has specialised in the assessment and support of students with SEND, while maintaining a hands-on teaching timetable. She has recently completed the Lexis Education TEMC course, which has further deepened her understanding of the overlap between the needs of EAL and SEND learners. She is currently working with Natalie Cheers to develop a whole-school literacy policy that supports both EAL and SEND students, while also embedding her developing linguistic knowledge into her Chemistry teaching.

John Polias

John is a director of Lexis Education, an international consultancy in teaching and learning with a focus on how meaning is made in various school disciplines. He writes curriculum and teaching materials as well as professional development courses for teachers in major education systems and independent international schools.

Dr Robert Sharples

Rob is a Senior Lecturer in Language and Education at the University of Bristol and founder of Heddle Education, a university spinout company that works with schools to address pupils' language and learning needs. He is a University Enterprise Fellow and author of *Teaching EAL: Evidence-based strategies for the classroom and school*.

Dr Dana Therova

Dana Therova is a Research Associate at the University of Bath. Her research interest is predominantly in the area of academic writing utilising the methodology of corpus linguistics. She has also been exploring the effectiveness of data-driven learning (DDL) drawing on self-compiled corpora and how this approach can be usefully implemented in wider English for Academic Purposes (EAP) settings to enhance students' knowledge and productive use of disciplinary academic writing conventions across different disciplines and levels of academic study.

Professor Ruslana Westerlund

[Ruslana Westerlund, EdD](#), is an educational consultant, researcher, and Associate Adjunct Professor at Bethel University (St. Paul, Minnesota). She brings over 30 years of experience supporting schools and districts in designing instruction that integrates language, literacy, and content learning for multilingual learners and all students. She is a co-author of the WIDA ELD Standards, where she contributed Systemic Functional Linguistics as the conceptual framing for the standards components.

Dr. Winfred Xuan

Winfred Xuan is an Assistant Professor in Teacher Education at the School of Education and Languages at Hong Kong Metropolitan University. He earned his Ph.D. in Systemic Functional Linguistics from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Dr. Xuan's research interests include systemic functional linguistics, applied linguistics, second language writing, English for academic purposes, and teaching English/Chinese as a second language. His work has been published in journals such as *The Journal of Babel*, *Functional Linguistics*, *Applied Linguistics Review*, *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, and *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*.

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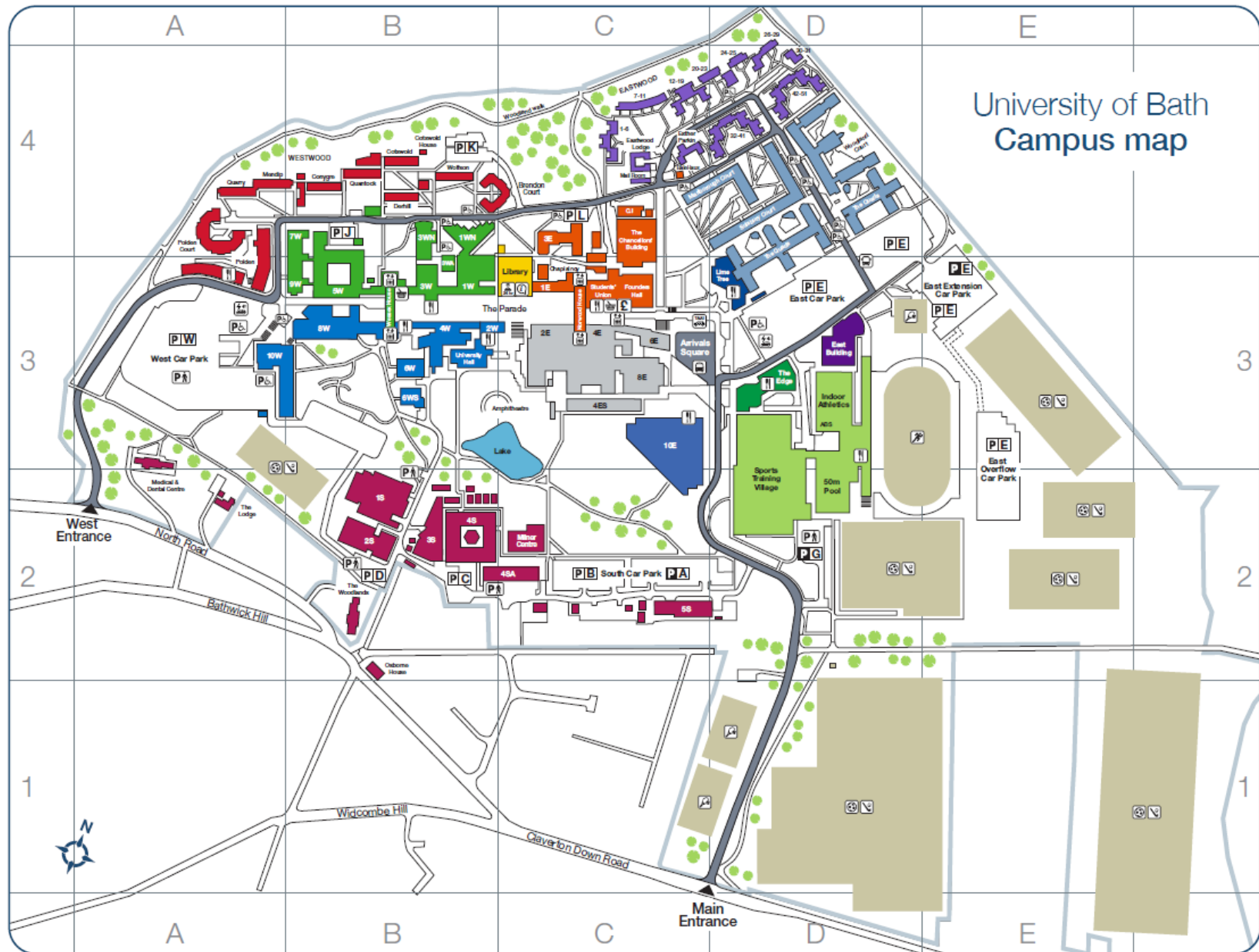
- Use the 'WiFi Guest' network (bandwidth is limited to 3Mbps per user to help ensure a fair service for all visitors).
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 - Once you are connected, open your web browser and refresh the page. Your browser may open automatically
 - Select your authentication method to continue
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Contact us

For any queries regarding this event, please get in touch with us at bawess@bath.ac.uk.

Map

The map of The University of Bath's campus can be accessed [here](#).



We look forward to welcoming you either online or in person in the beautiful city of Bath!



The BAWESS Research Team