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Using ColloCaid for Academic Writing

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Fill in the gaps

- The contradiction was not _____ apparent.
- They had to _____ the activities of each group.
- The system has been _____ adopted in the UK.
- The results are _____ in Table 3.
- There was a _____ increase ___ prices.
- Based ___ previous research, we conclude that...

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About the exercise

- The contradiction was not _____ apparent.
- They had to _____ the activities of each group.
- The system has been _____ adopted in the UK.
- The results are _____ in Table 3.
- There was a _____ increase ___ prices.
- Based ___ previous research, we conclude that...

- What kind of English are the gapped sentences about?
- Can more than one word fit each gap?

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Possible answers

- The contradiction was not ^{clearly, especially,} immediately, readily **apparent**.
- They had to ^{monitor, coordinate,} ^{organize, regulate} the activities of each group.
- The system has been ^{widely, formally,} readily, increasingly **adopted** in the UK.
- The results are ^{presented, shown,} displayed, provided **in** Table 3.
- There was a ^{sharp, slight,} significant, steady **increase** in prices.
- Based **on** previous research, we conclude that...

Gaps for testing recall of academic English collocations

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Collocation defined

Words conventionally used together
Words which just sound right together

- Lexical:
 - immediately apparent
 - monitor activities
- Grammatical:
 - depend on sth
 - interested in sth
- Lexical and grammatical:
 - increase in prices
 - increase of 10%
 - based in Lisbon
 - based on data

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Collocation defined

- Phraseological school perspective
 - collocations ≠ idioms, fixed expressions, binomials, etc.
 - cold feet?*
- Firthian perspective
 - lexical items occurring together more frequently than just by chance
- How can you check this?
 - Use a corpus

light increase or *slight increase*

Oxford Corpus of Academic English	light	slight
Occurrence	14,926	1,254
Co-occurrence 1 left of <i>increase</i>	1	97
LogDice score	0.7	8.92

Collocations and reading 

Which of the following is easier to read?

1. *Fine use of collocations can highly improve readability.*
2. *Effective use of collocations can greatly improve readability.*

fine use - effective use
highly improve - greatly improve

- Known word combinations are processed with less effort (Conklin and Schmitt 2007, 2012; Ellis et al. 2008)
 - Read as a single chunk, not each word separately
 - Idiom principle (Sinclair 1991)
- Collocationally rich texts are easier to read and perceived as more fluent (Pawley & Syder 1983; Crossley et al. 2015)

Collocations and writing 

Writing is easier if you don't have to stop and think of collocations



- submit a report
- working hypothesis

If you can recall collocations as a chunk, you can concentrate on other aspects of writing

Collocations and L2 learning 

Collocations are notably difficult for L2 learners (Pawley and Syder 1983; Natinger and DeCarrico 1992; Howarth 1998; Wray 2002; Frankenberg-Garcia 2018, Tavares-Pinto et al. 2021)

- Errors: **an increase of prices*
- Atypical uses: *? a light increase*
- Less visible issues
 - Limited collocation repertoire
 - Collocation avoidance
 - Collocation overuse
 - Possible misconceptions about collocation strength

Collocations and L2 learning 

- Clashing L1-L2 collocations can be particularly problematic (Nesselhauf 2005; Gilquin 2007; Peters 2016)
 - EN: **increase of prices*
 - PT: *subida de preços*
 - EN: *?a light increase*
 - PT: *um ligeiro aumento*
- But certain cognate collocations underused! (Tavares Pinto et al. 2021)
 - EN: *empirical study*
 - PT: *estudo empírico*
 - *for instance* sounds better than *for example*? (Frankenberg-Garcia & Pina 1998)

Collocations and EAP 

Academic English has its own set of collocations (Ackerman & Chen 2013, Frankenberg-Garcia et al. 2020)

- Every **option** must **remain on the table** .
- She **set the table** and began breakfast.
- Her right hand was lying casually **on the table** .
- Your task is to **clear the table** .
- **Booked a table** of 5 for lunch on Saturday.
- It's a more lucrative sideline than **waiting tables** .
- Mary sat with her elbows **on the kitchen table**
- Joe placed the tray **on the bedside table** and poured the tea.

- The final coding system is **listed in table 1** .
- Overall **results** are **shown in table 42** .
- Various organisms isolated are **shown in table 2** .
- The **results** are **reported in table 3** .
- The rate constant **k** is **given in table 15** .
- The **data** is **summarized in table 3** .
- The **results** are **reproduced in table 2** .
- The general logistic models are **presented in table 2** .

Teaching EAP Collocations 

- Learners often unaware of collocation problems (Nesselhauf 2005; Durrant and Schmitt 2009; Laufer and Waldman 2011; Frankenberg-Garcia 2014; 2018)
- Cannot ask for help is they don't know they need help
- What can we do to help learners with EAP collocations?

Raise awareness of collocation

1. The contradiction was not _____ apparent.
2. They had to _____ the activities of each group.
3. The system has been _____ adopted in the UK.
4. The results are _____ in Table 3.
5. There was a _____ increase _____ prices.
6. Based _____ previous research, we conclude that...

- Some words fit and sound natural, others don't
- Not just a matter of grammar & errors!
- Fluency and readability affected

Use textbooks with explanations and exercises

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Use textbooks with explanations and exercises

O'Dell & McCarthy (2008) – *English Collocations in Use*

Complete each sentence using a verb from the box in the appropriate form.

cover indicate present provide put
review tackle test undertake

- 1 It is a huge task to _____ a study involving hundreds of participants.
- 2 Fischler _____ her findings at an international biochemistry conference last year.
- 3 Chapter 2 _____ the literature on urban regeneration and concludes that more research is needed.
- 4 I have _____ a ratio of 1:10.
- 5 The research _____ to be carried out in the next few years.
- 6 The next step was to _____ the data.
- 7 The essay _____ a clear conclusion.
- 8 The book _____ a new perspective on the subject.
- 9 The lecturer _____ the main points of the lecture.

Writing essays, assignments and reports

Preparing for a research assignment

Here is an extract from a study skills leaflet given to students at a university, containing advice on how to tackle a research project. Note the collocations in bold.

Reading like a writer (Smith 1983)

- All students are expected to submit a 5,000-word report, detailing their research project and presenting their findings.
- Select a research topic in discussion with your tutor. You will need to formulate a **working hypothesis** when you begin your study. The purpose of your research is to see if your data **supports the hypothesis**.
- If you are **undertaking** a study which involves informants or volunteers, read the advice on **research ethics** in the department handbook.
- A key section of your report will be a **literature review**. This is not simply a summary of your background reading, but an **in-depth critique** of the most important books and articles, where you can show your awareness of current research.
- Make sure you **provide** a rationale for your study, and **always back up your conclusions** with evidence; never exaggerate any claims you make.
- Wherever appropriate, you should **lay out** your results in the form of tables, charts and diagrams.

Teach learners to use dictionaries for writing

- Look up words whose meaning they already know

Macmillan English Dictionary (<https://www.macmillandictionary.com>)

research definition and synonyms ★★★

NOUN (UNCOUNTABLE) [rɪ'sɜːtʃ] (rɪ'sɜːtʃɪŋ) /rɪ'sɜːtʃɪŋ/

Contribute to our Open Dictionary

the detailed study of something in order to discover new facts, especially in a university or scientific institution

Recent research shows that babies in the womb can be influenced by music.

She teaches a lot of classes and doesn't have much time for her own research.

medical/biotechnology research

research into: research into the causes of schizophrenia

research on: There is clearly a need for further research on this topic.

carry out research: Government scientists have carried out extensive research into the effects of these drugs.

Teach learners to navigate dictionary entries

Collocation often secondary

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Recommend collocation dictionaries

ability COLLOCATIONS AND EXAMPLES ★★★

NOUN UK 40 /əˈbɪləti/

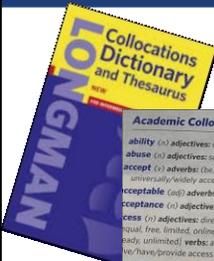
Explore meanings in the Dictionary

the power to do something or the skill in doing it

Adjectives frequently used with ability

- very good or impressive: **above-average, amazing, exceptional, extraordinary, proven, remarkable, uncanny, unique**
- He seems to have an **uncanny ability** to recognize and develop talented footballers.
- **natural**, rather than learned: **innate, instinctive, natural**
- George's **exceptional natural ability** on the piano was soon recognized.
- of a particular type: **academic, cognitive, creative, intellectual, linguistic, mental, musical, organizational, physical, psychic, technical**
- Some of these problems arose because a number of the users had **limited technical ability**.

Recommend collocation dictionaries



Academic Collocations List

(Ackermann and Chen 2013)
around 2400 EAP collocations

TEL tools you can use

Corpus of Contemporary American English

Collocates of *research* in COCA
<https://corpus.byu.edu/coca/> (Davies 2008)

TEL tools you can use

flax interactive language learning

Learning Collocations

research go

Family words: researched researcher researchers researches researching

used as a noun

research + noun	research project 301	research contract 103
	research programme 237	research work 102
	market research 209	research students 95
	research findings 141	research interests 82
	research team 130	research methods 80

<http://flax.nzdl.org/greenstone3/flax?fa=fp&sa=collAbout&c=collocations>

TEL tools you can use

SKELL

table

verbs with table as subject	verbs with table as object	adjectives with table
list - The following table lists	negotiate - to the negotiating table	above - in the table above
summarise - The following table summarises the	turn - turn the tables	A1 - Table A1.
show - The following table shows	dress - the dressing table	next - the table next to
illustrate - The following table illustrates	top - topped the table	full - a table full of
compare - The following table compares	round - round the table	outside - tables outside
summarise - The following table summarises	follow - The following table	ready - table ready
contain - table contains	dine - dining table	available - tables available
display - table displays the	wait - waiting tables	large - table large
present - The following table presents	clear - clear the table	small - table is small
outline - The table below outlines	book - book a table	close - table was close to
seat - table seating	set - set the table	open - tables open
turn - the tables have turned	route - routing table	high - water table is high

<https://skell.sketchengine.eu> (Baisa & Suchomel 2014)

Excellent collocation resources available, but some limitations

EAP textbooks

- Good for raising awareness of collocation, but limited space to cover everything
- Not practical during writing

General & EAP dictionaries

- Information on collocation not obvious, so learners need to be taught about it
- Limited space, limited coverage of collocation

Collocation dictionaries

- Focus on general English, less on academic language
 - Longman Collocations Dictionary and Thesaurus: appendix with 2469 academic English collocations

Excellent collocation resources available, but some limitations

Corpora

- Generally not very intuitive
- Noisy data (irrelevant, misleading, too much information)

Learners

- Don't always know how to select appropriate corpus
- Don't always know how to build corpus queries
- Can misinterpret results
- Can get distracted by corpus data

Corpus-based tools (e.g. SKELL, Flax)

- Noisy data
- SKELL: not academic
- Flax: student writing

What's more... 

- Looking up collocations during writing can interrupt thoughts and flow of words (Yoon 2016; Tarp et al. 2017)
- Learners tend to overestimate their knowledge of collocations (Frankenberg-Garcia 2005; Laufer 2011)
- Writers will not look up collocations if are not aware of their limitations

An alternative solution?



COLLOcaid

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What's different about ColloCaid? 

- Can help writers to expand their collocation repertoire
 - Reminders & suggestions of collocations that writers ...
 - Don't remember
 - Use less frequently
 - Don't feel confident enough to use
 - Could be unreasonably avoiding
- Collocation data is curated, so writers don't get distracted by
 - Information that is hard to find
 - Irrelevant, misleading or too much information

What's different about ColloCaid? 

- Based on data-driven learning (Johns 1991)
 - Collocations are shown, not explained
 - Learners value examples (e.g. Chan 2011; Dziemianko 2006, 2012)
 - Multiple examples help more (Frankenberg-Garcia 2012; 2014; 2015)
- Interactive text-editor integration
 - Works in real time, writers do not have to stop writing
 - Informed by HCI research (Rees et al. 2019)
 - Interactive menus
 - Working memory constraints
 - Short, easy to read examples

What data is behind ColloCaid? 

General Academic English words

- Academic Keyword List (Paquot 2010)
- Academic Collocations List (Ackermann & Chen 2013)
- Academic Vocabulary List (Gardner & Davies 2014)

Expert writing corpora

- Oxford Corpus of Academic English
- Pearson International Corpus of Academic English

561 academic lemmas → 32,186 collocation suggestions → 28,581 curated corpus examples

9,527 of which

Links to further examples from SkELL

How do you access ColloCaid? 

www.collocaid.uk

COLLOcaid Homepage ColloCaid Team Publications News About Try the Prototype Collocation Errors

FIND THE WORDS YOU NEED

ABOUT COLLOCAID TRY THE PROTOTYPE

ColloCaid prototype



collocaid

File Edit Insert View Format Table Help ColloCaid

Paragraph B I S A U L

- Works online
- Compatible with multiple devices and operating systems
- Texts are private – we do not see or store them

How can you use ColloCaid in class?

Fill in the gaps exercises



collocaid

File Edit Insert View Format Table Help ColloCaid

Paragraph B I S A U L

1. The contradiction was not _____ **apparent**

- immediately apparent
- apparent from (discussion/lecture/account)
- immediately apparent
- readily apparent
- increasingly apparent
- clearly apparent
- especially apparent
- particularly apparent
- equally apparent

How can you use ColloCaid in class?

Raise awareness of difference between N+V and V+N collocations



collocaid

File Edit Insert View Format Table Help ColloCaid

Paragraph B I S A U L

2. They had to _____ the activities of each group.



- activity generates
- undertake activity
- increased activity
- activity of (organisation/body/part/group)
- activity within (place/group)
- activity during (stage/period)
- activity among (groups/individuals)
- activity outside (home/family)
- activity in (body/part/section/area)
- activities generate
- affected by activities
- activities involve
- activities declines
- activities take place
- activity ceases
- activity creates
- caused by activities

How can you use ColloCaid in class?

Raise awareness of difference between N+V and V+N collocations



collocaid

File Edit Insert View Format Table Help ColloCaid

Paragraph B I S A U L

2. They had to _____ the activities of each group.



- activity generates
- generate activity
- increased activity
- activity of (organisation/body/part/group)
- activity within (place/group)
- activity during (stage/period)
- activity among (groups/individuals)
- activity outside (home/family)
- activity in (body/part/section/area)
- activities undertaken
- coordinate activities
- regulate activities
- perform activities
- organize activities
- monitor activity
- increase activity
- control activity

How can you use ColloCaid in class?

Raise awareness of which word governs the collocation



collocaid

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Paragraph B I S A U L

3. The system has been _____ adopted in the UK.




How can you use ColloCaid in class?

Raise awareness that preposition choice may depend on both the word that governs the collocation and what comes next



collocaid

File Edit Insert View Format Table Help ColloCaid

Paragraph B I S A U L

5. There was a _____ **increase** prices.

- increase (noun)
- increase (verb)
- increase in (speed/rate/level of)
- increase over (time/the period)
- increase of (10 per cent)
- increase accompanies
- experience increase
- increase

How can you use ColloCaid in class?

Encourage students to practice writing directly in ColloCaid

Abstract

Several **studies**

- study shows
- conduct study
- case study
- study on (groups/events/use of X)
- study of (conditions/events/groups)
- study in (area/literature/place)
- study among (groups)
- study among (regions/time period)
- study of (consequences)
- study at (stage/level)
- studies have shown
- study examined
- studies found
- studies reported
- studies have demonstrated
- studies suggest that
- studies using
- studies have focused
- More

- Expand vocabulary
- Dare to use collocations not used before

How can you use ColloCaid in class?

Ask students to improve their texts in ColloCaid

Abstract

Despite the remarkable advances made in recent years to facilitate the lexicographer's work of interpreting and synthesizing the complexity of language uncovered by corpora, an uncritical use of cutting-edge corpus tools and resources can instill a false sense of assurance. In this paper, authentic examples pertaining to wordlist use, collocation research and example selection that arose when compiling a real-world lexical database are discussed through the lens of problems that can easily slip through the cracks in e-lexicography. In doing so, we emphasize the importance of solid training and sound lexicographic judgment when using corpora, corpus tools and corpus-derived resources. This paper discusses how e-lexicography can be further improved.

- Does NOT check spelling or correct mistakes
- Collocation suggestions only

How can you use ColloCaid in class?

Help when marking

- advances
- recent
- work
- interpreting
- complexity
- use
- tools
- resources
- sense
- paper
- examples
- research

More from ColloCaid

- Editing tool focuses on collocation suggestions
- Separate database of common errors also available
 - 361 collocation errors and other issues found widely and frequently in English academic writing
 - Plus possible solutions!
- accept to pay X agree to pay (lexical choice)
- in the one hand X on the one hand (grammatical choice)
- give an advice X give advice (collocation use: countability)
- ability of using X ability to use (collocation use: gerund/infinitive)
- a bit small X rather small (collocation use: formality)
- Compiled from learner corpora, textbooks, dictionaries and grammars

How can you use ColloCaid in class?

www.collocaid.uk

Frankenberg-García, Ana; Rees, Geraint (2021): ColloCaid Academic Collocation Errors and Other Problems. fgshare. Dataset. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.fgshare.13640624.v1>

based

- based in data
- based in evidence
- based on data
- based on evidence

What do users think?

122 responses based on early prototype versions 0.1 to 0.3

Positive feedback

It is user friendly and it has lots of examples

It's very intuitive. Easy to use. I like it when it gives only 1 example to begin with and then later you can get more, if you need more

You can look for the word you're interested on without wasting time

I like the fact that it gives me combinations of words that sound more formal and academic than the ones I would think myself

Suggestions for improvement

More words could be added to ColloCaid, like academic words from specific areas

- Database has been expanded since early prototypes
- But focus continues to be general academic English

Maybe it could be compatible with text editors we use daily, such as Microsoft Word

- Couldn't agree more!
- Possible Google Docs integration...

Install a auto saving mechanism so that the text that I am composing is not damage or lost

- Privacy & data protection issues, but export to txt added

The interface / appearance could be more appealing but that is not a really important issue and I guess it is the last thing to improve

- Visualisation developed

Visualisation: tree view

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the ColloCaid interface. The 'Visualization: Tree View' is selected. It displays a hierarchical list of related terms for the word 'advantage', including 'take advantage', 'selective advantage', and 'advantage over'. The interface includes a standard menu bar (File, Edit, Insert, View, Format, Table, Tools, Help) and a rich text editor toolbar.

Visualisation: fan view (yet to come)

The screenshot shows the ColloCaid interface with the 'Visualization: Bowtie' selected. It displays a fan view visualization for the word 'approach'. The central word 'approach' is connected to various related terms like 'holistic approach', 'traditional', 'theoretical', 'methodological', 'integrated', 'analytical', 'alternative', and 'systematic'. On the right side, it lists actions: 'approach has', 'has proved', 'allows', 'involves', 'emphasizes', 'yields', 'provides', 'focuses on', and 'offers'. The interface includes a menu bar and a rich text editor toolbar.

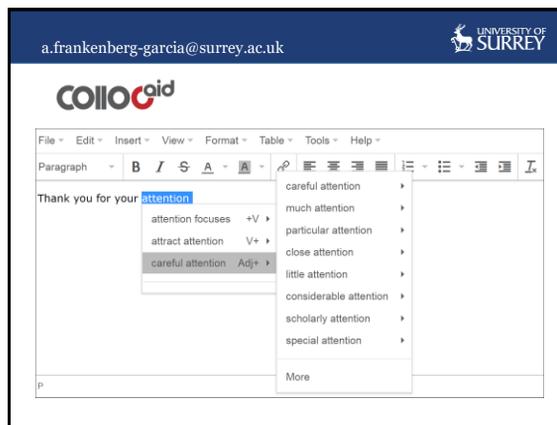
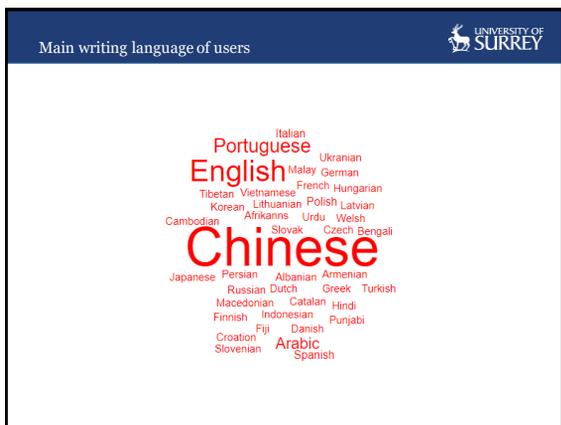
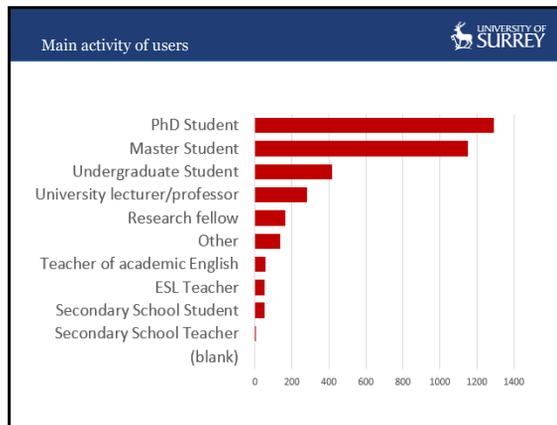
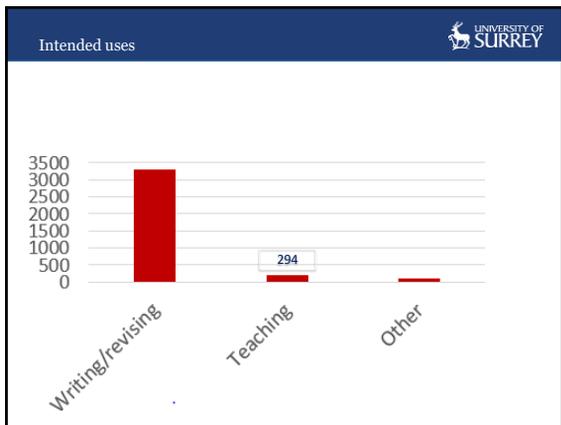
Who is using ColloCaid?

The screenshot shows the homepage of the ColloCaid website. The main heading is 'FIND THE WORDS YOU NEED'. Below it, there are buttons for 'ABOUT COLLOCAID' and 'TRY THE PROTOTYPE'. The website has a dark blue header with the University of Surrey logo and navigation links: 'Homepage', 'ColloCaid Team', 'Publications', 'Recent News', and 'About'. Below the main heading, there is a photograph of hands typing on a laptop keyboard.

- Prototype not broadly advertised yet
- Current version 0.6

3604 registered users on 27/01/2021

The screenshot shows a world map with various countries highlighted in blue, representing the global distribution of registered users. The map is centered on the Atlantic Ocean, showing significant user activity across North America, Europe, and parts of Asia and Africa. The header of the slide indicates that there were 3604 registered users on 27/01/2021.



Try our prototype

www.collocaid.uk

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