



Universidad de Jaén

Centro de Estudios de Postgrado

Trabajo Fin de Máster

**EFFICIENT READING AND EFFECTIVE
WRITING WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF EAP
TEACHING – AN INTENSIVE 3-WEEK PRE-
SESSIONAL COURSE**

Alumno/a: Salter Iglesias, Andrés Xosé

Tutor/a: Prof. D. Diego Rascón Moreno

Dpto: Filología Inglesa

Mayo, 2015

INTRODUCTION.....	3
JUSTIFYING THE PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC INTEREST OF THE TOPIC.....	4
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE	5
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND.....	6
<i>What is EAP?</i>	6
<i>Pre-sessional and In-sessional English</i>	7
<i>Changing EAP trends and challenges for the instructor</i>	8
<i>Needs analysis – A brief literature review</i>	9
<i>Some reflections on the Task-based Approach</i>	11
METHODOLOGY	12
<i>Student group description</i>	12
<i>Questionnaire design</i>	13
<i>Additional diagnostic tools</i>	14
<i>Retrospective interviews</i>	14
DATA ANALYSIS	15
<i>Questionnaire results</i>	15
<i>Preliminary assessment of writing samples</i>	26
<i>Retrospective interview results (collection of most frequent answers)</i>	28
<i>Discussion and interpretation of the data</i>	30
COURSE PROPOSAL	31
<i>Course structure and objectives</i>	31
<i>Task design</i>	33
<i>Course materials</i>	33
<i>Course plan</i>	34
<i>Potential constraints</i>	44
<i>Teaching strategies</i>	45
<i>Assessment</i>	45
<i>Essay assessment</i>	46
<i>Self-assessment</i>	46
<i>Tutor feedback</i>	47
CONCLUSION	48
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	51
APPENDICES	54
Appendix I - Needs analysis questionnaire.....	54
Appendix II - Assessment rubric for writing samples	56
Appendix III – Sample interview questions.....	56
Appendix IV - Essay-assessment rubric.....	57
Appendix V – Self-assessment rubric.....	58

INTRODUCTION

The increasing internationalisation of the academic world and the steadily growing inflow of overseas students into higher education institutions around the world accounts for an expanding sustained interest in new subdisciplines within the Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL) realm, specifically English for Academic Purposes (EAP). With the undeniable status of English as Lingua Franca for scientific and academic communication, anybody pursuing a research career or intending to complete a university degree must be acquainted with the basic structuring principles of academic English and achieve a minimally acceptable proficiency primarily in reading and writing skills. This should naturally extend to speaking and listening if academic instruction occurs in the context of an English-speaking institution or if there is a wish to participate in international conferences in which English is rapidly becoming the exclusive language currency much to the chagrin of conference interpreters.

Bearing this changing scenario in mind, our intention herein is to explore the feasibility, robustness and reproducibility of an EAP course plan with specific focus on reading and writing skills and specifically tailored to cater to the needs of overseas students in the context of British higher education. Despite the strict geographic and cultural circumscription of our project, we still aim to determine to what extent our findings and proposals are exportable to other academic contexts where English is the primary language of instruction regardless of the origin of students.

We will begin by justifying the academic relevance of our proposal, which has been tangentially addressed in this section, and the personal motivations that have led us to focus on this discipline. The second section will outline the main aim of this research project together with a detailed list of substantiated secondary objectives, which may help to build the conceptual scaffolding required to achieve our main research target or be tangentially related thereto but equally important in the process of organising our investigatory strategy. As for the following section, one of the main pillars of our proposal, it will present an analysis of the theoretical background stemming from our reading and in-depth study of relevant proposals and research in the literature. Some of the key areas we will cover include TEFL/ESP (English for Specific Purposes) methodological trends and their implications in EAP teaching; diachronic and synchronic analysis of EAP; evolution in ESP (Applied Linguistics, Register Analysis Paradigm, Discourse Analysis, Contrastive Linguistics); needs analysis methodology for the definition of target and learning needs; diagnostic tools; syllabus types,

specifically those based on the task-based approach and content-based instruction, and assessment principles.

After laying the theoretical foundations of our study, we will proceed to address the methodology by focusing on the way we have created our needs analysis questionnaires and retrospective interviews with a view to clearly defining the primary and secondary objectives of our course plan. This will be followed by a description of the process of practical implementation of the previously defined research tools and determination of any potential contextual constraints for our methodological approach.

We will then proceed to present the collated results of our study and shape them into our ultimate project aim, which is to create a course plan and the assessment tools required to ascertain its methodological accuracy and robustness. We will also delve into syllabus design principles and determine sample collection and analysis procedures before describing the creative process of drafting a course plan proper. The final section will include our conclusions and a review of any research gaps identified to suggest potentially new research lines, together with a reflection on the aims that were successfully attained and those that fell below our initial expectations because of unforeseeable constraints or methodological impracticalities.

JUSTIFYING THE PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC INTEREST OF THE TOPIC

It is undoubted that the fastest growing student population in the context of British higher education is the overseas community and this has unveiled a series of challenges for educational institutions. Beyond cultural integration and other pastoral issues, the widespread use of English as a communication vehicle in the academic and business realms has underlined the need for more specific language teaching strategies. As early as the 1960's, some British universities started creating ad-hoc courses and even teaching positions with a view to catering for the demands of language support coming from overseas students (Jordan, 2002). Ever since the inception of these specific training programmes, publications and research projects in the English for Academic Purposes subarea have garnered significant interest mainly because of their pedagogical implications for university students and professors-researchers wishing to disseminate the results of their research in the international arena, predominantly through talks in conferences or scientific papers written in English.

Pre-sessional and in-sessional language support programmes are now available in almost all English-speaking universities and higher education institutions with a clear focus on internationalisation and with an ever-growing number of foreign students. Quality certification and accreditation institutions have been created to guarantee the appropriate provision of high-quality instruction, while professors and researchers continue to share their views in countless EAP/ESP conferences held around the world. At the same time, voices rise demanding the creation of suitable training programmes for EAP tutors, while researchers still do not agree as to whether EAP tutors should be adequately qualified EFL instructors with subject specialism or actual academic experts who have been subsequently trained in applied linguistics and TESOL.

As an experienced EFL and EAP tutor, it is appropriate to review the conceptual background, history and current methodological challenges in the field of EAP to adequately devise a consistent course plan and seek deeper understanding of professional practice.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Our primary aim is to design an effective EAP course plan, specifically focused on strengthening reading and writing skills, bearing in mind the methodological trends and research background on the topic alongside student needs and expectations as determined by the use of relevant diagnostic tools.

This initial objective cannot be attained without a sound scaffolding of preliminary and/or specific targets that must be defined in advance and include the following:

- To study the chronological evolution of English for Academic Purpose studies and programmes, specifically in the context of UK higher education and analyse leading didactic trends synchronically.
- To review the literature related to EAP teaching, ESP, relevant methodology, syllabus design and assessment principles.
- To select a cohort of suitable candidate students and proceed to determine their learning needs and diagnose their language deficiencies to detect areas where specific instruction and intervention may be needed.

- To explore potential cultural clash and integration issues of overseas students in the context of British higher education by reading into the relevant literature and conducting interviews and surveys.
- To design a course plan specifically tailored in accordance with the results of the diagnostic tests and current methodological trends in EAP teaching.
- To determine assessment procedures, including summative and formative assessment tools, peer assessment and self-assessment rubrics.
- To draw from professional experience to predict difficulties and constraints of different nature, including institutional and educational.
- To seek reproducibility and robustness in the course design principles applied in the drafting of our own syllabus.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

What is EAP?

Although it is not clear when the term EAP was first used in connection with a new EFL approach to facilitate the successful use and understanding of academic English for non-native speakers, some authors date its inception back to the mid 1970's (Johns, 1981). Nevertheless, it is definitely not until the 1990's and early 2000's when EAP-related research and tailored courses become widespread, as evidenced by the birth and consolidation of BALEAP (The British Association of Lecturers in EAP), the formalisation of a Code of Practice and the introduction of an Accreditation Scheme (O'Brien, 1996). As a significant number of UK universities have been accredited by BALEAP, it is only natural to bear their Code of Practice in mind when laying the foundations of our course plan.

Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) refer to EAP as English teaching with the specific aim of helping students in their university studies. On the other hand, Hyland and Hamp-Lyons (2002) claim that it is not enough to prepare students to take their higher-education studies in English, but they should also be provided with the communicative skills required to successfully participate in specific academic and cultural contexts. In other words, we move beyond the linguistic demands of the academia, to incorporate cognitive and social aspects that were too often ignored in early ESP teaching. My

experience as an EAP tutor has allowed me to verify that student expectations are sometimes also inappropriate in terms of what an EAP course should cater for – they expect a traditional IELTS course with some lexical emphasis on their subject area and seem surprised to find out that the course aims at providing them with the tools to successfully enter a new academic context.

Pre-sessional and In-sessional English

With regard to the specific study skills that students should be taught in the context of EAP courses, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) present a very relevant classification that gives us four different situations related to EAP teaching within the university context:

1. The case of a country where English is used as the official education language where no specific preparation for further education studies is normally provided throughout the education system.
2. The case of some higher-education institutions where certain subjects are officially taught in English, whereas the national language continues to be the language of instruction in lower education levels.
3. The case of some countries where teaching is always in the national language, but English is still used as second language, especially with the purpose of international scientific communication.
4. And the case this essay will focus on: an English-speaking country, like the United Kingdom or the USA, where everything around overseas students is strictly in English. In fact, as we mentioned before, this type of situation originally led to the first work in EAP and to the creation of two types of courses normally offered by higher-education institutions: *pre-sessional* and *in-sessional*.

Despite the ongoing changes in methodology, materials, contents and assessment, several studies support the suitability of pre-sessional and in-sessional courses for overseas students. Hess and Ghawi (1997) and Kasper (1997) proved that the academic performance of overseas students in the USA who had taken an EAP course focused on reading and writing skills was significantly greater than that of students who chose not to or were not required to take the course. Feedback from my former EAP students confirms this hypothesis as they consistently claim to feel much more

confident in their understanding of academic culture and language after completing a pre-sessional course.

Changing EAP trends and challenges for the instructor

The different methodological approaches prevailing in EAP teaching and research in the last four decades have been closely intertwined with the trends in Applied Linguistics. Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) explain how EAP was tailored on the grounds of the Register Analysis Paradigm in the 1970's, thus focusing on the description of lexical and syntactic features typical of technical and scientific English. As this preliminary approach consistently focused on the mere description of a restricted range of grammar elements and lexis and did not offer explanations on the functions of grammar structures, several authors have expressed their vivid criticism (see Bhatia, 1993, Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). My teaching experience again underlines the unsuitability of a grammar-based approach in EAP teaching.

As a result of the underlying feeling of dissatisfaction, Register Analysis was quickly jettisoned in favour of Rhetoric or Discourse Analysis, with an approach based on language use and communicative aspects. Teaching was based on the study of sentences and paragraphs with extended rhetoric constructions and functions including description, narration, comparison and contrast (Paltridge, 2001). Educational materials gradually started to focus on the process experienced by students when writing texts (planning, drafting and reviewing) rather than on texts as finalised products, controlled compositions based on traditional rhetoric. Working on the process rather than the final product yields much more interesting results when providing feedback to students or guiding them through the essay-writing process. Our methodology should be based on text/genre specificity, teaching students to analyse and use discursive features found in the genres that are typically requested in the university context (essays, research papers and projects, doctoral theses, dissertations...).

The big remaining question in EAP research and methodology is whether non-native speakers can actually be taught to adhere to the English academic discourse rules. Although the prospects are not always necessarily optimistic as evidenced by the fact that many international journals continue to reject papers on the grounds of the inappropriate use of academic English (see Clyne, 1991; Ventola & Mauranen, 1996), several contrastive studies have helped to understand significant differences between English academic discourse and that of other languages (Ozturk, 2007) while

underlining interesting similarities in mental processes and decision-making strategies when it comes to writing. This can definitely shape the syllabus design process.

Needs analysis – A brief literature review

The process of designing a language course and then implementing the syllabus depends to a great extent on needs analysis, also known as needs assessment. Many authors have acknowledged the pivotal role of this process, regardless of whether we are talking about a general language or ESP course, but Fulcher (1999) and McDonough (1984), among others, have stressed that EAP courses, and for that matter EAP assessment rubrics, can only be tailored on the grounds of a comprehensive needs analysis, which could be defined as consisting of collecting as much information as possible to ensure that the course design will meet the needs of a particular group of students (Iwai et al., 1999).

While it is true that teachers have long conducted informal analyses of their students' needs, formal determinations are relatively new to the field of language teaching and they were only firmly established in the mid 1970's (West, 1998). It is important to stress, though, that initially needs analysis was basically a form of linguistic and register analysis and thus needs were identified with discrete grammatical or lexical items. However, the needs and purposes of learners started to gain grip thanks to Munby's contribution to communicative language instruction (1978) and Chambers' subsequent interpretation of his contributions by coining the term *Target Situation Analysis* (TSA) (1980), later explored by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). Indeed the latter came up with a series of questions whereby the target situation can be explored in detail and needs consequently established. Their main concerns have to do with the purposes of language learning (i.e., work, study, training....), the way in which language will be used (medium, channel or genre), the main subject areas to be addressed, the context of language use (physical, social or linguistic context) and the precise time when language will be used.

While target situation analysis attempts to ascertain what learners are expected to be like at the end of a language course, some other authors consider it is paramount to complement it with a present situation analysis, which would determine what students are like at the inception of the instruction process (Jordan, 1997), or, as Dudley-Evans and St. John put it (1998:125) "a PSA estimates strengths and weaknesses in language skills, learning experiences." In fact, needs analysis could be seen as a

combination of Target Situation Analysis and Present Situation Analysis (PSA), but, in the context of EAP, these may not be completely reliable indicators of what is required to enhance the learning experience and attain the main objectives of the course and this is when the pedagogic needs analysis comes into play.

This umbrella term, proposed by West (1998), attempts to compensate for those areas where the target needs analysis fails to deliver essential information by collecting data about the learner and the learning environment. A pedagogic needs analysis includes deficiency analysis, strategy or learning needs analysis and means analysis. Deficiency analysis investigates student lacks and tries to determine the best pedagogical route to move from the present situation to the target situation as previously and respectively determined by PSA and TSA by determining the language skills that need strengthening and the learning strategies that would benefit from instructional intervention. As opposed to this, the learning needs analysis focuses on what students want, on their own perceptions of their needs and their views of learning, rather than on what they lack. By doing so, in a process-oriented approach, this analysis will help use determine what learners require in order to engage in successful learning and thus provide them with the skills to reach their target without forgetting about the importance of learners' motivation and preferred learning styles.

The aforementioned notwithstanding, in the process of interpreting and decoding the results of these analyses in order to create suitable language courses, it will soon be discovered that what will work well in one particular situation, may fail to yield the same results in another, as there is a range of constraining factors, from pedagogy to logistics, that we could define as the course environment. A means analysis will help us delve into the restrictive factors surrounding a course, such as the underlying academic culture, staffing needs, required support services and even sources of instability or change, with a view to eventually designing an environmentally sensitive course (Jordan, 1997).

From the previous discussion, one can easily deduce that no single need analysis will provide us with foolproof indicators of what is required to help students achieve an enhanced learning experience. It is thus advisable to conceive an approach encompassing all the previously described processes in the line of Dudley-Evans and St. John's proposal (1998: 25), which includes the following elements:

- A description of the environmental situation, which basically equates to a means analysis.
- Personal information about learners that may potentially affect their learning strategies and choices.
- Language information about learners in terms of their current skills and language use difficulties (PSA).
- A definition of lacks and needs in terms of what students expect from the course.
- A description of language learning needs on the grounds of previously detected lacks and learning styles.
- Professional information about learners, or the contexts where students will use English and the type of communication activities they will engage in (TSA).
- Strategies to successfully communicate in the target situation, which will include understanding the concepts of register, discourse and genre and how these operate in the educational context.

Some reflections on the Task-based Approach

In the process of elaborating our course plan following a task-based approach whereby we could create an educational environment that mimics as close as possible the reality of British academia, we thought it was essential to clearly define what a task is so as to guarantee the robustness and reproducibility of our methodological choices. For Williams and Burden (1997: 168) a task would be defined as “any activity that learners engage in to further the process of learning a language”, but if we review Breen’s (1987) referential article on the same topic, we will find that his concept of task covers a wide array of learning activities, which range from rather simple exercises to much more intellectuality demanding activities where decision-making or problem-solving situations are simulated in groups or on an individual basis. Other authors prefer to create a tentative taxonomy for tasks and define communication tasks, in which conveying meaning has clear prevalence over form, and enabling tasks, which would conversely focus on language accuracy proper (Estaire & Zanon, 1994).

Despite the fact that the task-based approach was initially conceived as a separate entity from the communicative approach, many authors continue to incorporate this

element in their definition of task to different extents. Stern (1992) equates a task with an example of realistic language use in communication exercises, which revolve around a situation but not a specific grammar issue. Other authors, like Willis (1996) go beyond this proposal and claim that tasks should exclusively involve the purpose of communication to achieve a certain outcome. This view is also supported by Ellis (2000) who, in addition, adopts the term *exercise* as the equivalent of the aforementioned *enabling task*, that is, any activity which does not pursue a communicative aim.

If we assume that tasks will include a combination of communicative and language-focused elements and will involve students to different degrees, this clearly establishes two dimensions that should be clearly understood to create effective, learning-inducing tasks. The first dimension has to do with tasks focusing primarily on language forms and those where the communication of meaning plays a leading role. This should not be understood as a dichotomy, but rather as a flexible continuum, which gives the instructor the possibility to guide the learning process and veer in different directions according to the nature of the task and to students' response. One of the extremes of this continuum would consist primarily of *exercises* or *enabling tasks*, that is, non-communicative and mainly uncontextualised grammar exercises or drills, while the other would pursue authentic communication, conveying clear, defined messages in real-life situations proposed in tasks.

The second dimension is connected to the personal involvement of learners in a task, regardless of its nature or potential outcome. The mental engagement of students in any educational context appears to be essential as otherwise learning would be rendered impossible or highly unlikely, so this does not pose any problem in terms of defining a task, but rather in connection with motivation. Maintaining consistently high levels of motivation while getting through a task can be an important challenge in certain educational scenarios and, most typically, in heterogeneous classrooms.

METHODOLOGY

Student group description

The preliminary step before we can outline our study methodology is to provide a brief but accurate definition of our research cohort. Our group consists of 12 Chinese students (7 female and 5 male) whose ages range between 21 and 27 and who all

want to follow a postgraduate programme in Financing, Business Management, Marketing and Human Resources at a British University, but lack the adequate English skills to do so. Some of our students have experience in the fields of commerce or industry in China, which could be a very valuable reference during lessons, while others have little or no work experience. It is important to mention that a significant portion of our students come with backgrounds in non-business fields, such as engineering or even the humanities (this is the case of one specific student with a degree in English literature).

Our 20-hour pre-session course is designed to strengthen reading and writing skills and take students from an average 6.0 IELTS score to a 6.5 just in time to start their University courses. There will be four weekly 2-hour sessions for the first two weeks and two 2-hour sessions for the last week. There is an afternoon module focusing on speaking and listening skills, which students can combine with the morning sessions in order to achieve a holistic training, which mirrors their future academic experience.

Questionnaire design

As all of our students come with unconditional offers (i.e. there was no need for them to pass the pre-session course to be accepted by their respective schools), relatively high IELTS scores in all skills, and a common subject area, the use of a placement test was not considered appropriate as a pre-course diagnostic tool. In turn, students were asked to complete a questionnaire including open-ended questions and items based on a five-point *Likert* scale. The distinction between *target* and *learning needs* proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) made it clear that we should divide the questionnaire into three sections, which would help us to decide what the learner needs, lacks and wants (i.e. *target needs*), but also psychological, social and motivational attitudes towards the learning process and life in the UK (i.e. *learning needs*).

Section one of the questionnaire (see Appendix I for full questionnaire as presented to students) includes items on the students' perception of the course, their expectations, their idea of a suitable tutor and their concerns about life in the UK and integration in the new academic context. With this section we wish to explore the Sino-British cultural clash and how the Confucian heritage of our students permeates the social sphere and the academic context (Hui, 2005). This section will allow us to detect potential areas of intervention related to pre-existing cultural obstacles and predict integration difficulties.

Section two comprises items related to their reading strategies and understanding of referencing and literature research. Chinese students usually prefer to rely on their tutor's advice, expect them to provide guidance in terms of what to read and how to interpret this and definitely tend towards acritical memorisation (Littlewood, 2001) so it is important to determine if they will adjust to British lecturers who will normally encourage critical reading, analysis and student independence.

Section three includes questions about their writing skills and understanding of text structure, register and genre in order to determine to what extent our students are ready to produce successful samples of academic writing and to interiorise complex genre-related conventions.

With the aforementioned reflections in mind, we devised the questionnaire, which students are supposed to complete before the beginning of their pre-sessional course. As can be observed, some items have been formulated in similar ways to strengthen the validity of results and avoid biased conclusions. Phrasing is generally positive and clearly intelligible to avoid ambiguity or misinterpretations. Items are broadly connected to students' self-perception of academic and intellectual skills, personal values and unspecific course expectations.

Additional diagnostic tools

An appropriate needs analysis methodology should also include samples of materials produced by students (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) and consistent language syllabus design would definitely require the systematic collection of information on language needs (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). Consequently, samples of draft essays submitted for guidance and correction were analysed to determine conceptual depth, creativity, structure and argumentation skills and to ascertain the degree of understanding of academic genres. A simple assessment rubric was defined to quickly classify student written production and identify areas of weakness in which instructional intervention could achieve significant improvement (see Appendix II).

Retrospective interviews

As our needs analysis questionnaire will yield partly subjective results, we considered appropriate to ponder these findings with the actual experience of former EAP students. Skype interviews were held with 12 students who took an intensive

summer course in 2013 to discuss how they thought the pre-session had helped them to hone their academic skills and perform better at a British University and what course aspects exceeded, met or were below their expectations. Interviews were designed to give students freedom to express their ideas and beliefs and not to force them to voice the expected answers or dishonest flattering remarks about course design or tutors. However, we did prepare an interview template to guide the conversation into the areas of interest for our research purpose (see Appendix III for sample interview questions)

DATA ANALYSIS

We will now proceed to present the results of the previously described diagnostic tools so that we can analyse them in depth and apply our findings to the elaboration of our course plan.

Questionnaire results

Sample size – 24 students (12 from main group and 12 from second group)

Average age – 23

Average time spent studying English – 8 years

Average IELTS Scores

Writing – 5.5

Reading – 6.0

Listening – 6.0

Speaking – 5.0

SECTION I – LIFE IN BRITAIN AND
PRE-SESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS
1 – Total Agreement/ 5 – Complete
Disagreement

1 0%

2 0%

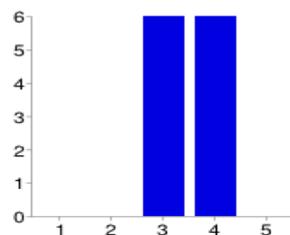
3 50%

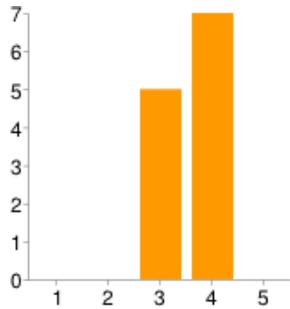
4 50%

5 0%

1. I know the British academic
world well

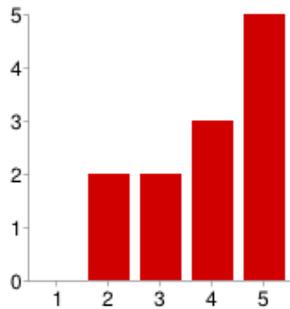
2. I am familiar with British culture





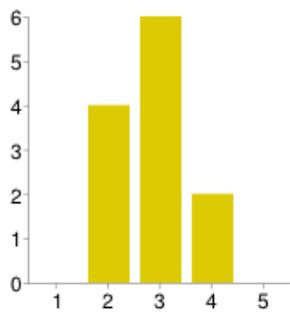
- 1 0%
- 2 0%
- 3 42%
- 4 58%
- 5 0%

3. I am not anxious about attending a university lesson in English



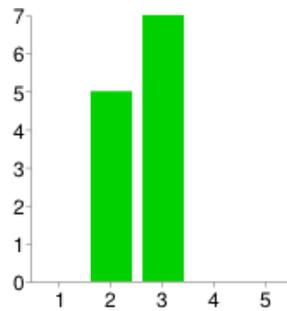
- 1 0%
- 2 17%
- 3 17%
- 4 25%
- 5 42%

4. I am looking forward to making new friends



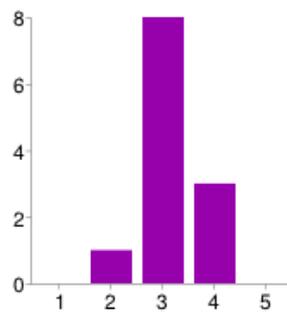
- 1 0%
- 2 33%
- 3 50%
- 4 17%
- 5 0%

5. I hope I can be in the same class with friends from my country



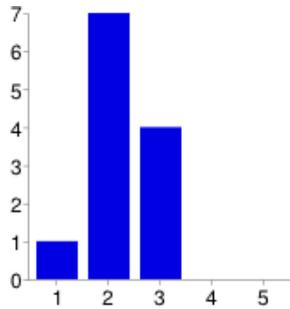
- 1 0%
- 2 42%
- 3 58%
- 4 0%
- 5 0%

6. Socialising is not very important to get through a university course



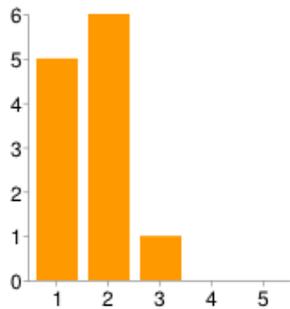
- 1 0%
- 2 8%
- 3 67%
- 4 25%
- 5 0%

7. It would be great to share accommodation with friends from my country



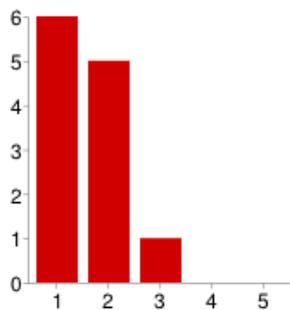
1 8%
 2 58%
 3 33%
 4 0%
 5 0%

8. I am very concerned about housekeeping issues in the UK (bank accounts, VISA...)



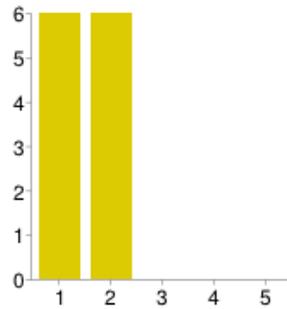
1 42%
 2 50%
 3 8%
 4 0%
 5 0%

9. I expect this pre-session to help me succeed in my university studies



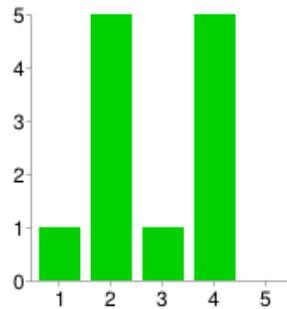
1 50%
 2 42%
 3 8%
 4 0%
 5 0%

10. I expect this pre-session to help me strengthen my IELTS skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening)



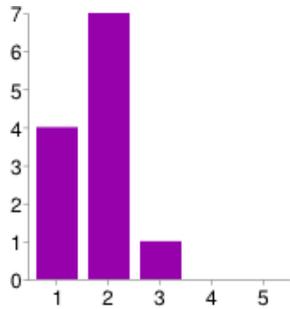
1 50%
 2 50%
 3 0%
 4 0%
 5 0%

11. I hope this pre-session includes a lot of grammar



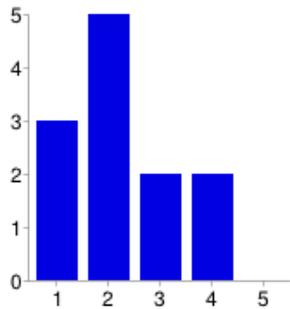
1 8%
 2 42%
 3 8%
 4 42%
 5 0%

12. The pre-session course should include subject-specific content



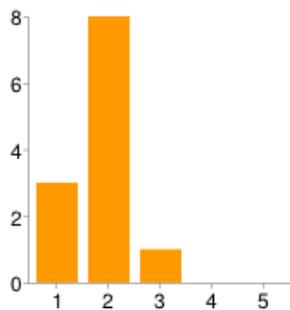
1 33%
 2 58%
 3 8%
 4 0%
 5 0%

13. I hope I can learn a lot of vocabulary related to my subject area



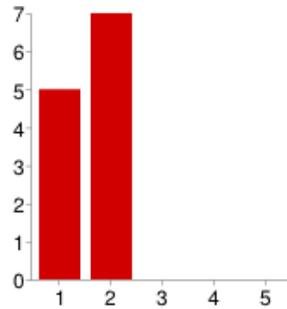
1 25%
 2 42%
 3 17%
 4 17%
 5 0%

14. I would like to be able to contact my tutor outside tutorials or lesson times



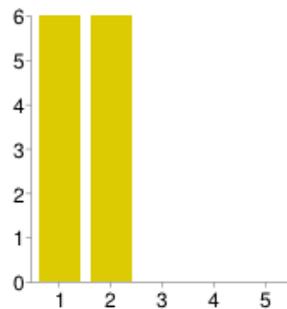
1 25%
 2 67%
 3 8%
 4 0%
 5 0%

15. The tutor should be familiar with my needs



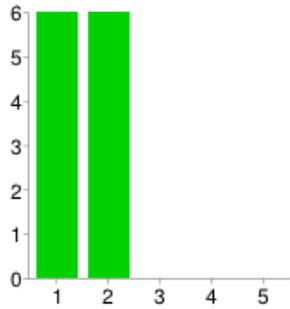
1 42%
 2 58%
 3 0%
 4 0%
 5 0%

16. I would like my tutor to be one of my university lecturers



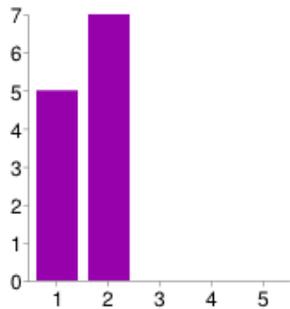
1 50%
 2 50%
 3 0%
 4 0%
 5 0%

17. My tutor should know a lot about my subject area



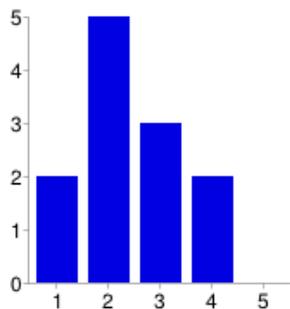
- 1 50%
- 2 50%
- 3 0%
- 4 0%
- 5 0%

18. I would like groups to be small as I need a lot of one-on-one attention



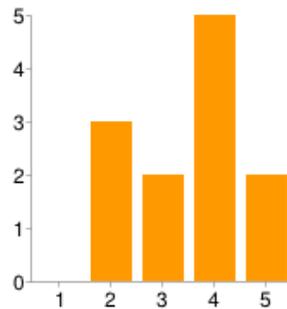
- 1 42%
- 2 58%
- 3 0%
- 4 0%
- 5 0%

19. My tutor should know my country well



- 1 17%
- 2 42%
- 3 25%
- 4 17%
- 5 0%

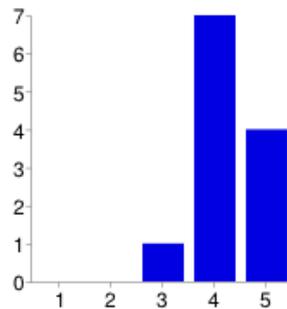
20. I don't expect this course to be different from other English courses



- 1 0%
- 2 25%
- 3 17%
- 4 42%
- 5 17%

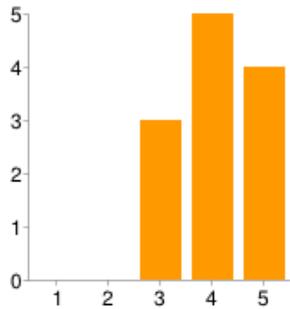
SECTION II – READING AND RESEARCH

1. I am used to doing academic research

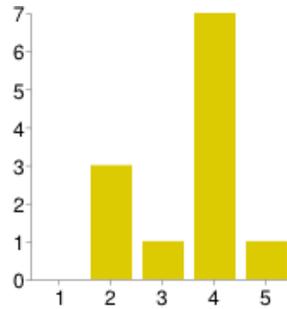


- 1 0%
- 2 0%
- 3 8%
- 4 58%
- 5 33%

2. I have done a lot of reading during my previous university studies



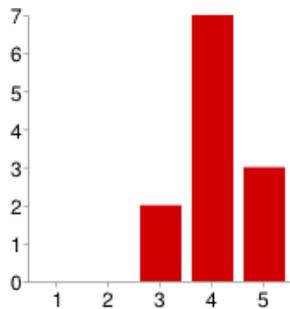
1 0%
2 0%
3 25%
4 42%
5 33%



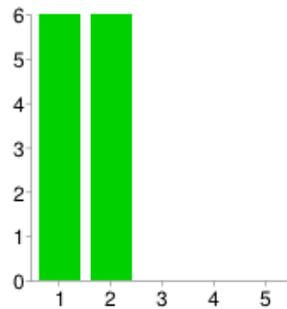
1 0%
2 25%
3 8%
4 58%
5 8%

5. I expect my tutor to tell me what to read and help me find information

3. I know how to find the information I need in a library



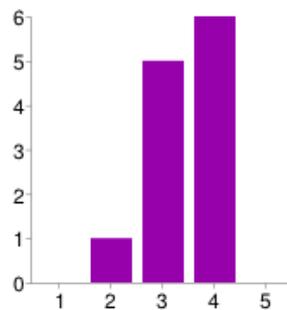
1 0%
2 0%
3 17%
4 58%
5 25%



1 50%
2 50%
3 0%
4 0%
5 0%

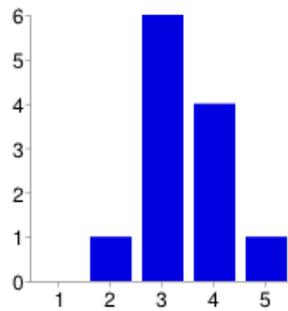
6. I can tell what the main and secondary ideas in a piece of text are

4. It is easy to find relevant information online



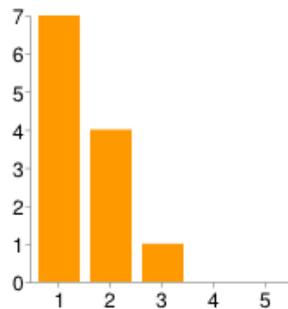
- 1 0%
- 2 8%
- 3 42%
- 4 50%
- 5 0%

7. I can tell if what I read is opinion or fact or an idea coming from someone else



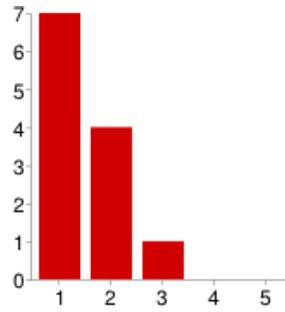
- 1 0%
- 2 8%
- 3 50%
- 4 33%
- 5 8%

8. I should never disagree with the ideas of an important author



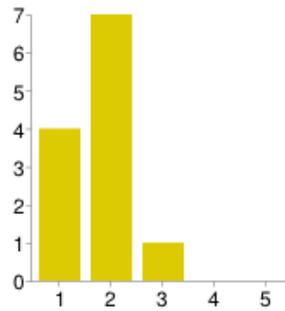
- 1 58%
- 2 33%
- 3 8%
- 4 0%
- 5 0%

9. My academic work should be based on what other authors think



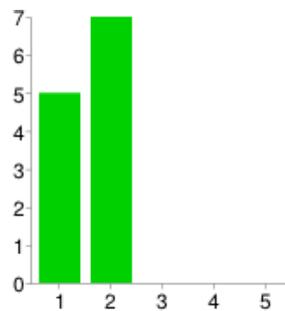
- 1 58%
- 2 33%
- 3 8%
- 4 0%
- 5 0%

10. I find it hard to read academic texts in English



- 1 33%
- 2 58%
- 3 8%
- 4 0%
- 5 0%

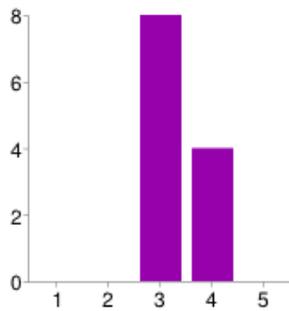
11. I use the dictionary a lot when reading in English



- 1 42%

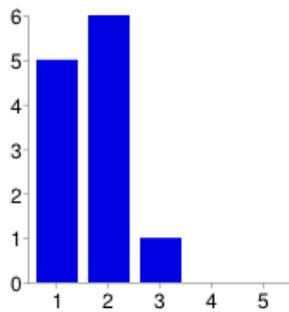
- 2 58%
- 3 0%
- 4 0%
- 5 0%

12. I can be selective when going through extensive literature sources



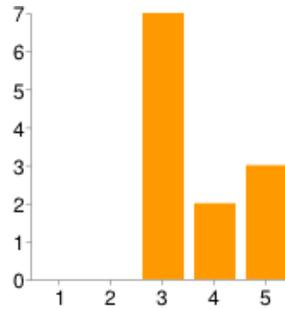
- 1 0%
- 2 0%
- 3 67%
- 4 33%
- 5 0%

13. Reading is time consuming and I am afraid I will not have time to write anything



- 1 42%
- 2 50%
- 3 8%
- 4 0%
- 5 0%

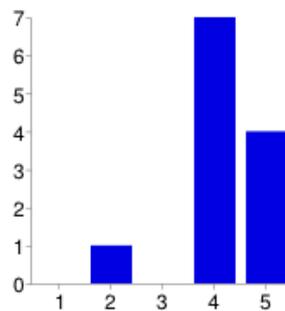
14. I am familiar with scanning and skimming techniques



- 1 0%
- 2 0%
- 3 58%
- 4 17%
- 5 25%

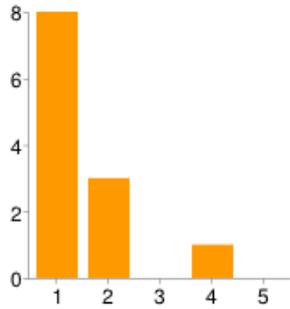
SECTION III – WRITING

1. I have written academic texts in English before



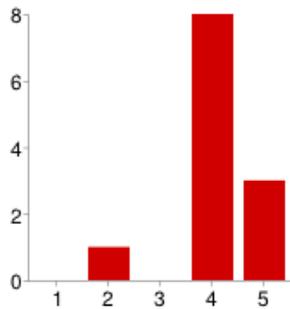
- 1 0%
- 2 8%
- 3 0%
- 4 58%
- 5 33%

2. My experience is limited to typical English class assignments



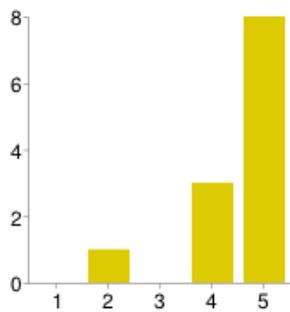
1 67%
 2 25%
 3 0%
 4 8%
 5 0%

3. I am familiar with the types of texts that can be found in the academic context



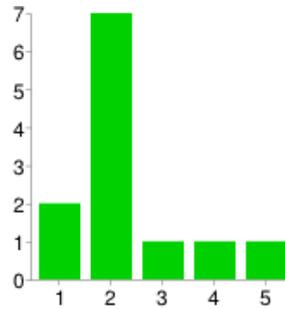
1 0%
 2 8%
 3 0%
 4 67%
 5 25%

4. I am familiar with academic writing conventions



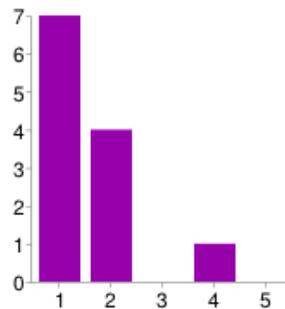
1 0%
 2 8%
 3 0%
 4 25%
 5 67%

5. I feel my writing is not very fluent and well organised in English



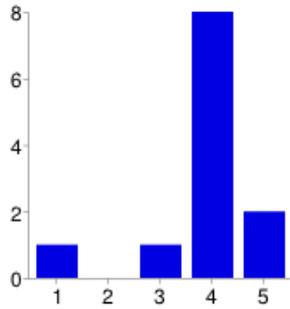
1 17%
 2 58%
 3 8%
 4 8%
 5 8%

6. I have a lot of ideas but I do not know how to put them in writing



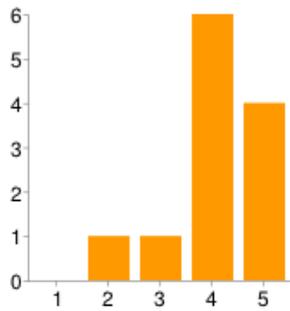
1 58%
 2 33%
 3 0%
 4 8%
 5 0%

7. I always plan my work well before I start writing



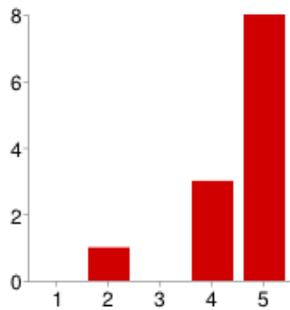
1 8%
2 0%
3 8%
4 67%
5 17%

8. I am familiar with the structure of an academic essay



1 0%
2 8%
3 8%
4 50%
5 33%

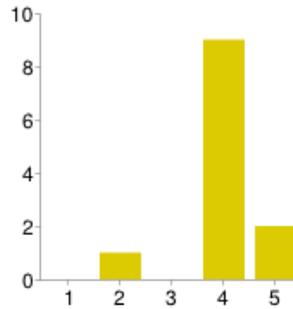
9. I am familiar with referencing conventions



1 0%

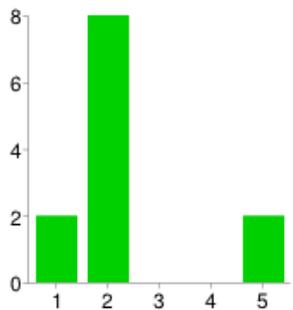
2 8%
3 0%
4 25%
5 67%

10. I always quote the author when I use someone else's ideas



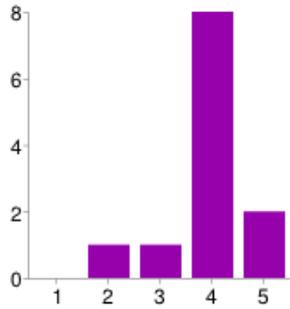
1 0%
2 8%
3 0%
4 75%
5 17%

11. If I mix my ideas with somebody else's thoughts or rewrite them, I do not need to quote the authors



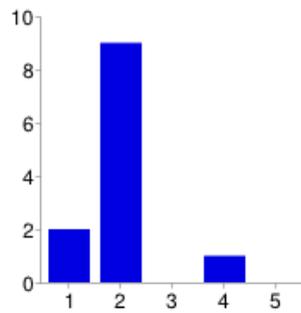
1 17%
2 67%
3 0%
4 0%
5 17%

12. My subject-specific vocabulary is varied



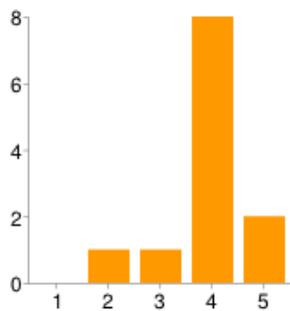
1 0%
 2 8%
 3 8%
 4 67%
 5 17%

13. I feel my grammar is weak



1 17%
 2 75%
 3 0%
 4 8%
 5 0%

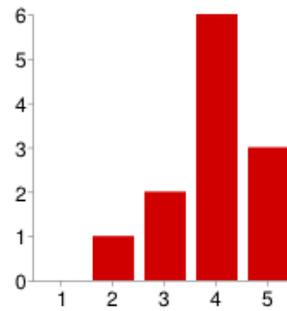
14. My English writing is consistent and well connected



1 0%
 2 8%

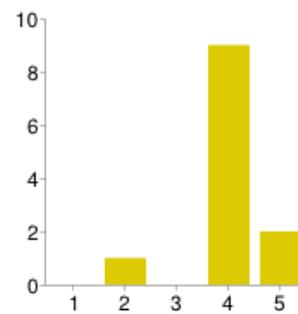
3 8%
 4 67%
 5 17%

15. When I write, I think about who is going to read it



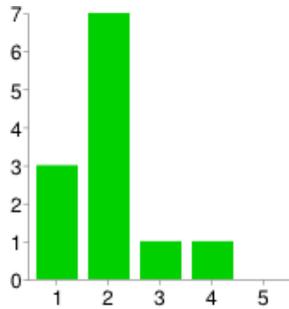
1 0%
 2 8%
 3 17%
 4 50%
 5 25%

16. I am able to express my knowledge clearly through writing

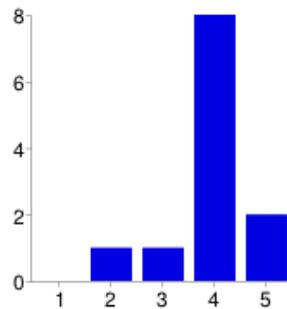


1 0%
 2 8%
 3 0%
 4 75%
 5 17%

17. I seek help from others when writing



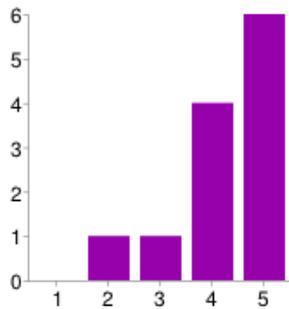
1 25%
2 58%
3 8%
4 8%
5 0%



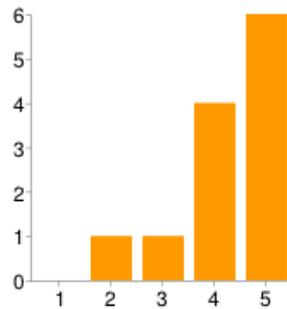
1 0%
2 8%
3 8%
4 67%
5 17%

18. I value my mates' opinions to assess the quality of my writing

20. I frequently go back and rewrite certain sections as necessary



1 0%
2 8%
3 8%
4 33%
5 50%



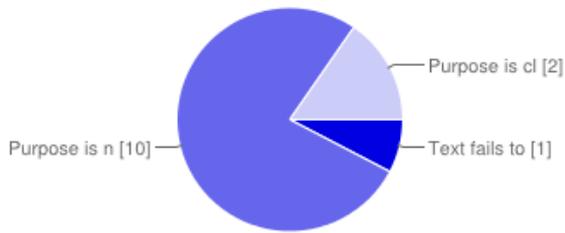
1 0%
2 8%
3 8%
4 33%
5 50%

19. I always proofread my texts

Preliminary assessment of writing samples

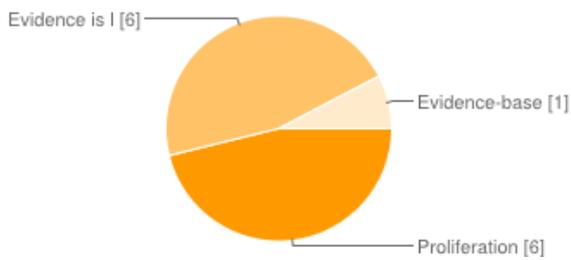
5-item rubric

Clarity of writing purpose (purpose should be stated as an argument or exposition of facts either implicitly or explicitly)



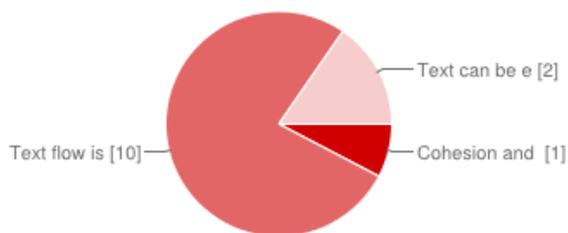
Text fails to establish a clear purpose	8%
Purpose is not consistently clear or may vary throughout the text	77%
Purpose is clearly defined	15%

Evidence-based reasoning (writing demonstrates critical analysis of literature sources and sound argumentation)



Proliferation of unsupported generalisations or inclusion of irrelevant citations/ references	46%
Evidence is listed but no clear conclusions are withdrawn	46%
Evidence-based reasoning is clear and leading to logical conclusions	8%

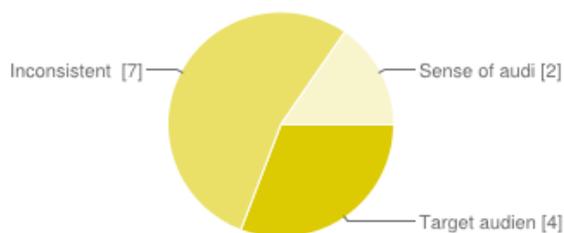
Genre-suited structure and writing conventions



Cohesion and coherence devices are poorly used and texts lack internal organisation	8%
Text flow is occasionally inconsistent	77%

Text can be easily read and respects expected writing conventions 15%

Audience awareness (specialised terminology, language forms and authoritative style are displayed in accordance with target audience)

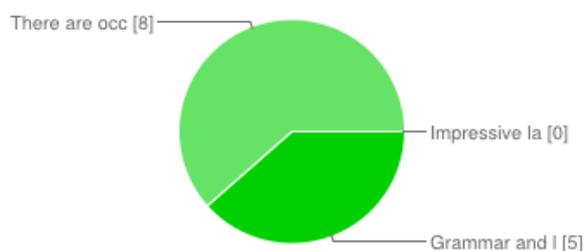


Target audience remains unclear 31%

Inconsistent acknowledgement of target audience 54%

Sense of audience clearly expressed through language use and writing conventions 15%

Effective control of academic language conventions



Grammar and lexical problems could potentially distract reader from writing purpose. Occasional unintelligibility 38%

There are occasional grammar and lexical problems but not sufficient to impair understanding 62%

Impressive language use 0%

Retrospective interview results (collection of most frequent answers)

1. *In terms of sociocultural and academic integration, in what ways do you feel the pre-session course was useful for you?*

- I learnt what to expect from my future university lecturers – 75%

- I felt that I was not in a disadvantaged position regarding British students – 70%
- I learnt that it is possible to respect a teacher and debate their opinion – 60%
- I learnt to make the best from lectures, seminars and tutorials – 50%
- I learnt where to find support and guidance within the academic context – 45%
- I felt support in housekeeping issues (accommodation, paperwork...) – 35%

2. *Do you feel your reading was strengthened? In what ways?*

- I think I now read with a critical attitude – 80%
- I scan and skim texts much more efficiently - 70%
- I can find sources more effectively – 55%
- I can determine the genre, register and conceptual structure of what I read – 40%
- I recognise referencing conventions – 30%

3. *Do you feel your academic writing is better now? In what ways?*

- I can now plan and draft an essay – 80%
- I can support my ideas with relevant references – 70%
- I am now much more aware of what plagiarism is and how to avoid it – 70%
- I can edit and correct my English to a considerable extent – 60%
- My paraphrasing skills have improved substantially - 55%
- I am familiar with the most common academic genres – 50%
- I have learnt that peer review can be very useful – 35%

4. *Looking back on your pre-sessional, what would you improve?*

- The course was excessively intense – 90%
- There was too much homework – 80%
- I would have loved to have many more one-on-one tutorials – 70%
- I would have loved my EAP tutors to be also my degree lecturers – 70%
- There should be more language support for students whose English is weaker – 60%
- Drafts should be fully corrected by tutors – 50%
- In-sessional support is not as strong as that provided during the pre-sessional – 40%

Discussion and interpretation of the data

Combined results of the different diagnostic and analytical tools used and described above seem to confirm our actual observations in teaching practice and were surprisingly homogenous despite the divergent student backgrounds and very much in line with research findings. We have summarised our findings as follows:

- (a) Most students claimed to be nervous or anxious about the prospect of a starting their university studies in the UK and declared themselves unaware of the main features of the British academic sphere. Little to no previous research has been conducted to find out about their host country and what their new study context will offer them.
- (b) Their ideal tutor should be readily available to solve doubts even outside office hours (Chinese students expect this and could feel lost or unsupported when they realise this is not possible in the new academic context), should be very confident about business-related terminology and concepts and should help them make decisions regarding literature choices, analysis and interpretation of texts. This pre-sessional course will help them understand that an EAP tutor need not be a subject specialist but rather a multi-faceted facilitator (or “practitioner” as suggested by Dudley-Evans, 1998) willing to understand the importance of collaborating with subject specialists (Jordan & Nixon, 1986).
- (c) Students also expressed that their draft work should be frequently supervised and corrected in all aspects (structure, contents and English). Writing samples collected also unveiled significant structural and grammatical problems that will be duly addressed as part of the course programme. Beyond language issues, considerable genre-related and cognitive problems were found in the structuring of written work.
- (d) Most students fail to create a sound conceptual framework and find it hard to maintain consistent style throughout their draft essays. This underscores the need to address the concepts of academic register and target audience as part of our pre-sessional. The vast majority of our research subjects are unfamiliar with European academic genres and writing conventions.
- (e) Little knowledge is shown regarding referencing, finding suitable sources and academic genres (a vast majority of students are basically acquainted with

generic IELTS essays). Writing samples do not only confirm this but indicate that students are highly likely to plagiarise (deliberately or unconsciously) not only because of their Confucian understanding of the idea of respect for authoritative sources of knowledge (whereby they should perpetuate this knowledge but never question or criticise it) but also due to their inability to rephrase complex ideas in English.

- (f) Retrospective interviews shed some light on the difficulties Asian students experience in understanding teaching methodologies and student-to-teacher relations in the British context. Interviewees complained about course intensity but now understand they could not have become efficient critical readers, accurate writers or productive researchers, as required by the current post-graduate courses, without the foundations laid during the pre-session course.

COURSE PROPOSAL

Despite the vast variety of syllabus types, the specificity of the EAP context makes it reasonable to combine two predominant approaches: on the one hand, our syllabus will be task-based - In Skehan's (1996) terms, *task* should be understood as an activity that is connected to the real world and whose assessment is defined in terms of the outcome - as it capitalises on meaning and communication and prefers to conceive students as *users* rather than just *learners* (Ellis, 2003). Our aim is to teach overseas students to use English as an effective tool to achieve academic success by facing real higher education situations and associated tasks.

On the other hand, this is predominantly a language course, but we aim to provide students with certain notional and cognitive skills that will help them succeed in their business-related university studies. Consequently the course becomes somewhat aligned with the adjunct CBI (content-based instruction) model (Brinton et al., 1989) as academic English will need to be taught under the specificity of the business conceptual network and terminology. In addition, one could say that in the context of EAP an underlying text-based approach is inevitable as decoding and using language never ceases to be one of the course pillars.

Course structure and objectives

Our course plan consists of five tasks - a main task (*Writing an academic essay*), overlapping the rest and drawing from their respective outcomes, and four

micro-tasks (or rather subtasks) designed to facilitate the correct completion of the main one and help students achieve the following global aims (an alphabetical key has been used to connect general and specific aims with needs analysis results):

- (a) Attain an adequate level of preparation to enter their departmental studies by demonstrating a basic understanding of the key concepts in their subject area
- (e) Use a reasonable range of critically evaluated data sources and show academic integrity by avoiding plagiarism at all times
- (b) Develop analytical reading strategies for academic materials with specific focus on business and management-related literature
- (c) Learn to write an academic essay in accurate English, consistent structure, appropriate style and relevant terminology

The four proposed subtasks (*Finding suitable references; Understanding and critically analysing a case study; Drafting, brainstorming and structuring an essay; Avoiding plagiarism*) have been conceived to develop specific reading skills:

- (e) Identify and understand argumentation by separating factual information from opinion
- (e) Identify in-text referencing conventions
- (e) Develop lexis acquisition and recognition skills
- (d) Identify typical academic genres
- (a) Use tools like diagrams, notional maps and effective notes to decode, summarise and synthesise textual information

In addition, the following writing skills will be covered:

- (c) Produce linguistically and lexically correct texts, with strong cohesion and coherence
- (c) Develop paraphrasing skills
- (d) Develop suitable text structuring skills (paragraphing, topicalisation)
- (b) Develop their own ideas and support them by identifying relevant sources
- (e) Use accepted referencing conventions
- (e) Translate effective reading into relevant academic writing

- (a) Planning and drafting

Task design

For each of the tasks we will establish an outcome, which has to be clear and specific as it will be assessed. It is only natural that the final assessment will heavily rely on the main task, which is writing an academic essay that is acceptable within the British academic context, but the feedback provided to students for each subtask, along with the self-assessment rubric, will definitely help to produce a successful outcome for the overlapping writing task.

In addition to this, each task will have two main structural components: a *knowledge component*, which will include what students need to know both in terms of specific concepts, rules or sets of instructions, but also regarding background cultural knowledge (i.e. British society, the British university system...); and a *skill-development component* including the skills required by students to achieve a satisfactory completion of the task. These skills will be *cognitive* (analyse, predict, ponder, synthesise...) and *linguistic* (this covers *language skills proper*, like grammar and lexis, and *discourse skills*, like formatting or following pre-established conventions)

Course materials

Materials for our course plan will primarily consist of a combination of text excerpts coming from different sources and representing the main academic genres normally found in business-related contexts (essays, literature reviews, case studies, case reports...). All of these will be authentic materials with the aim of making students familiar with the text types they will have to read and write during their universities studies and ensuring they will develop sufficient understanding of subject-related terminology and concepts. Authentic materials will help guarantee the verisimilitude of our task proposal and effective application of the CBI model.

In terms of specific language skills that require a more systematic and pragmatic approach (paraphrasing techniques, coherence and cohesion, structural scaffolding, lexical development and logical connections), practical examples and exercises have been extracted from referential titles in the field of academic writing and reading. Preliminary course references used in the creation of our course plan will include

Academic Writing for Graduate Students (Swales & Feak, 1994), *Study Writing. A Course Plan in Written English* (Hamp-Lyons & Heasley, 1987) and *English for Academic Study: Extended Writing & Research Skills* (McCormack & Slaght, 2012).

Course plan

MAIN TASK – WRITING AN ACADEMIC ESSAY	
TASK OUTCOME	APPROXIMATE TIMING & REFERENTIAL MATERIALS
<p>Students are requested to produce a complete, well-structured essay on a subject connected to their field of expertise. This text has to be original and feature the student's analytical and conceptual input</p>	<p>As it is the main course task, this will be developed specifically or tangentially together with four subtasks we have defined + 2 hours of supervised in-class writing organised as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are asked to write a draft introduction for their essay. Tutor supervises the process and fosters reflection on language and structural choices – 45 minutes • Peer review: students work in pairs exchanging their draft introductions, which have to be read and analysed in terms of intelligibility, structural clarity and quality of ideas. Students exchange feedback. Tutor supervises and filters feedback – 45 minutes • Group discussion: collective tutor-guided discussion on main difficulties encountered and quality and validity of the feedback provided by peer students – 30 minutes <p>McCormack & Slaght – Unit 1 – Introduction to Extended Writing and Research</p>
SPECIFIC BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	
<i>Students are expected to</i>	<i>Students will be mentored by the tutor in the process of</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To have sufficient background knowledge on their subject area - To be able to conduct extensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (a) Understanding and becoming familiar with the British academic sphere

<p>research to complement or corroborate their ideas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (d) Understanding the concept of genre and discriminating different academic text typologies - (c) Grasping the essential features of an academic essay, both conceptually and structurally - (e) Selecting and analysing relevant academic sources 	
SPECIFIC SKILLS		
<i>Cognitive Skills</i>	<i>Discourse Skills</i>	<i>Linguistic Skills</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Critical analysis - Synthesis - Contrast/ Comparison - Conceptual mapping - Finding obvious and subtle conceptual connections - Bridging argumentative gaps - Hierarchisation - Conceptual atomisation - Causal, consequential reasoning - Prediction/ Inferring/ Deduction 	<p>Students will be introduced to the main academic conventions concerning essay writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Academic honesty - Academic caution - Hedging - Acknowledgement of sources used - Clear discrimination between personal contributions and referenced ideas - Clear structuring - Register – Degree of formality - Setting clear objectives - Understanding potential target audience 	<p>Structuring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of cohesion/coherence devices – anaphora/cataphora – deictic elements - Linking words and structures – formulaic structures for introduction, conclusion or transition purposes - Linking devices to express logical relations (cause, consequence, aim...) <p>Impersonal style</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of nosism – <i>pluralis modestiae</i> - Use of the passive - Avoidance of emotionally connoted language - Hedging - Adverbials and quantifiers to express academic caution <p>Topicalisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theme/rheme (topic/comment) - Word order - Subordination and coordination <p>Lexis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lexical cohesion: synonymy, hypernymy, hyponymy,

		antonymy, polysemy - Semantic fields - Specific terminology
--	--	---

SUBTASK – FINDING SUITABLE REFERENCES	
TASK OUTCOME	APPROXIMATE TIMING & REFERENTIAL MATERIALS
Constituting a complete list of literature sources relevant to the subject area	<p>2 hours of tutor-guided work and background knowledge development in the classroom + Undefined number of hours of individual work selecting and reading through references</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenary session – Tutor presents main referencing conventions and explains how to conduct a literature review of a given research area – 30 minutes • Work in pairs – Students are given an excerpt of an academic essay containing in-text referencing problems, which have to be detected and solved – 30 minutes • Work in pairs – Students are given different essay titles and a list of potential references. By using online tools, they will have to determine the suitability and validity of those references and rank them in terms of their applicability – 30 minutes • Work in pairs – Students will now have to find at least 5 additional references for their essay title and justify their choice – 30 minutes <p>Swales & Feak – Unit 8 – Constructing a Research Paper II – Reviewing the Literature McCormack & Slaght – Unit 2 – Using Evidence to Support Your Ideas</p>
SPECIFIC BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	
<i>Students are expected to</i>	<i>Students will be mentored by the tutor in the process of</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be minimally familiar with academic reading - Discriminate between text books and academic references - Be sufficiently familiar with the operation of libraries and online repositories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (e) Selecting relevant sources - (e) Discriminating between authoritative and accessory sources - (e) Becoming familiar with the most common referencing guides - (e) Understanding in-text referencing - (e) learning to quote efficiently and in compliance with academic conventions - (b) Narrowing down their research 	
SPECIFIC SKILLS		
<i>Cognitive Skills</i>	<i>Discourse Skills</i>	<i>Linguistic Skills</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skimming - Scanning - Extracting ideas - Synthesis/ summarising - Understanding hierarchical structuring of ideas - Primary vs. secondary information - Discriminating opinion and factual information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deploying suitable in-text referencing strategies - Combining personal contributions with quoted ideas - Integrating paraphrased segments within text scaffolding 	

SUBTASK – UNDERSTANDING AND CRITICALLY ANALYSING A CASE STUDY	
TASK OUTCOME	APPROXIMATE TIMING & REFERENTIAL MATERIALS
<p>Producing a short case report stemming from the reading and analysis of a case study</p>	<p>4 hours of case analysis and group discussion – 2 hours of supervised in-class writing of case report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided pre-reading task – Students will have to read the INSEAD case study at home and reflect on each of the sections. • Group work – Each group will be given a section of the case study. They will have to

	<p>present to the rest of the students their most interesting findings and select the essential information for further use – 45 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutor-supervised group discussion to determine problematic areas explained or suggested in the case study – 30 minutes • Group work – Groups will be given different problematic areas and they will have to come up with projections, suggested solutions and recommendations. These will be presented and discussed collectively – 45 minutes • Tutor-supervised reading – Students are given an excerpt of a case report for reading and analysis. Collective discussion of structure and purpose of a case report – 30 minutes • Language focus – Grammar explanations using examples from previous text concerning language for recommendation, suggestions, predictions and adverbial modulators. Practical exercises – 90 minutes <p>Swales & Feak – Unit 3 – Problem, Process and Solution INSEAD downloadable case studies – <i>Diesel for Successful Living: Branding Strategies for an Up-market Line Extension in the Fashion Industry</i> Hamp-Lyons & Heasley – Unit 5 – Class Relationships: Comparison/ Contrast & Unit 9 – Linear Relationships: Cause & Effect</p>
SPECIFIC BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	
<i>Students are expected to</i>	<i>Students will be mentored by the tutor in the process of</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be familiar with key management and business concepts (leadership, innovation, productivity...). Tutor will nevertheless make sure these concepts are adequately understood by all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (b) Applying frequently used and well documented business models, including SWOT or PEST analysis - (c) Understanding the typical

<p>students and discussed as they appear in the text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be able to adopt specific business roles, such as business or financial consultant - Be able to draft a simple business plan - Apply real-life experience and professional know-how (to the extent they actually have this knowledge) 	<p>structure of a case study and finding relevant information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (c) Understanding the usual structure of a case report - (a) Developing cultural awareness 	
SPECIFIC SKILLS		
<i>Cognitive Skills</i>	<i>Discourse Skills</i>	<i>Linguistic Skills</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skimming - Scanning - Mathematical analysis - Interpretation of statistical and/or financial data - Prediction and deduction skills - Association - Contrast/ Comparison - Problem-solving skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequate use of conventions when writing a case report - Identifying conventions when reading a case study - Identifying/Expressing factual information vs. hypothesis/projections/expectations - Expressing recommendations and suggestions - Formulate possible solutions for specific problems - Hedging and academic caution 	<p>Language for recommendation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verb patterns: recommend, suggest, advise - Modal verbs - Impersonalising passive structures: it is recommended... <p>Language for hypothesis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conditional structures - Probability vs Possibility – modal verbs - Adverbial Phrases <p>Lexis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific terminology - Adjectives for modulation and avoidance of emotional connotation or absolute terms - Adverbial modulators - Financial idioms and collocations

SUBTASK – DRAFTING, BRAINSTORMING AND STRUCTURING AN ESSAY	
TASK OUTCOME	APPROXIMATE TIMING & REFERENTIAL MATERIALS
<p>Choosing a research line and narrowing down the scope of the course essay. Write down an essay plan including main parts and objectives</p>	<p>4 hours + undefined self-study time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plenary session: Tutor lectures students on how to structure an effective academic essay and how to find relevant sources – 60 minutes - Work in pairs & group discussion – Students are given the introductory section of different academic essays. They need to discuss the structure, validity and quality of the ideas presented and share their opinion with the rest of the students – 60 minutes - Tutor-supervised individual work – Students will write a list of the main ideas they will develop for their course essay and reflect on how they will achieve this and what sources they may use – 30 minutes - Group discussion – Students present their ideas to the rest of the class and peers make remarks and suggestions while guided by tutor – 45 minutes - Tutor-supervised individual work – Students draft their essay structure and use peer and tutor feedback from previous activity to write down ideas for each section – 45 minutes <p>Swales & Feak – Unit 1 – <i>Approach to Academic Writing</i> Swales & Feak – Unit 7 – <i>Constructing a Research Paper I</i> McCormack & Slaght – Units 3 & 4 – <i>Sourcing Information for Your Project/ Developing Your Project</i> Hamp-Lyons & Heasley – Unit 10 – <i>Organising Texts: Structuring Texts</i></p>
SPECIFIC BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	
<i>Students are expected to</i>	<i>Students will be mentored by the tutor in the process of</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be sufficiently familiar with their subject area - Have a critical attitude regarding the suitability and quality of sources used - Be familiar with how to conduct extensive research about a given topic - Be willing to accept different perspectives and differing views on ideas they hold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (a) Fostering a fruitful environment for the exchange of ideas and opinions - (a) Accepting constructive criticism even when coming from peer students - (a) Understanding the importance of peer review - (b) Analysing the feasibility of a research or writing project - (b) Narrowing down the scope of their essay or reconsider research directions - (b) Accepting the limitation of an initial proposal and starting anew when necessary - (b) Creating logical substantiated connections between initial research aims and final outcomes and conclusions - (b) Developing effective proofreading strategies - (b) Developing effective planning strategies - (d) Understanding essay writing conventions within an academic setting - (d) Becoming familiar with different essay sections and the nature of information to be presented in each case
--	--

SPECIFIC SKILLS		
<i>Cognitive Skills</i>	<i>Discourse Skills</i>	<i>Linguistic Skills</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Critical analysis - Conceptual mapping - Logical relations - Hierarchisation - Compare/ Contrast - Argumentation - Counterargumentation/ 	<p>Students will be introduced to the main academic conventions concerning essay writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Academic honesty - Academic caution - Hedging - Acknowledgement 	<p>Structuring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of cohesion/coherence devices – anaphora/cataphora – deictic elements - Linking words and structures – formulaic structures for introduction, conclusion or transition

<p>Refutation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstration/ Corroboration 	<p>of sources used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear discrimination between personal contributions and referenced ideas - Clear structuring - Register – Degree of formality - Setting clear objectives - Understanding potential target audience - Students will be directed on how to express constructive criticism and develop argumentation and refutation skills 	<p>purposes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Linking devices to express logical relations (cause, consequence, aim...) <p>Impersonal style</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of nosism – <i>pluralis modestiae</i> - Use of the passive - Avoidance of emotionally connoted language - Hedging - Adverbials and quantifiers to express academic caution <p>Topicalisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theme/rheme (topic/comment) - Word order - Subordination and coordination <p>Lexis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lexical cohesion: synonymy, hypernymy, hyponymy, antonymy, polysemy - Semantic fields - Specific terminology
--	---	--

SUBTASK 4 – AVOIDING PLAGIARISM	
TASK OUTCOME	APPROXIMATE TIMING
Producing an original, well-referenced essay	<p>2 hours + undefined self-study time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenary session: Tutor explains nature and types of plagiarism – 15 minutes • Work in pairs – Students are given essay excerpts of essays and the original sources they refer to. They have to determine whether or not plagiarism has been committed and how – 30 minutes • Plenary session – Tutor explains and provides examples of main paraphrasing techniques – 30 minutes • Work in pairs – Students will be given examples of paraphrased texts and originals and will have to determine the techniques used. On a second stage, students will have to paraphrase different excerpts by applying specific techniques – 45 minutes
SPECIFIC BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	
<i>Students are expected to</i>	<i>Students will be mentored by the tutor in the process of</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand and apply referencing principles - Understand the principles of academic honesty, integrity and originality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (b) Managing time pressure to avoid rushed unreflective writing - (b) Developing sufficient understanding of original materials - (c) Expanding their ability to make large scale language revisions - (c) Strengthening confidence in their English skills - (c) Expanding their knowledge of paraphrasing techniques - (a) Understanding cultural differences in writing - (a) Understanding plagiarism in its

	different forms and its implications	
SPECIFIC SKILLS		
<i>Cognitive Skills</i>	<i>Discourse Skills</i>	<i>Linguistic Skills</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creativity - Cognitive filtering - Reformulation - Time management - Conceptual organisation 		Paraphrasing techniques <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Word Form Change - nominalisation, adjectivation, verbalisation - Voice: active and passive voice alternation - Semantics – synonymy, antonymy, polysemy - Intraphrasal and interphrasal relations – logical connectors, subordination and coordination patterns - Topicalisation – theme/rheme, information focus - Packing noun phrases – transforming complex verbal structures into compact noun phrases - Unpacking noun phrases – transforming compact noun phrases into elaborate verbal structures

Potential constraints

EAP courses are known for their high content density and intense pace and thus students must be initially warned about the physical and mental exhaustion that pre-sessionals sometimes entail. This intensity involves constant tutor supervision and regular written and oral feedback, which will require holding at least one weekly individual tutorial to discuss task understanding and work progress. Students should also be reminded that study time is required outside planned contact hours and that it is highly recommended to consult additional sources beyond class material. To that aim we will make a learning platform available (Moodle or Google Drive) so that students can download class materials in advance and access additional contents and activities.

Teaching strategies

In line with previously discussed EAP teaching reflections, we believe that our teaching role equates to that of a practitioner (Dudley-Evans, 1998) and this can be deployed in the shape of plenary sessions, where group discussion and brainstorming will be fostered; one-on-one tutorials, which can be used to provide specific feedback and analyse aspects students may not be willing to discuss publicly in the classroom; or classroom supervision of reflective individual work. Throughout the course, our aim as practitioners will be to:

- Promote independent learning and prepare students to face the requirements of British academic institutions
- Provide students with strategies to manage their time effectively and optimise their academic performance
- Identify collective and individual difficulties as early as possible
- Create a healthy classroom atmosphere by encouraging the expression of opinions and respectful teacher-to-student and student-to-student interaction
- Minimise potential feelings of isolation, lack of integration or fear of losing face by creating a comfortable collaborative environment and catering for special needs.

Assessment

When it comes to assessment in the EAP context, alternative methods seem to be gaining ground against traditional testing methods in order to avoid undesirable negative washback effects (Alderson & Wall, 1993), like student dissatisfaction or the feeling that course contents do not match evaluation requirements. Alternative assessment requires problem solving and higher cognitive skills, real-world situations are normally used and processes and products are given equal importance (Aschbacher, 1991), so it seems to be suitably connected with our ultimate aim, which is to help students to achieve a successful integration in the British university system by updating their academic English skills. Indeed, the outcome of the main task in our course plan, which is writing an academic essay, is in line with the principles of performance assessment (see Shohamy, 1995 and Wiggins, 1989) as students are

requested to complete a real-life, highly authentic task. This kind of approach does not only gauge the students' ability to respond to specific academic situations, but provides a valuable estimation of their actual language abilities and can even predict their performance in future situations.

Essay assessment

Designing an unambiguous assessment rubric with explicit marking criteria is essential to achieve a successful assessment method, which is not heavily influenced by subjectivity (Bone, 1999). Our rubric consists of a series of categories with corresponding marking bands selected in accordance with the underlying theoretical principles and factors we wish to measure (Brown et al., 1997), that is, *task achievement and demonstration of knowledge acquired; cohesion and coherence; critical analysis; writing accuracy and referencing*. For each marking band there are descriptors expressing the sufficiency or unsuitability of the students' performance in connection with the learning objectives formulated in our course plan whereby we guarantee the validity of the assessment method (Morgan et al., 2004) and show candidates their achievements and areas requiring improvement.

Regardless of the student cohort and spatiotemporal circumstances, results should be comparable under an equivalent testing scenario (Nightingale et al., 1996). We aim to guarantee the reproducibility and reliability of this system by providing assessment training to tutors (random essay marking, rubric descriptor analysis and moderating sessions) and using double marking.

The last pillar is fairness, which is measured as the extent to which students understand the information regarding quality and performance standards. To that aim, learners will be provided with a copy of the assessment rubric at the beginning of the course and the tutor will refer back to this document as frequently as required when teaching the contents in the course plan (see Appendix IV for full assessment rubric).

Self-assessment

Our subtasks include a final self-assessment rubric, which students can use to monitor their progress. This consists of a series of can-do descriptors, that is, students are presented with a list of task-related situations and they have to decide how well they would respond to them (for example, *I understand the structure of an academic*

essay; I am familiar with the basic guidelines for in-text referencing). This is clearly easy and quick to apply and it allows students to go back and reflect on changes in their learning strategies and academic performance, but some authors have raised concerns regarding the accuracy of self-assessment, as there seems to be a lot of variability and proficient students curiously tend to underestimate their capabilities (Yamashita, 1996). Despite the deviations associated to the subjective nature of this assessment system and the psychological implications (self-esteem, anxiety in learning contexts, etc.), it still provides students with an interesting reference on their achievements and difficulties experienced (see Appendix V for self-assessment rubric).

A variant of this will be peer review, which we encourage at different times (see Course Plan above for examples of peer-review activities within subtasks) not only as a way to foster a collaborative environment, but also to exchange constructive ideas and learn from other students' cognitive processes.

Tutor feedback

In addition to the formal essay assessment, students will be provided with feedback stemming from classroom observations but also from drafts submitted for preliminary evaluation and correction. Feedback may be presented in written form (Word-processing functions like track changes and comment addition prove very effective and clear in this sense) and orally during one-on-one tutorials or sometimes in plenary sessions when suggestions and recommendations can potentially be useful for all students. The collection of draft work is also part of our ongoing needs analysis, as observations may help to identify new needs or detect the importance of learning aspects that might have been overlooked in the initial course design. It is important to remember that, as comprehensive as the feedback given to students may be, it should never consist of a detailed correction of their written production including all language mistakes, conceptual problems or structural deviations from academic standards. Recommendations and suggestions are the best way to guarantee independent learning and sustainable progress and they can obviously contain indications of repetitive grammar mistakes that can easily be avoided or lexical issues, but rewriting or detailed correction will not help students to interiorise course contents (see Appendix VI for additional reference).

Our assessment proposal attempts to be reproducible, reliable, valid and fair, but also comprehensive in the sense that all aspects will be taken into account when

interpreting results: traditional indicators, complementary observations, performance measuring tools and obviously self- and peer-assessment. This holistic approach is probably the only way to obtain a clear detailed picture of our students' achievements and limitations (McNamara & Deane, 1995).

CONCLUSION

As an EAP tutor, expanding my theoretical background on key issues connected to syllabus design, identification of student needs and expectations, assessment and methodological principles has been particularly interesting. This has helped us to create a more consistent and seamless course plan built upon the task-based approach and supported by a tailored needs-analysis scaffolding whereby we have been able to determine the crucial objectives for our students, secondary and tangentially related targets alongside procedural and methodological aspects.

Through our theoretical research on key EAP issues, we have managed to build a solid framework to rely on when it comes to reassessing the validity of teaching strategies, the efficacy of classroom management or identifying meaningful nuances in tutor-to-student and student-to-student relations. This is particularly important in the context of pre-sessional courses as their intensity, nature and length provide limited opportunities to attempt a trial-and-error approach and implementing ongoing substantial modifications to the course plan is basically out of the question. Thus, our intention herein has been to provide our course design with a solid theoretical backbone and to conduct a thorough needs analysis of the student population to define *a priori* needs, wants and lacks and plausible expectations regarding student language production and task outcomes.

Working in a pre-sessional course is a valuable experience in terms of accepting new teaching challenges, adjusting to demanding and variable scenarios and managing pressure, but the learning cycle will not be complete without retrospective analysis. This has been partially achieved by conducting interviews with former pre-sessional students and ascertaining their degree of satisfaction, initial expectations and subjective remarks concerning weaknesses and areas of improvement. However, we believe it will be essential to test the robustness and reproducibility of our course plan by having it implemented in different EAP-related teaching scenarios and collecting any relevant feedback. This will be particularly important to determine if tasks have been

designed accurately and unambiguously and to explore if our assessment rubrics are efficient in all their dimensions (teacher-initiated, self-assessment and peer-to-peer).

Looking back on our professional practice is an interesting source of information, which can be decoded and reinterpreted under new light with suitable literature research. This deepens our understanding of the transnational nature of EAP courses for overseas students whose needs can only be catered for by deploying suitable strategies to bypass the negative effects of the cultural clash (see our previous discussion of Confucianism and the concept of *face* whereby Asian students, chiefly Chinese, will take their teacher's words as a monolithic reference that could never be questioned or challenged and find it hard to voice their opinion or criticism regarding other mates' performance for fear of losing their social recognition). Along this line, it could be interesting to expand our research to other EAP teaching contexts (as our work focuses exclusively on the UK even if some of the research conducted includes American authors) and to analyse pre-sessional courses where English is not the instructional language so that we can learn from their organisation, methodological choices and determine whether certain constraints and difficulties are shared or not.

In addition, our retrospective reflective analysis also collaborates in the process of grasping the multi-layered complexity of academic English and navigating through a plethora of elusive concepts like genre or register. Indeed, as proven by the collated results of our diagnostic tests and questionnaires, pre-sessional students are hardly acquainted at all with these notions and find it difficult to find their academic voice in such a different context. Our course design develops different key academic genres extensively and provides students with sound guidelines to follow, but we have also devised instructional techniques aiming at logical conceptual mapping, hierarchisation of personal and alien ideas and careful planning before producing acceptable written outcomes. The fact that many students also come from a typical IELTS scenario makes it essential to strengthen their formal and semi-formal registers in both writing, which is the key aspect of the course we presented above, and speaking, as students are required to present their research orally and participate in academic discussions and seminars.

Our research has showed us that no particular course-design approach suits EAP needs and specificities perfectly and, thus, it has been interesting to verify that EAP syllabus design encompasses elements stemming from traditional text-based instruction as it is virtually impossible to shy away from templates or examples of

written work as a reference, which can also help students paragon their progress or hone their paraphrasing skills; contemporary task-based approaches, which have proven to be key in our course plan even if we have encountered some theoretical difficulties, precisely when designing learning and communicative tasks and, most importantly, when imbricating the different cognitive and notional layers that underlie complex tasks like the ones defined in previous sections; and even content-based instruction, which becomes relevant when introducing students to basic tools of economic analysis or case study strategies. Although teaching continues to revolve around academic English, tutors are required to master key business management concepts to guarantee students will be able to complete the course tasks successfully.

This last reflection underlines the fact that successful design may stem from a collaborative effort uniting EAP tutors and subject specialists, a frequent source of controversy in literature, as some authors welcome the participation of non-language tutors but refuse to accept that the EAP tutor should be versed in any other subject other than academic English proper. However, since the idea of having specialists and language tutors cooperate in actual EAP teaching has considerable feasibility limitations, both intellectual and financial, if not methodological, a door opens to the possibility of creating customised tutor-training courses envisaging the prospect of a tutor-specialist figure combined in just a single EAP practitioner. This may seem farfetched but if we think of other realms where subject specialism and language knowledge coexist like conference interpreting, way before academic programmes were institutionalised or the figure of professional interpreters properly defined, conference interpreters were normally subject specialists who happened to be functionally bilingual and found it easy to navigate through specialised terminology in two different language systems. Analogically, the first EAP tutors were normally holders of degrees in non-language subjects who later acquired additional language-teaching qualifications and, even today, many pre-sessional lecturers have gradually acquired technical subject knowledge by extensive reading and collaborating in the research endeavours of their students.

We believe further research could be conducted to determine the feasibility of specialised teacher-training courses and to define the theoretical scaffolding of such instructional endeavour. In the meantime, we should also continue to strengthen content definition, assessment principles and task elaboration in the context of EAP courses, both pre-sessional and in-sessional, to guarantee they mimic the reality of

academia as closely as possible while not forgetting that they are still second-language courses.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alderson, J.C. & Wall, D. (1993). Does washback exist? *Applied Linguistics*, 14, 116-129.
- Aschbacher, P. A. (1991). Performance assessment: State activity, interest, and concerns. *Applied Measurement in Education*, 4, 275-288.
- Bachman, L.F. & Palmer, A.S. (1996). *Language Testing in Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bhatia, V. K. (1993). *Analysing Genre: Language Use in Professional Settings*. London: Longman.
- Bone, A. (1999). *Ensuring Successful Assessment*. National Centre for Legal Education: University of Warwick.
- Breen, M. P. (1987). Learner contributions to task design. In Candlin, C. N. & Murphy, D. F. (eds.) *Language Learning Tasks*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 23-46.
- Brinton, M., Snow, M., & Wesche, M. (1989). *Content-based Second Language Instruction*. Boston, MA: Heinle and Heinle.
- Brown, G., Bull, J., & Pendlebury, M. (1997). *Assessing Student Learners in Higher Education*. London: Routledge.
- Chambers, F. (1980). A re-evaluation of needs analysis. *ESP Journal*, 1/1, 25-33.
- Clyne, M. (1991). The sociocultural dimension: The dilemma of the German-speaking scholar. Schröder, H. (ed.): *Subject-oriented Texts*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 49-68.
- Dudley-Evans, T. & St John, M. J. (1998). *Developments in English for Specific Purposes. A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2000). Task-based research and language pedagogy. *Language Teaching Research*, 4/3, 193-220.
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based Language Learning and Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Etaire, S. & Zanon, J. (1994). *Planning Classwork: A Task-based Approach*. Oxford: Macmillan Heinemann.

- Flowerdew, J. & Peacock, M. (2001). Issues in EAP: A preliminary perspective. Flowerdew, J. & M. Peacock (eds.) *Research Perspectives on English for Academic Purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 8-24.
- Fultcher, G. (1999). Assessment in English for academic purposes: Putting context validity in its place. *Applied Linguistics*, 20/2, 221-236.
- Hamp-Lyons, L. & Heasley, B. (1987) *Study Writing. A Course in Written English*. Cambridge: CUP
- Hess, N & Ghawi, M. (1997). English for Academic Purposes: Teacher Development in a Demanding Arena. *English for Specific Purposes*, 16/1, 15-26.
- Hui, L. (2005) Chinese cultural schema of Education: Implications for communication between Chinese students and Australian educators. *Issues in Educational Research* 15/1, 17-36.
- Hutchinson, A., & Waters, B. (1987). *English for Specific Purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hyland, K. & Hamp-Lyons, L. (2002). EAP: Issues and directions. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 1, 1-12.
- Iwai, T., Kondo, K. Limm, S. J. D., Ray, E. G., Shimizu, H., & Brown, J. D. (1999). *Japanese Language Needs Analysis*. London: Routledge.
- Johns, T. F. (1981). Some problems of a world-wide profession. In J. McDonough, & T. French (Eds.) *The ESP teacher: role, development and prospects*. ELT Documents, 112.
- Jordan, R. R. (1997). *English for Academic Purposes: A Guide and Resource Book for Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jordan, R. R. (2002). The growth of EAP in Britain. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 1/1, 69-78.
- Jordan, R. R., & Nixon, F. (1986). *Language for Economics*. London: Collins ELT.
- Kasper, L.F. (1997). The Impact of Content-Based Instructional Programs on the Academic Progress of ESL Students. *English for Specific Purposes*, 16/4, 309-320.
- Littlewood, W. (2001). Students' attitudes to classroom English learning: A cross-cultural study. *Language Teaching Research*, 5/1, 3-28.
- McCormack, J. & Slaght, J. (2012) *English for Academic Study: Extended Writing & Research skills*. Reading: Garnet Education.
- McDonough, J. (1984). *ESP in Perspective: A Practical Guide*. London: Collins ELT.
- McNamara, M. & Deane, D. (1995). Self-assessment activities toward autonomy in language learning. *TESOL Journal*, 5, 18-23.

- Morgan, C., Dunn, L., Parry, S., & O'Reilly, M. (2004). *The Student Assessment Handbook: New Direction in Traditional and Online Assessment*. London: Falmer Press.
- Munby, J. (1978). *Communicative Syllabus Design*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Nightingale, P., Te Wiata, I., Toohey, S., Ryan, G., Hughes, C., Magin, D. (1996). *Assessing Learning in Universities*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.
- O'Brien, J. (1996). EAP course evaluation and quality assurance. In M. Hewings, & T. Dudley-Evans (Eds.), *Evaluation and course design*. Review of ELT 6 (No. 1).
- Ozturk, I. (2007). The textual organisation of research article introductions in applied linguistics: variability within a single discipline. *English for Specific Purposes* 26, 25-38.
- Paltridge, B. (2001). *Genre and the Language Learning Classroom*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Shohamy, E. (1995). Performance assessment in language testing. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 15, 188-211.
- Skehan, P. (1996). A framework for the implementation of task-based instruction. *Applied Linguistics*, 17, 38-62.
- Stern, H. H. (1992). *Issues and Options in Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Swales, J. & Feak, C.B. (1994) *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press
- Ventola, E. & Mauranen, A.(eds.) (1996). *Academic Writing: Intercultural and Textual Issues*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- West, R. (1998). Needs analysis in language teaching. *Language Teaching*, 27/1, 1-19.
- Wiggins, G. (1989). A true test: Toward more authentic and equitable assessment. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 70, 703-713.
- Williams, M & Burden, R. L. (1997) *Psychology for Language Teachers. A Social Constructivist Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Willis, J. (1996). *A Framework for Task-Based Learning*. London: Longman.
- Yamashita, S. O. (1996). *Six measures of JSL pragmatics*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

APPENDICES

Appendix I – Needs Analysis Questionnaire

Section I – Life in Britain and Pre-sessional expectations

Please read the following statements and then choose the most suitable option from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning “total agreement” and 5 “complete disagreement”

- I know the British academic world well
- I am familiar with British culture
- I am not anxious about attending a university lesson in English
- I am looking forward to making new friends
- I hope I can be in the same class with friends from my country
- Socialising is not very important to get through a university course
- It would be great to share accommodation with friends from my country
- I am very concerned about housekeeping issues in the UK (bank accounts, VISA...)
- I expect this pre-sessional to help me succeed in my university studies
- I expect this pre-sessional to help me strengthen my IELTS skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening)
- I hope this pre-sessional includes a lot of grammar
- The pre-sessional course should include subject-specific content
- I hope I can learn a lot of vocabulary related to my subject area
- I would like to be able to contact my tutor outside tutorials or lesson times
- The tutor should be familiar with my needs
- I would like my tutor to be one of my university lecturers
- My tutor should know a lot about my subject area
- I would like groups to be small as I need a lot of one-on-one attention
- My tutor should know my country well
- I do not expect this course to be different from other English courses

Section II – Reading and Research

- I am used to doing academic research
- I have done a lot of reading during my previous university studies
- I know how to find the information I need in a library
- It is easy to find relevant information online

- I expect my tutor to tell me what to read and help me find information
- I can tell what the main and secondary ideas in a piece of text are
- I can tell if what I read is opinion or fact or an idea coming from someone else
- I should never disagree with the ideas of an important author
- My academic work should be based on what other authors think
- I find it hard to read academic texts in English
- I use the dictionary a lot when reading in English
- I can be selective when going through extensive literature sources
- Reading is time consuming and I am afraid I will not have time to write anything
- I am familiar with scanning and skimming techniques

Section III – Writing

- I have written academic texts in English before
- My experience is limited to typical English class assignments
- I am familiar with the types of texts that can be found in the academic context
- I am familiar with academic writing conventions
- I feel my writing is not very fluent and well organised in English
- I have a lot of ideas but I do not know how to put them in writing
- I always plan my work well before I start writing
- I am familiar with the structure of an academic essay
- I am familiar with referencing conventions
- I always quote the author when I use someone else's ideas
- If I mix my ideas with somebody else's thoughts or rewrite them, I do not need to quote the authors
- My subject-specific vocabulary is varied
- I feel my grammar is weak
- My English writing is consistent and well connected
- When I write, I think about who is going to read it
- I am able to express my knowledge clearly through writing
- I seek help from others when writing
- I value my mates' opinions to assess the quality of my writing
- I always proofread my texts
- I frequently go back and rewrite certain sections as necessary

Appendix II - Assessment rubric for writing samples

1. Clarity of writing purpose (purpose should be stated as an argument or exposition of facts either implicitly or explicitly)
 - a. Text fails to establish a clear purpose
 - b. Purpose is not consistently clear or may vary throughout the text
 - c. Purpose is clearly defined
2. Evidence-based reasoning (writing demonstrates critical analysis of literature sources and sound argumentation)
 - a. Proliferation of unsupported generalisations or inclusion of irrelevant citations/references
 - b. Evidence is listed but no clear conclusions are withdrawn
 - c. Evidence-based reasoning is clear and leading to logical conclusions
3. Genre-suited structure and writing conventions
 - a. Cohesion and coherence devices are poorly used and text lacks internal organisation
 - b. Text flow is occasionally inconsistent
 - c. Text can be easily read and respects writing conventions
4. Audience awareness (specialised terminology, language forms and authoritative style are displayed in accordance with target audience)
 - a. Target audience remains unclear
 - b. Inconsistent acknowledgement of target audience
 - c. Sense of audience clearly expressed through language use and writing conventions
5. Effective control of academic language conventions
 - a. Grammar and lexical problems could potentially distract reader from writing purpose. Occasional unintelligibility
 - b. There are occasional grammar and lexical problems but not sufficient to impair understanding
 - c. Impressive language use

Appendix III – Sample interview questions

Sample interview questions

1. In terms of sociocultural and academic integration, in what ways do you feel the pre-session course was useful for you?

2. Do you feel your reading was strengthened? In what ways?
3. Do you feel your academic writing is better now? In what ways?
4. Looking back on your pre-sessional, what would you improve?

Appendix IV - Essay-assessment rubric

Main category	0 - 40	40 - 60	60 - 80	80 - 100
Coherence and Cohesion (structural and notional) (15%)	Limited attempts to organise or make the text flow naturally. Flawed paragraph progression Limited coherence and limited or inaccurate use of cohesive devices. Basic issues identified some drawing of conclusions but these may not be fully logical. Unsupported claims.	Acceptable attempts to organise the text. Some well-linked ideas but cohesion is often artificial. Correct paragraph progression. Issues identified, some conclusive remarks and occasionally supported claims.	Logically organised with clear and effective progression of ideas with effective linking. Clear use of cohesion and coherence devices and successful paragraphing. Logical identification of issues, very clearly drawn conclusions, well-chosen and explained use of appropriate examples to support claims.	Excellent organisation and progression. Perfectly suitable paragraphing and use of cohesion and coherence devices. Complete identification of main essay issues; coherent and unambiguous conclusions; excellent use of exemplification and claims supported in an original and rigorous fashion
Critical Analysis (25%)	Fundamentally descriptive work with little to no weighing of evidence provided.	Essentially descriptive work but occasional weighing of evidence included.	Good critical weighing of evidence, with a predominance of analysis over description.	Excellent application of critical analysis and critical weighing of evidence.
Knowledge Display Task Achievement (25%)	Writing is basically unrelated to the essay topic and/or mainly irrelevant. Little specific knowledge shown. Very limited pool of sources used, some of which are irrelevant or tangential to the topic. Evidence of plagiarism or excessive use of lifted sections.	Most of the writing is related to the topic but occasionally irrelevant or inconclusive. Basic demonstration of specific knowledge Essential academic literature on the topic has been consulted and included together with a limited amount of additional sources.	Chiefly relevant and original writing. Relevant knowledge is demonstrated if some sections can appear slightly incomplete or lacking sound literature support. Relevant academic literature is fully covered and efforts have been made to find additional relevant references. Rare lifting of phrases.	Completely relevant and highly original writing. Powerful display of relevant and even unexpected knowledge on the topic. Very high standard of literature research and varied use of fully relevant sources

		Occasional use of lifted phrases.		
Accuracy and appropriateness of writing (25%)	Poor writing standard. Mistakes can even hinder intelligibility and prevent reader from understanding key points. No proofreading skills shown	Acceptable writing standard. Mistakes may be considerable in number, even sometimes an occasional source of confusion and style inconsistency, but ideas are generally understandable. Occasional typos showing superficial proofreading	Well written with limited errors and adequate academic style. Careful presentation	Excellent writing with very limited to no errors. Clear respect of register and style conventions and unblemished presentation
Referencing Mechanics (10%)	Incorrect or inaccurate in-text citations. Incomplete bibliography or unquoted references included. Referencing guide not used	Attempt to use correct referencing but mechanical errors remain. References included in the bibliography but with some errors and omissions.	Consistently correct in-text referencing. Complete bibliography	Perfect referencing mechanics

Appendix V – Self-assessment rubric

SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC – SUBTASK 1 – FINDING SUITABLE REFERENCES	
<p><i>Look back at the work on this module and what you have learnt and tick all the statements you positively think you can do or describe your skills now. If you tick more than 70% of the statements, you are on the right path. If you tick less than 50%, it is time to review your notes and discuss with your tutor how to turn this around</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am familiar with the most usual referencing guides • I can apply suitable selection criteria when navigating through references • I can browse through a text quickly and find the information I need • I can contrast and compare references suitably • I can corroborate or refute my ideas by researching available 	

<p>literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can detect and explore research gaps • I can differentiate main and secondary ideas • I can locate references easily in a library • I can tell factual information from opinion • I can use in-text referencing correctly • I can use online literature search engines efficiently • I can write a complete reference list 	
--	--

<p>SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC – SUBTASK 2 – UNDERSTANDING AND CRITICALLY ANALYSING A CASE STUDY</p>	
<p><i>Look back at the work on this module and what you have learnt and tick all the statements you positively think you can do or describe your skills now. If you tick more than 70% of the statements, you are on the right path. If you tick less than 50%, it is time to review your notes and discuss with your tutor how to turn this around</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can adopt specific business roles • I can apply common business models for analysis purposes • I can apply key management and business concepts to my analysis of a case study • I can apply my real-life experience and know-how • I can apply problem-solving strategies to produce a case report • I can detect cultural differences that may be crucial in business analysis • I can express ideas using hedging and academic caution • I can identify the main parts of a case study • I can make projections and formulate hypotheses • I can read and understand a case study well • I can understand and process statistical and financial information • I can use language patterns to express suggestions and recommendations • I can use relevant financial terminology 	

**SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC – SUBTASK 3 – DRAFTING,
BRAINSTORMING AND STRUCTURING AN ESSAY**

Look back at the work on this module and what you have learnt and tick all the statements you positively think you can do or describe your skills now. If you tick more than 70% of the statements, you are on the right path. If you tick less than 50%, it is time to review your notes and discuss with your tutor how to turn this around

- I can apply a critical attitude to assess the quality and suitability of sources
- I can benefit from exchanging ideas and opinions
- I can bridge the gap between literature research and my own opinions and conclusions
- I can determine if a writing project is feasible
- I can determine limitations in my research proposal
- I can determine my potential audience and write accordingly
- I can develop argumentation and counter-argumentation solidly
- I can incorporate criticism and differing opinions into my work
- I can modify or reconsider research directions as I go
- I can plan effectively
- I can structure my writing in accordance with academic conventions
- I can use an impersonal academic style
- I understand the concept of register
- I understand the importance of academic honesty and integrity
- I understand the importance of proofreading and peer review

SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC – SUBTASK 4 – AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

Look back at the work on this module and what you have learnt and tick all the statements you positively think you can do or describe your skills now. If you tick more than 70% of the statements, you are on the right path. If you tick less than 50%, it is time to review your notes and discuss with your tutor how to turn this around

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am confident in my own English writing skills • I am familiar with the most common forms of plagiarism and their implications • I can make good use of the most frequent paraphrasing skills • I can manage writing time well • I can reformulate ideas in my own words • I can write original well-referenced material • I have sufficient understanding of original materials • I understand cultural differences in writing • I understand the principles of academic honesty, integrity and originality 	
---	--

Appendix VI – Writing sample assessment

(See sample draft writing excerpt below)

ASSESSMENT OF WRITING SAMPLES

Clarity of writing purpose (purpose should be stated as an argument or exposition of facts either implicitly or explicitly)

Evidence-based reasoning (writing demonstrates critical analysis of literature sources and sound argumentation)

Genre-suited structure and writing conventions

Audience awareness (specialised terminology, language forms and authoritative style are displayed in accordance with target audience)

Effective control of academic language conventions

To what extent do annual financial reports help stakeholders to understand the health of public companies?

“Financial reports provide information about assets, liabilities, income and cash flows, and stockholders’ equity of the firm.” (Geraid I. White, 2002) So, generally, it includes balance sheet, income statement, statement of comprehensive income, statement of cash flow and statement of stockholder’s equity. Financial reports are very important to stakeholders. It commonly reflects financial standing and operating results of a company. Users could

Comentario [A1]: Reconsider using a quote right at the beginning of your essay

Comentario [A2]: Check referencing conventions

achieve important information and make their financial decision by analyzing financial reports. But, unfortunately, in recent years, many public companies decorate their financial reports and offer illusive accounting information to users deliberately in order to achieve illegal benefits. As a result, the functions of financial reports have **lapsed**.

Comentario [A3]: Use of pronouns in this section, precisely "it", is problematic. It is unclear what you are referring to. Avoid using adverbs as sentence starting elements and link ideas together to draft a more solid opening paragraph

This essay aim to illustrate who are users of financial reports, how do users understand the financial standing and operating results of company through financial reports, why financial reports become useless to stakeholders and put forward some advices to identify and avoid **it**.

Comentario [A4]: This section indicates the aim of your essay but it does not clearly relate to the previous paragraph. Consider rewriting so that reading becomes easier. Check grammar and word order

According to Pauline **Weetman** users of financial reports include stockholders, creditors, suppliers, managers, customers, employees, government and competitors. Stockholders concern about the profitability of the company and accept risky information of investment and checkup whether the company has adequate cash flow during the process of daily operating. Generally, creditors include short-term and long-term ones. The former usually pay attention to the liquidity of company assets and the latter commonly follow with interests in enterprise long-term ability to pay debt. As to suppliers which are similar to creditors, they usually aim to checkup the debt paying ability of the company. Managers will be aware of the operating and debt paying situation of their company. They need to identify the problems during the process of running, estimate further development directions of enterprise and assure asset of company has been maintained. Customers give attention to the distribution of company resources, so, they usually evaluate the quality of service and products they achieved and make sense of whether the company could sustain and develop their service and products in the long run. Obviously, employees concern more about whether the company can offer them a stable job and safe working conditions as well as if they can get their salaries on time. All of this can be inflected by the operating and debt paying ability of the company. Government usually makes sense of the operating ability of company. As we know, a well-established company will offer more job opportunities to society. Conversely, it will affect the steady of society if many people lost their jobs. In addition, government could be aware of the tax payment situation of the company by their reports. Competitors aim to achieve the information about the economic policies, resources superiority and future developing directions of the company, thus, they could formulate corresponding **measures**.

Comentario [A5]: Check referencing conventions

"The financial reporting system is based on data generated from accounting events and selected economic events." (Ashwinpaul C. Sondhi, **2002**) So, what can stakeholders get by analyzing financial reports? And how they get the information? Pauline (2006) claims that there are five aspects achieved from financial reports. The first one is business environment and operating characters of the company. It could be achieved by analyzing the trend of corresponding industry and learning about the company's position in this industry. Users could also evaluate the situation of human resources and identify the distribution methods within company. Subsequently, users can learn about business accounting policies through the changes of accounting

Comentario [A6]: Paragraphing could be improved in this section. This is too long and address various and not necessarily related issues. Reorganise to help readers follow your argumentation line. Remember, as stated before, not to use adverbs as sentence starters too frequently

Comentario [A7]: Consider adding a subheading so that your essay is organised in clearly different sections. Review to use of linkers in this paragraph.

policies and the reasons of adopting different accounting policies. Most importantly, they could make sense of what influences the changes will bring to the items of relative financial statement. Then, the essential one is to achieve important information from financial statements. Of course, the primary financial statements are balance sheet, income statement and cash flow statement. Balance sheet offers users a fixed point time financial situation. Income statement provides users with financial status during a period of time. Lastly, cash flow statement indicates the financial adjustability of the company for a time. What follows is to accept the financial ability of the company. Users could achieve this goal through the analysis of various financial targets. Finally, stakeholders can make comprehensive analysis to the company and make comments about it. When we turn to the question how stakeholders get information from financial reports, generally, there are four methods, comparative analysis, ratio analysis method, trend analysis method and factors analysis method. Comparative method is a way to achieve information by compare. Users can compare the profit in reality to plan, balance present and past benefit and make a comparison to other companies. Ratio analysis method is to analyse the debt paying ability, operating ability, and profitability of the company by dint of sorts of ratio. This is the most popular method used by stakeholders. Then, trend comparison method is on the basis of present financial status and operating results to predict the future situation. Stakeholders can use either absolute value or ratio to learn about it. Finally, stakeholders use factor comparison method to be aware of which factor contributes a lot to economic indicators. For example, non-business income could be a main factor contributing to the increase of profit. To sum up, stakeholders can get what they want from analyzing financial reports.

However, for some reasons, the information stakeholders achieved from financial reports of public companies is distorted. Hugh Grove (2008) claimed that there were several factors leading to fraudulent financial reporting of public companies. Initially, company has weak internal self-discipline ability. On one hand, it has all-powerful CEO, as a result, many decisions are made discretionarily. On the other hand, management control system is invalid. In what follows, many public companies may be driven by short-term benefits. They usually glossed over facts when they did not achieve their economic goals. The increased trend of economy will convince the stakeholders and make them have a continuous investment to their company. Sometimes, public companies can not compile fraudulent financial reporting successfully by themselves. As we know, annual reports of public companies will be audited by auditing company on a yearly basis. So, some illegal relationships maybe exist between public company and auditing company. The most famous case is Enron and Anderson. Similarly, investment bankers are probably to become the offer of illusive accounting information, because they have common interests with public company. Of course, lack of ethics within company is the most direct reason. But, it is not easy to improve moral level at short notice.

Comentario [A8]: Again, please review paragraphing. This is too long and too many ideas are introduced in a not very clear manner. Check some grammar issues such as use of the article and pronoun use. Consider breaking this down into different subsections

Comentario [A9]: Why "however"? What is the logical connection with the previous section

Comentario [A10]: Explanation or reference required

Comentario [A11]: This is an attempt to add some critical analysis and personal perceptions, but this should be developed and more examples provided

Besides, as many people know that the basic reason of illusive accounting information is the separation of ownership rights and management rights. Managers are responsible for the daily company management activities, so, they are very familiar with internal accounting information of the company. Strong stock holders can achieve detailed financial information by their particular position. Hence, senior managers and strong stock holders control the creation and publish of financial reporting. Whereas, as the stakeholders, some minority stockholders have to depend on published financial reports to learn about the financial status and operating results. Consequently, when there is a situation of conflicting interests between senior mangers, strong stock holder and minority stockholders, former two will occupy the benefits of minority stockholders depending on their priority. As a result, they decorate the annual financial report to achieve their **goals**.

Accordingly, to some extent, financial reports can not meet the demand to make sense of the accounting information of public companies. However, fraudulent financial reporting can be conscious of in advance, and we could take measures to make the financial reports more believable and **useful**.

Bryan (2001) illustrated two performances of public company should be paid attention by stakeholders. First one is "when income is greater than expected and when debt covenants are restrictive, conditioned on income being greater than expected." (Bryan, 2001) It means that we should pay attention to

anonymous income and be aware of vanished debt. When both of them happen together, then, we should keep eyes on the ball. This is the common method to increase profits of public company. The second one is "when income is greater than expected and when earnings-based bonus plan is used and debt covenants are restrictive." (Bryan, 2001) In this situation, the public company will overrate their income by maximizing the current value of dividend income. Consequently, stakeholders will be misled as they consider the company will have a good development in the **future**.

Of course, there are a lot of methods used by public company to decorate their financial reports. For example, they could control profit by different valuation methods of inventory. As we know, both overrating the price of final inventory and underrating the price of initial inventory will lead to overstatements of income. Besides, many ST companies frequently use non-business income to control profits. Because there is no corresponding cost for non-business income, they can achieve this income with any expense and non-business income has big influence on final profits. Similarly, other receivables can be also considered as a tool to control profits by public companies. Furthermore, parent company and subsidiary company often inflate their profits by internal connected transaction. Such as if parent company purchases a great number of equity stake of its subsidiary company by a small part of asset, then, there will be a great increase in the final achievement of parent company.

Obviously, there are diverse methods for public company to fraud stakeholders. So, we should take measures to prevent the behaviors and make the financial reports more believable. First, the most efficient way is to strengthen

Comentario [A12]: The rationale behind this paragraph is unclear so this should be improved both in terms of grammar and logical connections

Comentario [A13]: This is difficult to understand and it stands as an independent paragraph with difficulty. Please connect with previous sections and improve clarity

Comentario [A14]: Be careful word choice and referencing conventions

Comentario [A15]: Even if not expressed very clearly in terms of grammar, these ideas are interesting, but could be developed in more detail with personal contributions and some more critical analysis

external investigation. We should make the audit procedure much strict and change audit firms for public company regularly to avoid collusion. Once an illegal behavior is found, rigorous punishment should be taken to improve the cost of decorating financial reports. In what follows, internal control system should be considered seriously. Company should pay attention to improve the professional morals of accountants and makes them play an important role in internal control system. They should also establish effective internal decision making system to avoid powerful CEO or senior managers. Then, the company may have better to connect the wage of senior managers with the income of company. As we know, the reason why senior managers decorate financial reports is that they are driven by benefits. So, higher salaries could be regarded as incentives to senior managers. They could get adequate dividends when the company gets a fat profit. As a consequence, they will devote themselves into the development of the company and achieve more benefits to themselves. There is no need for them to decorate the financial reports, because they could get what they want by daily management. The last but not the least, lack of ethic contributes a lot to fraudulent financial reporting, so many company should put the stress on the improvement of ethic. Although it is difficult to improve ethic level in a short time, this is the most essential method to avoid illusive accounting information and protect the benefits of stakeholders. Of course, besides the methods mentioned above, more measures can be taken to avoid fraudulent financial report and make it more trustworthy.

In conclusion, although there are many reasons to the fraud of public companies as well as there are many means for them to get illegal benefits, stakeholders are not helpless. They can use professional analysis methods to analyse the reports and identify the problems through unwonted performance of company. With the development of technology there will be many measures to be taken to avoid fraudulent financial reporting and in the future, when there is an improvement of ethic level, illusive accounting information could be avoided basically.

So, I believe, financial report is extremely significant for stakeholders to learn about a company and at present it may be the most efficient way to help users recognize a company entirely. What is more, fraudulent financial report could test an unhealthy company for them from other side as well. To sum up, financial report is useful for stakeholders. But, they need to identify useful information by themselves.

References List:

- 1, Gerald I. White, Ashwinpaul C. Sondhi, Dov Fried (2003) The analysis and use of financial statements. 3rd.ed. New York: Wiley
- 2, Pauline Weetman (2006) Financial accounting: an introduction. 4th.ed. Harlow: Financial Times Prentice Hall
- 3, Hugh Grove and Elisabetta Basilico (2008) Fraudulent Financial Reporting Detection. Business Source Premier (EBSCO) [online], Fall 2008, pp.10-42 Available at: <http://web.ebscohost.com>

Comentario [A16]: This section is interesting but it is not clearly connected with the aim you stated in your introduction. Is your intention to find ways to avoid fraud or is it to explain how to analyse and interpret financial statements correctly?

Comentario [A17]: Conclusion is not strong enough. You should look back at your essay, reorganise sections and state a clear objective in your introduction.

Comentario [A18]: Check referencing conventions both in this list and throughout the text

[Accessed 29th August, 2011]

4, Bryan K. Church, Jeffrey J. McMillan, and Arnold Schneider (2001) Factors Affecting Internal Auditors' Consideration of Fraudulent Financial Reporting during Analytical Procedures. Business Source Premier (EBSCO) [online], March 2001.

Available at: <http://web.ebscohost.com>

[Accessed 30th August, 2011]