Evaluating an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) pre-sessional course: how effectively does it prepare students for their Masters programmes?

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EITAL is a four-week, full-time pre-sessional EAP course for international students preparing for entry to language-teaching related postgraduate degree programmes at Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh.

Course aims
1. research & write an 1800 word source-based critical review of a journal article relevant to their specialist area; revise in response to formative feedback
2. research, prepare & effectively deliver a 10-minute individual oral presentation & respond appropriately to questions
3. work successfully with partner(s) to research, prepare & present a conference paper, responding effectively to questions
4. make notes on & critically respond in discussion to live lectures & written texts on a range of topics
5. progress on to Edinburgh degree programmes with confidence in EAP skills

End-of-course assessment
Students must attain the required score on all components (standardised & moderated appropriately):
- Listening test (lecture listening & note-taking)
- Written assessment: (a critical review)
- Oral assessment: a presentation based on the critical review, including Q & A

The course has been running for over 20 years and with increasingly large student numbers in line with expansion of numbers on the UoE degree programmes. Student satisfaction has been uniformly high according to end-of-course evaluations.

However, we want to know to what extent this perception of the usefulness of the course persists as students experience the rigours of their Masters programmes.

Methodology

Small-scale tracking project:
- questionnaires: 32 responses – distributed January 2019
- interviews (x 9) & focus group (4 students): 13 participants in total – conducted April/May 2019

Questionnaire findings

Usefulness of course elements (%)