MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EAP: WHAT'S IN OUR TOOLKIT?

Diane Schmitt Nottingham Trent University BAAL TEA SIG 2017

THREE IMPORTANT EAP ASSESSMENT STAGES SAME OR DIFFERENT QUESTIONS?

- Screening tests
 - Do students have sufficient language to directly enter university?
- End of pre-university EAP course assessments
 - Can students use their current language resources to learn new academic content and demonstrate learning by successfully carrying out academic tasks?
- End of university assessments
 - Do graduates have sufficient language to convey their understanding of disciplinary content in professional contexts?

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IS A MOVING TARGET



Entry

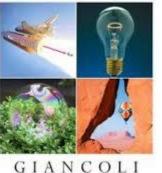
Experience

Exit

- ELP as general academic and social communicative language ability
- Engagement with disciplinary teaching, learning and assessment tasks
- ELP as specific (disciplinary) academic and social communicative language ability
- *Readiness to enter profession and/or further study*
- ELP as professional and social communicative language ability

English Language Proficiency Development Continuum – In Arkoudis, Baik and Richardson (2012: 13)





Philip Kosky

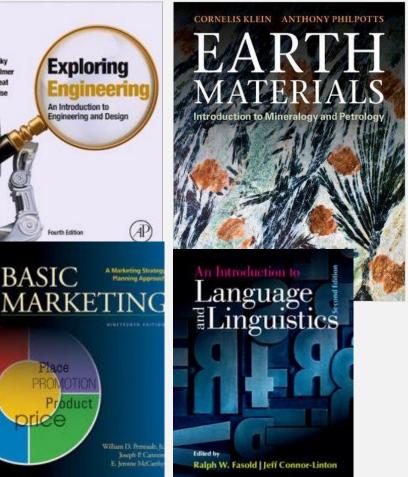
Robert Balme

William Kea George Wise

roduction to Psychology



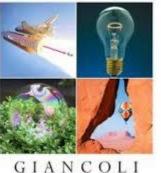
LEARNING NEW CONTENT AS A NEW UNDERGRADUATE



Expectations for new students

- Little expectation of subject background knowledge for undergraduates
- Sufficient language and literacy skills to pick up on expected ways of learning at university
- Sufficient language to tackle the content of textbooks, lectures and other input
- Sufficient language to demonstrate understanding of subject content through discussion, writing and other forms of output
- Sufficient language to learn disciplinary discourse/language





Philip Kosky

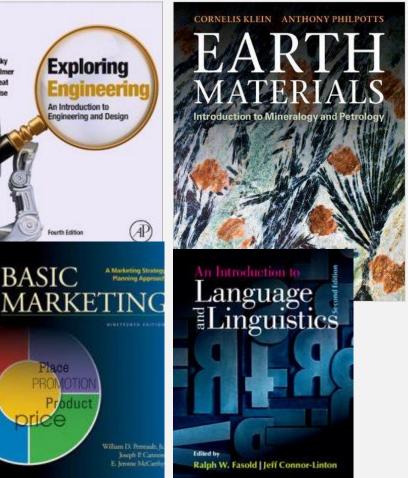
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LEARNING NEW CONTENT AS A NEW UNDERGRADUATE



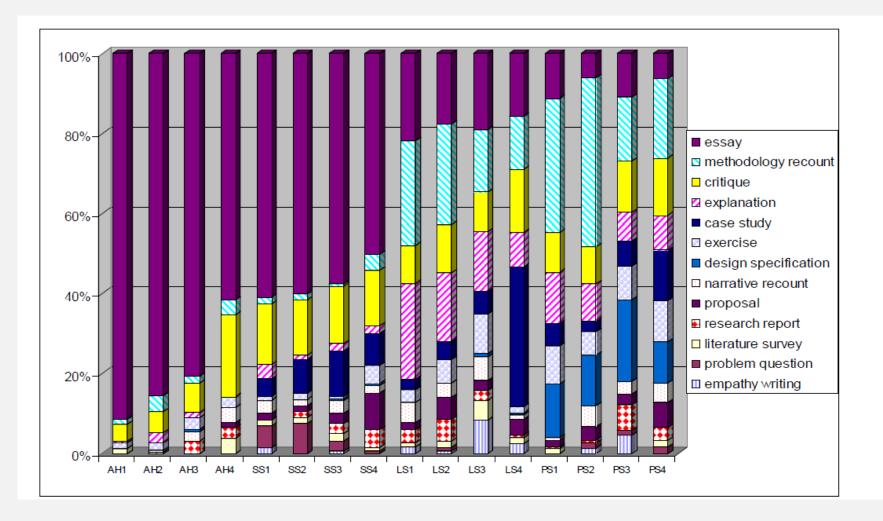
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- Sufficient language to tackle the content of textbooks, lectures and other input
- Sufficient language to demonstrate understanding of subject content through discussion, writing and other forms of output
- Sufficient language to learn disciplinary discourse/language

EXPECTATIONS OF LANGUAGE & LITERACY DEVELOPMENT DURING UNIVERSITY

- Sufficient language to learn and apply disciplinary discourse/language
- Sufficient language and literacy skills to extend understanding of expected ways of learning at university
- Sufficient language to tackle increasingly complex content and a wider range of input
- Sufficient language to demonstrate increasingly critical and complex understandings of subject content through discussion, writing and other forms of output

WRITING TASKS SET AT UK UNIVERSITIES BY DISCIPLINARY GROUP AND LEVEL



(Gardner, 2010)

GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

- Bachelor's degrees with honours are awarded to students who have demonstrated:
 - a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline
 - an ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline
 - conceptual understanding that enables the student to...

GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

- Conceptual understanding that enables the student to:
 - describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline
 - have an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge
 - manage their own learning, and make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline).
- Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:
 - apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects
 - critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution – or identify a range of solutions – to a problem

(QAA, 2008)

THE AUSTRALIAN EMPLOYMENT CONTEXT

In recruitment

- 1. technical skills are the top priority
- 2. ELP is critically important, in contexts where demand is strong, candidates will be systematically sifted through written application and interview processes.
- 3. in all the professions reading, writing, speaking and listening are deemed vital
- 4. demand for field-specific vocabulary, terminology and jargon is routinely high, as are employer expectations of effective cross-cultural adjustment, comprehensible accent, small-talk capacity, and select personality traits in work.
- 5. While advanced English training is provided in select sites, provision is likely to be uncertain, deemed marginally effective, and unlikely to deliver the level of ELP competence sought in professionals six to eight years 'out' (near universally stated to be IELTS Band 8 by employers).
- 6. Poor English heightens the risk of former international students' career stagnation and ultimate dismissal. (Arkoudis and Hawthorne, 2009)

THE CURRENT EAP ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT



English Language Proficiency Development Continuum

Readiness to commence higher education study

Entry

Exit

- ELP as general academic and social communicative language ability
- Engagement with disciplinary teaching, learning and assessment tasks
 ELP as specific (disciplinary) academic and social communicative language ability
 - Readiness to enter profession and/or further study
 - ELP as professional and social communicative language ability

English for International Opportunity

Benchmark presessional/foundatio n programme assessment to

IELTS (O' Loughlin, 2007)

English for International Opportunity

HK, Australian immigration, UAE universities – use IELTS as an exit test (Bruce & Hamp– Lyons, 2015; Birrell, 2006; Rogier, 2012)



Tracking students' proficiency in Year 1 with IELTS (Humphries et al, 2012)

TEST - RETEST ENTRY (GREEN, 2005)

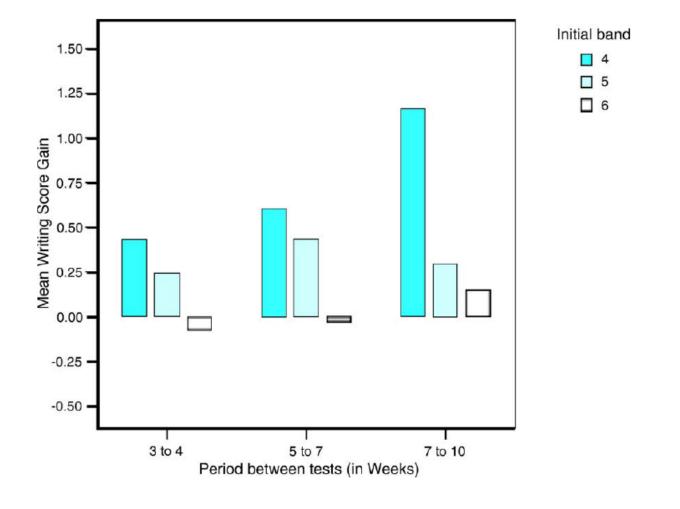


Fig. 3. Mean score gains on IELTS Writing component for learners on EAP courses.

TEST - RETEST EXPERIENCE (HUMPHREYS ET AL, 2012)

- Investigated the score gains of 57 undergraduates over their first semester at Griffith University. All had been enrolled on an English Language Enhancement Course which is compulsory for international students entering with overall scores of less than 7.0 on IELTS.
- Found no change in the mean overall score from Test 1 to Test 2 scores for 21 participants remained the same, while the scores of 19 participants went up and 11 went down.
- Concluded that lack of gain is due to the use of band scores in the IELTS scale. The width of the bands masks changes that are noticeable on the more granular raw score scales.
- Considered another cause may be the existence of an "intermediate plateau" (i.e. "a steeper trajectory at the CEFR B2 to C1 levels (McCarthy, 2011)

TEST - RETEST EXIT (O'LOUGHLIN AND ARKOUDIS, 2009)

- Investigated the score gains of 30 undergraduate and 33 postgraduate international students at the University of Melbourne.
- Compared the IELTS scores students presented at entry with those of a test taken during the final semester of their degrees.
- Found that on average, students' overall scores improved by .413, which is less than half a band score on the test.
- Found only ten students improved by a full band from Test 1 to Test 2. The greatest gains were in reading, listening, and speaking respectively although only the first two were equal to a .5 band gain. Mean writing gain was a disappointing .206.
- Found students with higher initial test results in listening, reading and writing were found to improve much less than those with lower initial test scores.

TEST - RETEST EXIT (BIRRELL, 2006)

- The Australian government requires on-shore student applicants for Skilled Migrant Visas to take an IELTS test even though they have completed a degree at an Australian university.
- Research by Birrell (2006) revealed that in 2005–06, 34% of 42,295 skilled visa applicants did not achieve IELTS scores of 6.0 overall.
- This data appears to indicate that the English language proficiency of many graduates of Australian universities not only did not improve, it may have regressed.

OTHER TOOLS (STORCH AND TAPPER, 2009)

- Measured the impact of a credit-bearing in-sessional EAP course at the University of Melbourne on the development of post-graduate student writing.
- Used a pre- and post-30-minute in-class writing assignment.
- Defined linguistic development in terms of fluency, sentence level accuracy and use of academic vocabulary.
- Measured text structure and rhetorical quality improvements using the IELTS Task 2 writing descriptors.
- Found improvements in accuracy, use of academic vocabulary and text structure

OTHER TOOLS (KNOCH ET AL, 2015)

- Studied 31 participants from the University of Melbourne
- Used a writing task that is closer to the pedagogic argumentative essay used at school than to disciplinary writing.
- Collected data at the start of students' undergraduate study and three years later near the end of their study.
- Found little or no development in linguistic features such as accuracy, and grammatical and lexical complexity.
- Found no significant development of content, organisation or style.
- Participants reported that they had not written very much on their degrees and when they did write they received little or no

OTHER TOOLS (QIAN, 2007)

- The Graduating Students Language Proficiency Assessment (GSLPA) was developed at Hong Kong Polytechnic University.
- The content looked forward to the context of professional employment rather than backwards at the context of using language for academic purposes.
- It was a workplace-oriented, task-based performance test with writing and speaking components.
- Writing tasks A and B required candidates to write a memo or professional letter. The tasks required some kind of problem solving or argument in a workplace context, with careful attention to audience, register and communicative strategies.
- Task C was a proofreading and error correction task, based on a themed passage related to modern world workplaces

OTHER TOOLS (QIAN, 2007)

- GSLPA's speaking component was a semi-direct test conducted in a multimedia language laboratory
- It was comprised of five tasks as follows:
- Task 1: Summarizing and reporting information from a radio interview.
- Task 2: Responding to a series of questions at a job interview.
- Task 3: Presenting information from a written (graphic) source to a business meeting.
- Task 4: Leaving a work-related telephone message.
- Task 5: Providing information about an aspect of life in Hong Kong to a newly-arrived international colleague.

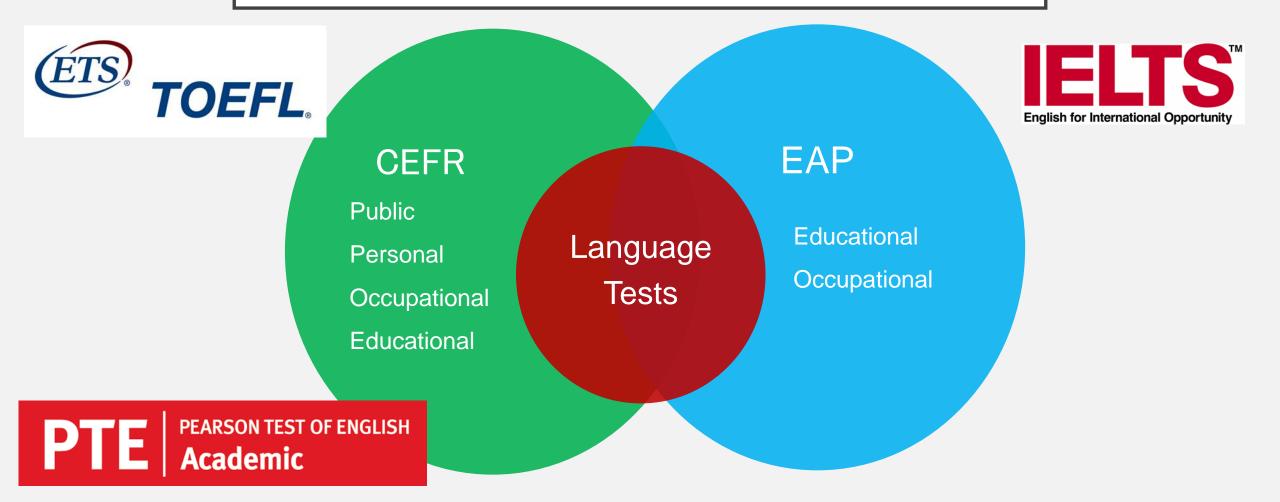
ARE WE REALLY ANY WISER?

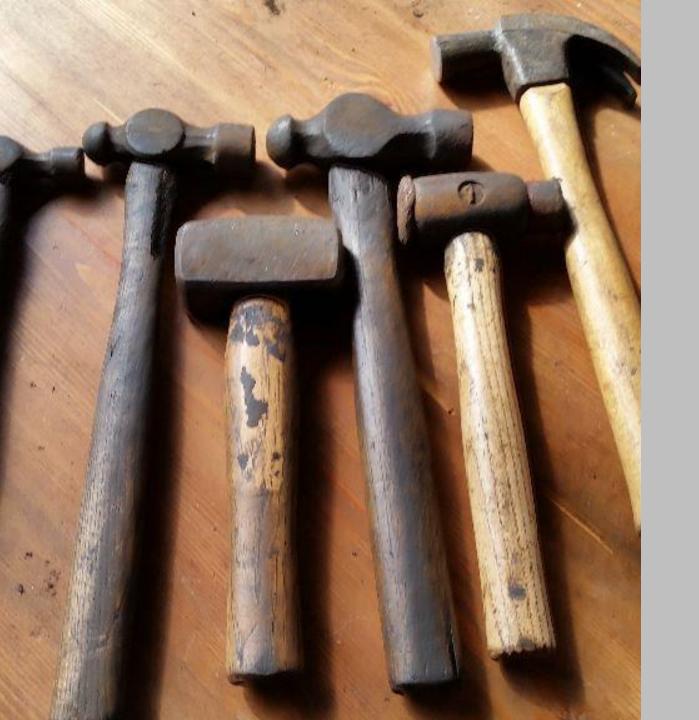
 You'd think with such a vast number of people being "served" by [EAP] systems in English L1 universities there would be strong research on time spent studying English and resulting score gain. (Hamp-Lyons, L-Test communication, 23 Feb, 2013)



• Inability to demonstrate language gain

THE LIMITS OF CURRENT STANDARDISED LANGUAGE TESTS





CRITIQUE OF CURRENT TOOLS

A major weakness of these measures is that language use is disconnected from disciplinary content.

They do not attempt to capture the type of language development students may make in their disciplinary genres.

Several only assess writing.

In the writing studies, the sample sizes are small.

DISCIPLINARY DIFFERENCES

Broad, generic approaches to EAP mask the wide range of language variability that has been identified amongst disciplines (Hyland, 2016).

- Law focuses on what is *legally* right
 - *impose*, *enforce*, *deter*, *prohibit*
- Philosophy focuses on what *morally* or *logically* accepted
 - Concession- *accept*, *admit*, *concede*
 - Critique *criticise*, *imagine*, *question*
 - Entertainment *claim*, *imagine*, *postulate*
- Sociology focuses on what is *arguably, fundamentally, socially* challenged.
 - Theories and ideas *embrace*, *shape*, *reinforce*, *legitimise*, *portray* and *challenge*

(Nesi and Gardner, 2012:127)

WHAT'S THE ADDED VALUE OF EAP INSTRUCTION AND UNIVERSITY LEARNING?

CAN WE ASSESS ITS IMPACT ON LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT?

Sample Academic Reading B: Questions

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 1-14, which are based on Reading Passage 1 on pages 1 and 2.

Investigating Children's Language

A For over 200 years, there has been an interest in the way children learn to speak and understand their first language. Scholars carried out several small-scale studies, especially towards the end of the 19^{ch} century, using data they recorded in parental diaries. But detailed, systematic investigation did not begin until the middle decades of the 20^{ch} century, when the tape recorder came into routine use. This made it possible to keep a permanent record of samples of child speech, so that analysts could listen repeatedly to obscure extracts, and thus produce a detailed and accurate description. Since then, the subject has attracted enormous multidisciplinary interest, notably from linguists and psychologists, who have used a variety of observational and experimental techniques to study the process of language acquisition in depth.

B Central to the success of this rapidly emerging field lies the ability of researchers to devise satisfactory methods for eliciting linguistic data from children. The problems that have to be faced are quite different from those encountered when working with adults. Many of the linguist's routine techniques of enquiry cannot be used with children. It is not possible to carry out certain kinds of experiments, because aspects of children's cognitive development – such as their ability to pay attention, or to remember instructions – may not be sufficiently advanced. Nor is it easy to get children to make systematic judgments about language, a task that is virtually impossible below the age of three. And anyone who has tried to obtain even the most basic kind of data – a tape recording of a negresentative sample of a child's speech – knows how finstrating this can be. Some children, it seems, are innately programmed to switch off as soon as they notice a tape recorder being switched on.

C Since the 1960s, however, several sophisticated recording techniques and experimental designs have been devised. Children can be observed and recorded through one-way-vision windows or using radio microphones, so that the effects of having an investigator in the same room as the child can be eliminated. Large-scale sampling programmes have been carried out, with children sometimes being recorded for several years. Particular attention has been paid to devising experimental techniques that fall well within a child's intellectual level and social experience. Even pre-linguistic infants have been brought into the research: acoustic techniques are used to analyse their vocalisations, and their ability to perceive the world around them is monitored using special recording equipment. The result has been a growing body of reliable data on the stages of language acquisition from

Questions 1 - 5

Reading Passage 1 has eight paragraphs, A-H.

Which paragraph contains the following information?

Write the correct letter, A-H, in boxes 1-5 on your answer sheet. NB You may use any letter more than once.

- 1 the possibility of carrying out research on children before they start talking
- 2 the difficulties in deducing theories from systematic experiments
- the differences between analysing children's and adults' language
- 4 the ability to record children without them seeing the researcher
- 5 the drawbacks of recording children in an environment they know

Questions 6-9

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 1?

In boxes 6-9 on your answer sheet, write

TRUE	if the statement agrees with the information
FALSE	if the statement contradicts the information
NOT GIVEN	if there is no information on this

- 6 In the 19th century, researchers studied their own children's language.
- 7 Attempts to elicit very young children's opinions about language are likely to fail.
- 8 Radio microphones are used because they enable researchers to communicate with a number of children in different rooms.
- 9 Many children enjoy the interaction with the researcher.

D There is no single way of studying children's language. Linguistics and psychology have each brought their own approach to the subject, and many variations have been introduced to cope with the variety of activities in which children engage, and the great age range that they present. Two main research paradigms are found.

E One of these is known as 'naturalistic sampling'. A sample of a child's spontaneous use of language is recorded in familiar and comfortable surroundings. One of the best places to make the recording is in the child's own home, but it is not always easy to maintain good acoustic quality, and the presence of the researcher or the recording equipment can be a distraction (especially if the proceedings are being filmed). Alternatively, the recording can be made in a research centre, where the child is allowed to play freely with toys while talking to parents or other children, and the observers and their equipment are unobtrusive.

F A good quality, representative, naturalistic sample is generally considered an ideal datum for child language study. However, the method has several limitations. These samples are informative about speech production, but they give little guidance about children's comprehension of what they hear around them. Moreover, samples cannot contain everything, and they can easily miss some important features of a child's linguistic ability. They may also not provide enough instances of a developing feature to enable the analyst to make a decision about the way the child is learning. For such reasons, the description of samples of child speech has to be supplemented by other methods.

G The other main approach is through experimentation, and the methods of experimental psychology have been widely applied to child language research. The investigator formulates a specific hypothesis about children's ability to use or understand an aspect of language, and devises a relevant task for a group of subjects to undertake. A statistical analysis is made of the subjects' behaviour, and the results provide evidence that supports or falsifies the original hypothesis.

H Using this approach, as well as other methods of controlled observation, researchers have come up with many detailed findings about the production and comprehension of groups of children. However, it is not easy to generalise the findings of these studies. What may obtain in a carefully controlled setting may not apply in the rush of daily interaction. Different kinds of subjects, experimental situations, and statistical procedures may produce different results or interpretations. Experimental research is therefore a slow, painstaking business, it may take years before researchers are convinced that all vanables have been considered and a finding is genuine.

Questions 10 - 14

Complete the summary below.

Choose NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 10-14 on your answer sheet.

Ways of investigating children's language

THE CHALLENGE OF TEST - RETEST

IELTS READING

PTE ACADEMIC - SPEAKING

	Section Time Ren	naining 27
Look at the map below. In 25 seconds, please speak into the mid seconds to give your response.	rophone and describe in detail what the map is showing. You will ha	ve 40
THE REAL OF		
Africa	Recorded Answer Current Status: Beginning in 23 seconds.	
Gorilla Distribution Western Lowland Gorilla Meuntain Gorilla Eactorn Lowland Gerilla		

IBT TOEFL - INTEGRATED READING/LISTENING/WRITING



Then you will respond to a question using the information from the passage and the lect You may use your notes to answer the question. You will have 15 minutes to prepare an type your response.

Cut

Paste

Undo

Hide

WordCount

Directions: You have 20 minutes to plan and write your response. Your response will be judged on the basis of the quality of your writing and

on how well your response presents the points in the lecture and their relationship to the reading passage. Typically, an effective response will



Here is an example of an integrated writing question. First you will read passage approximately 250 to 30

In many organizations, perhaps the best way to approach certain new projects is to assemble a group of people into a team. Having a team of people attack a project offers several advantages. First of all, a group of people has a wider range of knowledge, expertise, and skills than any single individual is likely to possess. Also, because of the numbers of people involved and the greater resources they possess, a group can work more quickly in response to the task assigned to it and can come up with highly creative solutions to problems and issues. Sometimes these creative solutions come about because a group is more likely to make risky decisions that an individual might not undertake. This is because the group spreads responsibility for a decision to all the members and thus no single individual can be held accountable if the decision turns out to be wrong.

Taking part in a group process can be very rewarding for members of the team. Team members who have a voice in making a decision will no doubt feel better about carrying out the work that is entailed by that decision than they might doing work that is imposed on them by others. Also, the individual team member has a much better chance to "shine," to get his or her contributions and ideas not only recognized but recognized as highly significant, because a team's overall results can be more far-reaching and have greater impact than what might have otherwise been possible for the person to accomplish or contribute working alone.

INTEGRATED WRITING

be 150 to 225 words. Question: Summarize the points made in the lecture you just heard, explaining how they cast doubt on points made in the reading.

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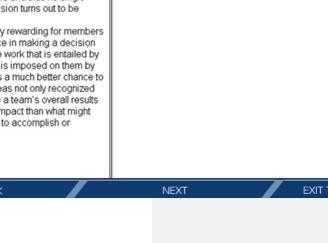
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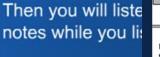
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INTEGRATED WRITING

TOEF







HEAR TEST SAMPLE AUDIO

TEST - RETEST END OF PRE-SESSIONAL ASSESSMENT

- Combined continuous assessment
- Reading into writing exam
- Short tasks (summary, writing up lecture notes, writing a section of an essay)
- Portfolio of work
- Vocabulary/vocabulary notebook
- Reflective journal
- Open book exam

- Password exam
- TEEP
- English Proficiency Test Battery
- IELTS

Based on 44 responses to a BALEAP survey carried out in September, 2011



DISCIPLINARY INPUT & OUTPUT

Performance Management Cycle Holbeche, 2005: 243





Analysis and evaluation: Your answer should demonstrate a depth a breadth of isomelage, and where appropriate recognite linkages across module material. Your answer should show citikcal waveress of wider issue of measurement and evaluation of different perspectives on managing an erganistic, ANRy to provide a systematic interrogation of the essay questio and instinct to the wider contracts, model and perspectives.

Employee Involvement' and 'Employee Participation' as terms are often

used interchangeably, however it is argued that they do embrace different

approaches to engaging employees at the place of work. Using examples of

different approaches critically evaluate how and in what ways these two

terms might be characterized as different and how they link to the notion

Critically evaluate the different approaches to the idea of engagement

namely 'work engagement' and 'employee engagement' (Purcell 2014).

"The term diversity is often used interchangeably with equal opportunities;

the two are very different, both conceptually and legally" (Dundon and

Rollinson, 2011:311). To what extent would you agree with this quote and

of 'employee voice'

why?

Which approach do you prefer and why?

4) Work effectively to design learning glass and interventions to meet

Produce a report which outlines your proposals for reducing the reliance and exp

upon off-site courses by 30%. The reduction is to be achieved by shifting toward

technology supported learning across the Group. ALL forms of learning (skills, ett

The Rollins Group is a global organisation and one of the world's largest produces

oducts for the automotive sector and the sil exploration industry. In addition

needs in a timely, feasible and cost effective way

You are the Head of Organizational Learning and Talent Development,

and knowledge based learning) can be considered in your proposals.

Vour task

Case study

- Awareness of topical issues and academic literature: Your answer sha show evidence of whiler reading making appropriate use of academic literat which an integrated into the answer. Show evidence of undertailing relevreading and backs au discussions with a creditive evidence base is order consider the insule raised by the assignment.
- Practical implications: Your answer should demonstrate an ability to prove strategic recommendations to the issues raised in the analysis where require
- Presentation and argument: Tour answer should demostrate an ability groduce well-structured and critical analysis which follows a logical sequent of thoughts and arguments. Analysis should be written in an objective sh which avoids unsubstantiated assertions and utilises the Harvard System References.

A FUTURE EAP ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT



GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

- 1. Universities are responsible for ensuring that their students are sufficiently competent in the English language to participate effectively in their university studies.¹
- 2. Resourcing for English language development is adequate to meet students' needs throughout their studies.
- 3. Students have responsibilities for <u>further developing their English language</u> proficiency during their study at university and are advised of these responsibilities prior to enrolment.
- 4. Universities ensure that the English language entry pathways they approve for the admission of students enable these students to participate effectively in their studies.
- 5. English language proficiency and communication skills are important graduate attributes for all students.

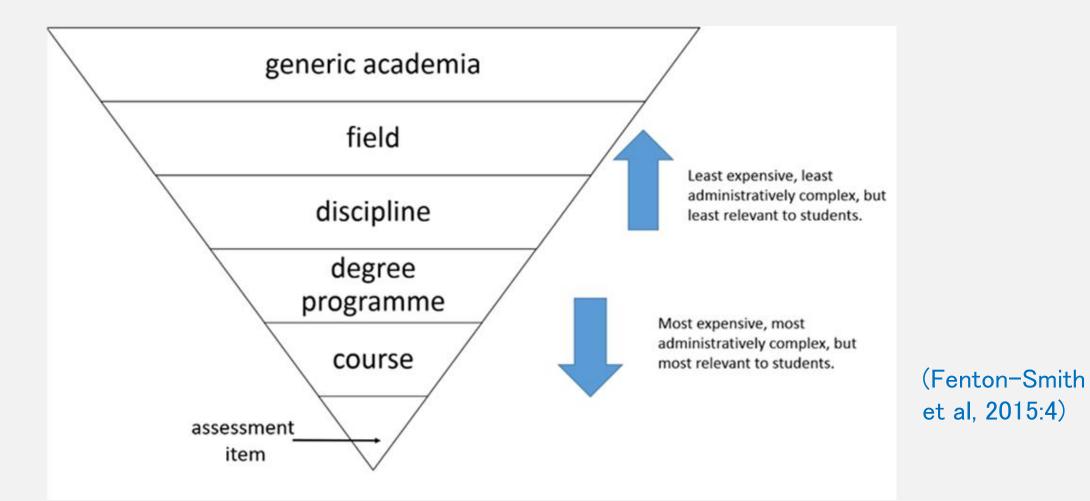
- 6. Development of English language proficiency is integrated with curriculum design, assessment practices and course delivery through a variety of methods.
- 7. Students' English language development needs are diagnosed early in their studies and addressed, with ongoing opportunities for self-assessment.
- 8. International students are supported from the outset to adapt to their academic, sociocultural and linguistic environments.
- International students are encouraged and supported to enhance their English language development through effective social interaction on and off campus.
- 10. Universities use evidence from a variety of sources to monitor and improve their <u>English language development activities</u>.

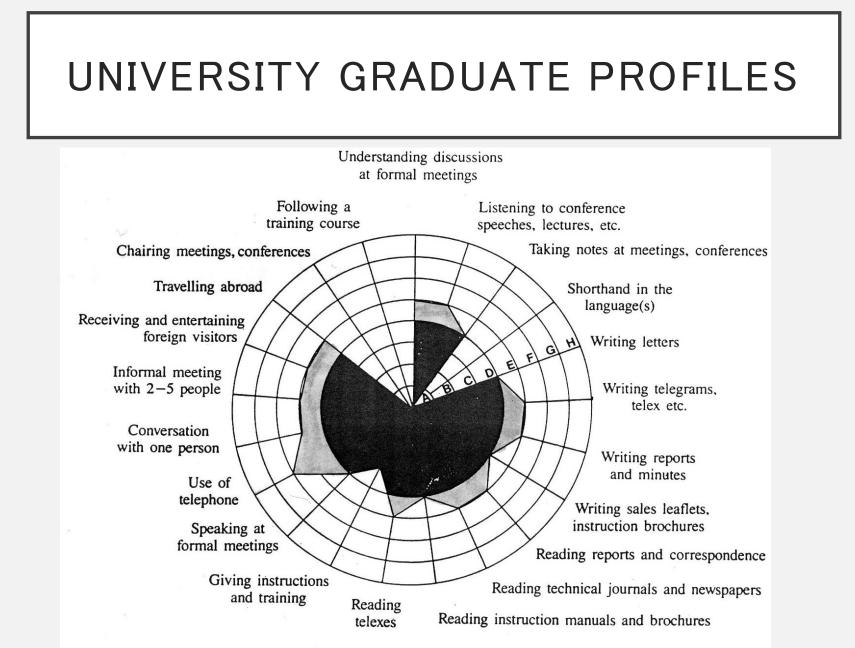
DEEWR, 2009

LITERACY OUTCOMES AT UNIVERSITY

- What range of literacies do we expect a university student to develop as a consequence of studying for their degree?
- To what extent are these literacy practices general?
- To what extent are they specific?
- What language resources are required to carry out those practices?
- How generalizable is that language across literacy practices?

CALIBRATING THE SPECIFICITY OF INSTRUCTION





RELATING STARTING LEVEL PROFICIENCY TO EXIT LEVEL PROFICIENCY

- We have not been successful in measuring language gain when we use tools that are very similar to one another.
- Can we better measure gain, if we use a wider range of tools that better match students' language use context?
- Can we link scores from different tools in meaningful ways?

General Language Proficiency



Disciplinary Language

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