Perceived Helpfulness of an Advanced EAP Curriculum
- Critically Reflective Teaching

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Overview

1. Two studies
2. Comparison of the findings
3. What “successful” students do
4. What “good” teaching means
Initial Study 2011 - 2012

Surveys
Focus groups
Ethnographic case study
Initial Study 2011 - 2012

- ESL students
  - Extrinsically motivated
  - The more educated the better the coping skills
  - Low awareness of academic support services on campus
Findings

Preliminary findings of the first study (TESL Toronto 2012)

- Positive perception of the skills learned in EAP
- Socio-academic friendship from EAP an asset
- Challenges in reality
- Speaking competence and confidence
One Size Doesn’t Fit All

Preliminary findings (TESL Toronto 2012)
One Size ...

Preliminary findings (TESL Toronto 2012)

1. **Aligning the needs**

2. **Customized or “Contextualized” EAP**
   
   
   - e.g. Engg. vs. Bus/Adm.
Report 2012: Key Recommendations

1. A shift in approach to teaching
   - More “explicit instruction,” “systematic feedback” and “various pedagogical strategies”
2. Lessons focusing on:
   - Communicative competence (clear pronunciation)
   - Reading and listening skills
   - Critical thinking skills
Key Recommendations 2012

3. Meaningful learning activities to students (e.g., relevant to future areas of study)

4. Engagement of various cohorts in the university community
Examples

- What’s in the News (WIN) – authentic listening and reading
- CSR Selection Committee – Critical thinking
- Research project
- Inviting ESL graduates to the classroom
- Meetings with prospective faculty advisors
- Specific language instructions focusing on skill building
A Critical Reflection

An opportunity to see our teaching practice
A Follow-up Study

- 2016 (survey data collected 2015 – 2016)

- Interviews
  - 13 ESL graduates in different stages of their studies
Overall Findings

- Improved perception and confidence
- Demographic changes
- Different challenges, different skills
- Metacognitive learners
Survey Findings

1. Improved student perception of the Curriculum

   - 9%
   - 13%
   - 34%
# Survey Findings

## Survey Results Comparison: Perceived Helpfulness of ESL Curriculum (040-050)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012 (n=49)*</th>
<th>2016 (n=71)**</th>
<th>2016 NDE (n=53)</th>
<th>2016 DE (n=18)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness of 050 for university: (Yes)</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>***Helpfulness of 040 for 050: (Yes)</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable working w/ Can. classmates</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#1 Reason for ease</td>
<td>ESL in-class activities &amp; sociable personality</td>
<td>ESL in-class activities</td>
<td>ESL in-class activities</td>
<td>ESL in-class activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparedness of academic strategies</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness of ESL</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in language skills for university</td>
<td>see Appendix A</td>
<td>see interactive report</td>
<td>DE vs. NDE (see interactive report)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Survey distributed in Fall 2011 and Winter 2012 semesters  
** Survey distributed for five consecutive semesters (SPR 2015 - Fall 2016)  
*** Helpfulness - 6 and up on a scale of 1 - 10  
NDE: Non-Direct Entry (i.e., 050 students from 040) / DE: Direct Entry students to ESL 050  
All percentages based on the number of responses per item  
Number of no response varies per question item
Survey Findings

2. Demographic changes
   • Direct Entry vs. Non-Direct Entry
# Survey Findings

## ESL Student Survey Demographics (2012 vs. 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011-2012</th>
<th></th>
<th>2015-2016</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total # of recorded responses</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>5 (10%)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>18 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (Male)</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td></td>
<td>63%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Age (Year)</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of origin (China)</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td></td>
<td>64%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave. length of stay in Canada (Month)</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status (Student Visa)</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td></td>
<td>84%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education completed before ESL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highschool</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td></td>
<td>52%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 Years Univ/College Dip.</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td></td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All percentages based on the number of responses per item
Number of *no response* varies per question item
Direct Entry (DE) Students

1. Different abilities, goals and needs

2. Learning academic skills appreciated
   “[language school in ... was] more fun and conversational but not academic” “needed for [his] graduate degree”
Other Traits of DE

Goal-oriented, motivated, confident DE students

“do well”

“[a lot of international students] didn’t know what to do [in class]” – avoided working with them

“Canadian students work harder”
Interview Findings

- Similar results (2012 – 2016)
  1. Positive perception
  2. Valuing
  3. Perceived limitations
  4. Desired ESL activities
Interview Findings: New

1. Improved perception/confidence of
   • Their pronunciation
   • Reading skills (grad students)
Interview Findings: New

2. Greater awareness/use of student support services on campus
Interview Findings: New

3. Different wants and needs for NDE and DE (Consistent with the survey results)

- NDE – reading and listening
- DE – speaking & academic writing
Interview Findings: New

4. Different skills in different stages of study
Why Incorporate Student Feedback?
Profile of Successful Students

- Metacognitive skills and strategies

“set a goal and monitor and reset the goal. [For group work] position yourself and make yourself attractive [...] show them what I can bring to the table”
Profile of Successful Students

- Metacognitive skills and strategies

“[Find] ways to contribute [to group work, so the local students appreciate working with him]”

“I listen to what they say and think about what I am good at. I offer to help and ask, “Can I do this?” and I [work hard] and show the result [product] to them. They like that.”
"Just a darn minute! — Yesterday you said that $X$ equals two!"
"I expect you all to be independent, innovative, critical thinkers who will do exactly as I say!"
Meeting the Needs?
Meeting the Needs?

- Human agency
- Deliberate practice
- Transfer of learning
- Community of learning
Metacognitive Strategies

- Inventory questionnaires
- Reflective dialogue journal writing
- Daily reflective and review activity
Professional Development

Critically reflective teaching practice

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“It sort of makes you stop and think, doesn’t it.”