Pre-sessional Courses

Putting the S into EGAP: collaborating with departments and students

Nathalie Vermeire & Tom Rewhorn
Academic Skills Centre, University of Bath
• Pre-sessional summer courses at Bath

• Why and how we collaborated

• What we did with the collaboration
  ➢ Biology & Biochemistry
  ➢ Architecture & Civil Engineering
Bath Pre-sessional courses (Management and General)

- Engineering & Design (Architecture, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electronic Engineering)
- Humanities and Social Sciences (Education, Politics, Health, Social & Policy Sciences, Psychology, International Studies)
- Sciences (Computer Science, Mathematical Sciences, Biology & Biochemistry, Pharmacy & Pharmacology, Physics)

Students in classes according to subject area
Different skills focus according to faculty

- Engineering & Sciences – focus on report writing
- Humanities & social sciences – essay writing

Creation of discipline specific lessons to address needs

- Four sessions of two hours (once a week)
- Same day & time across both Pre-sessional courses
MEETING ACADEMICS

- Raise awareness of Pre-sessional course
- Update/inform design of PS course, in particular, the discipline specific modular courses.
  - Key challenges (students)
  - Key forms of assessment
  - Degree programme structure, deadlines and expectations

- Collate information on degree programmes for PS teachers
  - Enable them to better highlight the transferability of skills to assessments and tasks on particular degree programmes
STUDENTS

• Their experience of current programme
• How the PS course benefited them
• How the PS could be improved
• Samples of work and feedback from tutors
• Guidelines and instructions provided for assignments
• Advice for future PS students (video/written messages)
STUDENTS (What we did)

• Individual meetings
• Group meetings
• Online feedback survey
  • What should we take out?
  • What should we change?
  • What should we add?
THE DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC MODULAR COURSES

(4 X 2 HOUR LESSONS)
Biology & Biochemistry

• What the academic said
  Note-taking skills
  Develop critical analysis skills
  Develop skills in News & Views article

• What the students said
  Lectures a problem (pace, length, accent)
  Amount of reading challenging
Sessions delivered by a Pre-sessional teacher and Dr Momna Hejmadi

Increase in student confidence

Looking forward
  - Collaboration with in-sessional Biology teacher (Noreen Bannigan)
  - Collaboration with subject librarian
Architecture and Civil Engineering - the responses

Academics:

• Key issues: listening and speaking
  • Presentations followed by Q+A
  • 2 hour lectures followed by seminars
  • Lack of confidence in asking questions/ contributing in seminars
  • Site visits and work placement
• Critically evaluating sources (date/ strengths of evidence provided)
• Language

Students:

• Confidence in participating in seminars and asking questions
• Following lectures
• Time management
• Language- vocabulary
• Reading load
AIMS:

• more opportunities to listen and respond to subject related content
• confidence in asking questions, voicing and defending opinion and responding to others.
• Language
LESNOS CONTENT:

• Watch 2 short videos - Ted talk on an architect + Building material
  • Note-taking
  • Responding to and critically considering input
• Asking questions- sample questions + questions prompts
• Giving presentations (an architect or building material)
• Writing site descriptions
• Language input throughout
Other current discipline specific strands:
  • Engineering and Science
  • Humanities and Social Sciences
  • Accounting and Finance (move to PSM 2017)

• Positive feedback from students, teachers and academics
• Useful insights and suggestions from students

Future:
• More discipline specific strands e.g. Economics

Thank you for listening