

BAAL TEA SIG

Alternative ways of assessing listening and speaking on an in-session EAP course

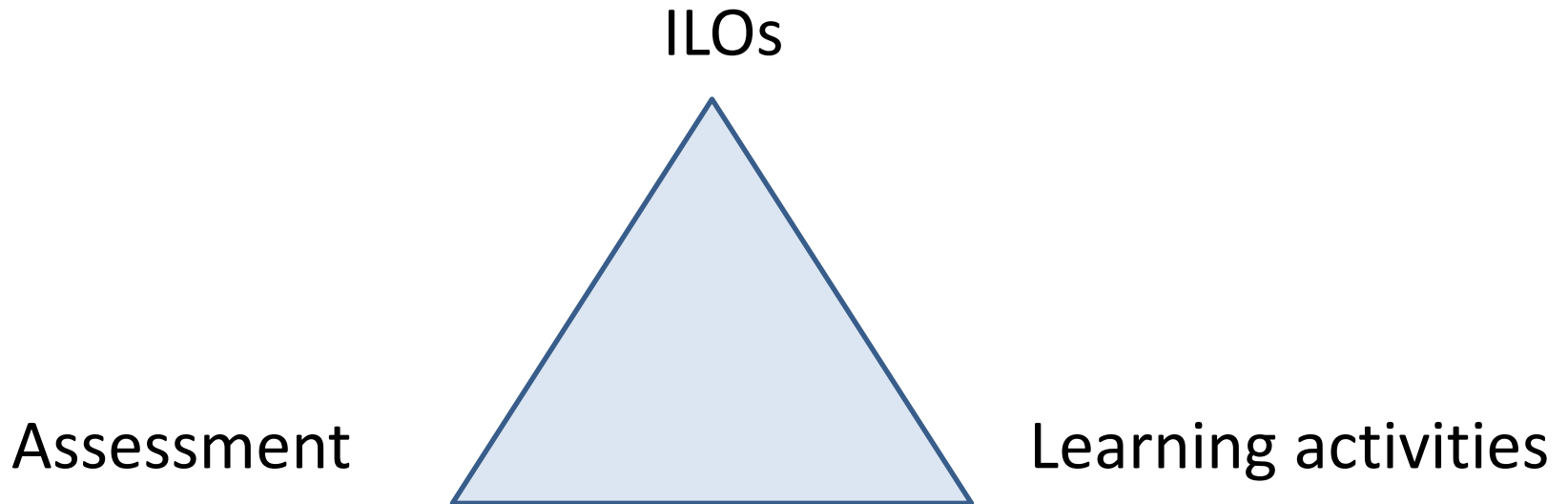
Elizabeth Allen

Academic Listening and Speaking

Course overview:

- Undergraduate open unit
- 10 credits
- 20 hrs: 2hrs/wk over 10 wks (Term 1, repeated Term2)
- Aimed at C1/C2 level (CEFR)

Constructive Alignment (Biggs, 1996)



Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

Demonstrate the ability to:

- listen critically to academic lectures and take effective notes
- understand the structure and development of academic talks
- provide oral summaries of lectures and seminar contributions
- build on contribution of others in seminars
- justify personal contributions with appropriate evidence
- prepare and deliver short academic presentation

Unit Assessments

- Formative: Three Minute Thesis (3MT[®])
presentation and evaluation
 - Assignment 1: Seminar response (30%)
 - Assignment 2: Presentation (30%)
 - Exam: Lecture and critical response (40%)
-

Assignment 1: Seminar skills

Potential problems of a 'Discussion task' (O'Sullivan, 2008)

- Dominant student/s
- Interference from conversation management and discussion skills
- Relatively large number of students
- Number of topics (1 - same language; many – comparison of results?)
- Reliability of only having 1 examiner / assessor

Assignment 1: Seminar skills

Potential problems

Eg. Recording of a seminar using Sonocent software



Assignment 1: Seminar skills

ILOs:

- provide oral summaries of lectures and seminar contributions
- build on contribution of others in seminars
- justify personal contributions with appropriate evidence

Listen to a recording, choice of content (politics, culture, education, health)

Listen and respond directly to the speaker, 3 min. limit

Record the response and submit through Blackboard

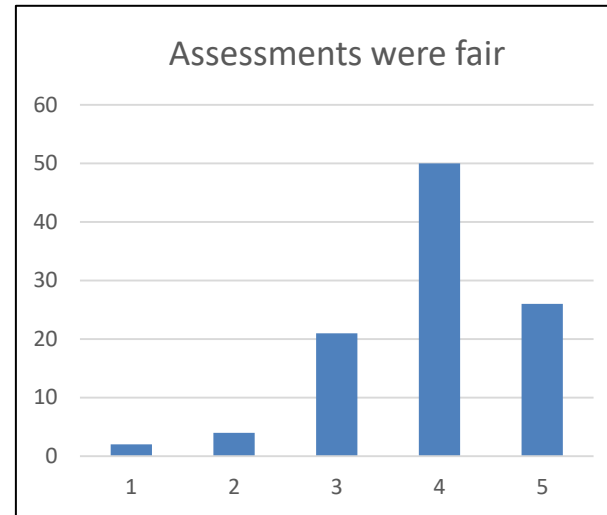
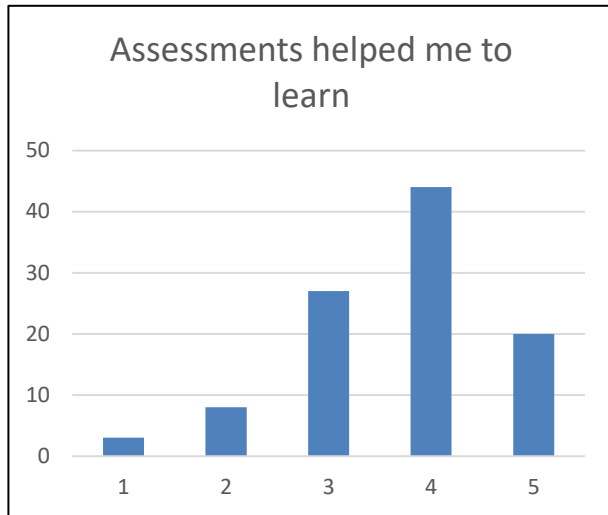
Assessment of and for learning. Repeating the task has a developmental effect; shift focus from content to form and accuracy

(Bruce, 2011)

Student Feedback (Jan 2015 – Dec 2016)

4 cohorts, 134 students, 103 provided feedback (77% response rate)

Overall

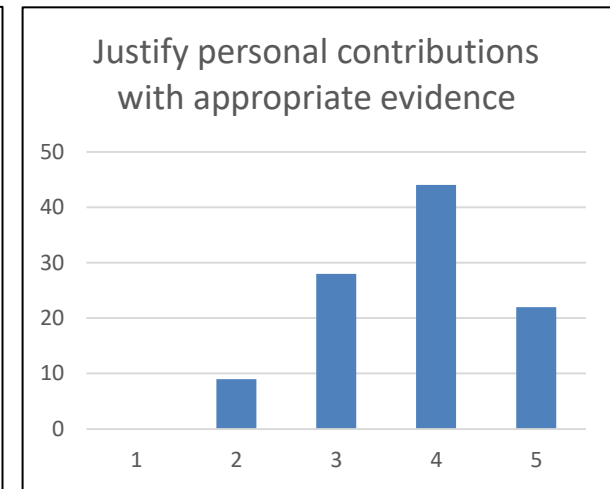
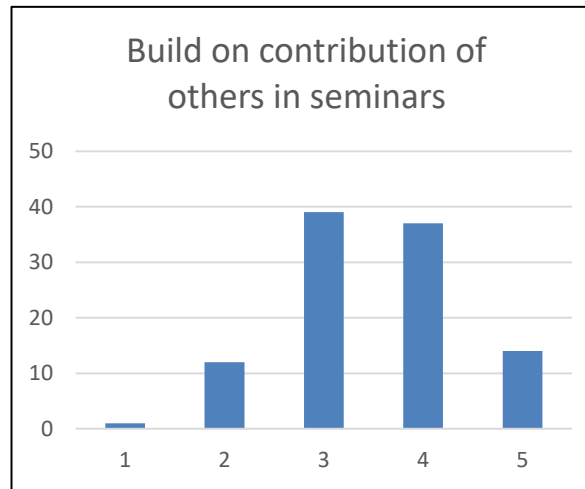
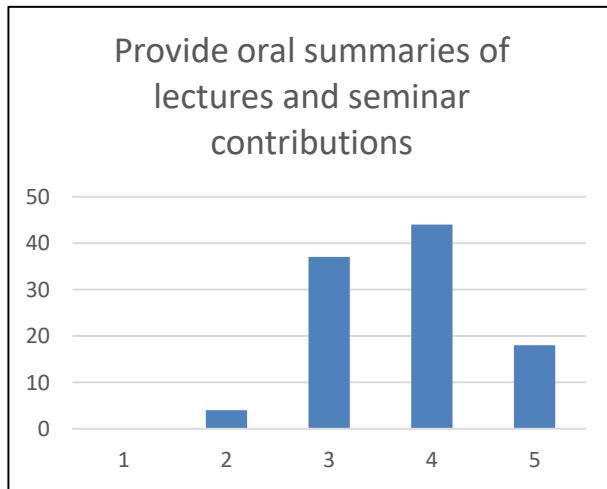


(1 = lowest and 5 = highest on likert scale)

Student Feedback (Jan 2015 – Dec 2016)

Data gathered from 4 cohorts, 134 students, 103 provided feedback (77% response rate)

Develop Seminar ILOs



(1 = lowest and 5 = highest on likert scale)

Student Feedback (March 2017)

Assignment 1 specific feedback

Data gathered from 2 classes, 25 students, 21 provided feedback (84% response rate)

- Did assignment 1 assess the 3 ILOs?
Yes: 20
Not sure: 1 (not sure it developed building on the contribution of others)
- Did assignment 1 help you to develop the 3 ILOs?
Yes: 20
Not sure: 1 (but the classroom activities did)

Student Feedback (2015-2017)

Liked:

- Can rerecord (redraft) assignments therefore practice and *improve*: pronunciation, critical thinking, summarising, expressing a point of view
- Time to prepare and plan
- Formative speaking assessment was ‘live’, but summative wasn’t (nerves)
- Time limit (improve conciseness)

‘I liked that it involved a lot of skills like understanding, summarising, giving my opinion and researching for evidence’ (Student, 2017)

Didn’t like:

- IT problems
- Listening to themselves (play back)
- Topic choices for seminar response (potential problem of a ‘prepared monologue’, O’Sullivan, 2008)

Tutor Feedback (2015-2017)

Liked:

- Integrated skills approach
- Easier to mark as can play back several times
- Easier to administer, standardise and moderate

Didn't like:

- IT problems and downloading student files from Blackboard

References

Biggs, J., 1996. Enhancing teaching through constructive alignment. *Higher education*, 32(3), pp.347-364.

Bruce, I., 2011. *Theory and concepts of English for academic purposes*. Palgrave Macmillan.

O'Sullivan, B., 2008. Notes on assessing speaking. *Cambridge: UCLES*.

O'Sullivan, B., 2012. Assessing Speaking. In: Coombe, C., Davidson, P., O'Sullivan, B. and Stoyhoff, S., ed. *The Cambridge guide to second language assessment*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp.234-246.