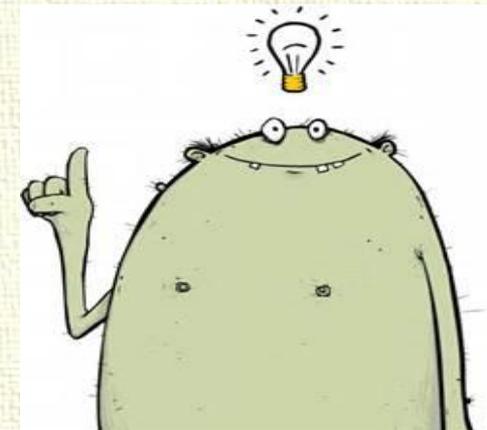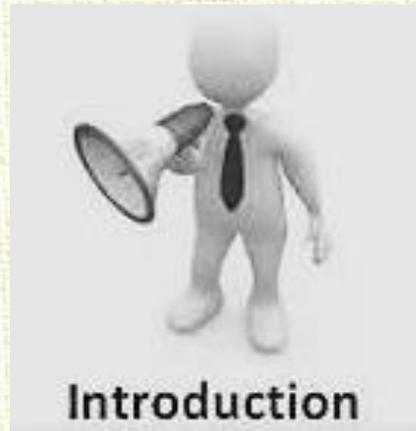# How to Collect Data to Show Assurance of Learning (AoL) In a Humanities Course

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1

# Assurance of Learning

Introduction

How to assess

RUBRICS

Questionnaires

Results/Findings

Conclusion

# "Teaching" and "Learning"

## (Participant-Centered Learning)



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What is "learning outcome"

What is a "student learning outcome?"

A "student learning outcome," … is properly defined in terms of the particular levels of knowledge, skills and abilities that a student has attained at the end (or as a result) of his or her engagement in a particular set of collegiate experiences. (p. 1)

Council of Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), 2006
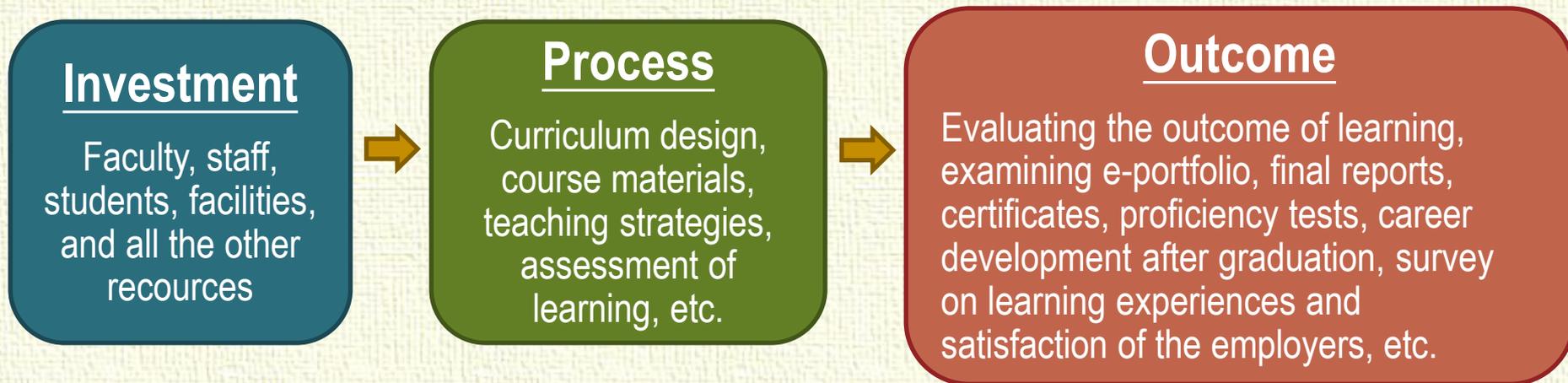
What is "learning outcome"

What is a "student learning outcome?"

In our cases, it may refer to

the particular levels of knowledge, skills and abilities that a student has attained

at the end of a particular course.

Between teaching and learning

In Taiwan, assurance of learning is often "measured" by comparing **how much being invested** with **how much has been achieved** (outcome).

**Investment**

Faculty, staff, students, facilities, and all the other recources

**Process**

Curriculum design, course materials, teaching strategies, assessment of learning, etc.

**Outcome**

Evaluating the outcome of learning, examining e-portfolio, final reports, certificates, proficiency tests, career development after graduation, survey on learning experiences and satisfaction of the employers, etc.

**Providing the best learning environments**

**Assurance of effective learning**

The problem in applying this model to humanities courses:

1. The "true enlightenment" (outcome) may not occur until much later than when the course ends.

2. There are no standardized tests for humanities courses that can meet different needs of teachers and students.

3. Essence of humanities courses are often not elements "exclusive" from other courses, but more "involving" of multi-disciplines.

**Investment**

Faculty, staff, students, facilities, and all the other recources

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Curriculum design, course materials, teaching strategies, assessment of learning, etc.

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**In that case, what should we do to reflect "assurance of learning" in our humanities courses?**

Based on the **background** and **needs** of our students, we can make sure of the following four things:

1. **The objective of a course** (knowledge, fundamental skills and competencies, etc.)**:** describing the objectives, significance and value of the course.

2. **What is covered in the course and how learning is assessed:** Describing the details of what will be covered in the course and how the students' learning and their learning outcomes are to be assessed.

3. **The remedial strategies:** Preparing special/remedial strategies of teaching for those who fail to learn in a designed process (more student-centered).

4. **Reflections from students:** Design questionnaires to collect data related to students' learning experiences, self-efficacy, needs or suggestions.

Objectives of a course

**To ensure the outcome of learning, teachers need to make clear what the objective of the course is.**

1. **The purpose:** Be specific and comprehensible s that students know what the teacher is expecting students to do.

2. **What are to be learned:** knowledge, fundamental skills and competencies, problem-solving, critical thinking in general, etc.

3. **The value of the knowledge or skills learned:** the application of the course materials, keen judgement & insight, finding problems ⇨ analyzing problems ⇨ generating solutions.

4. **Special qualities/features of the humanities course:** inspiration and enlightenment in all aspects related to human thought and behavior.

1. **Specific core competence:** Comprehensible description/descriptors of the core competencies of the course that students can understand and that meets the requirement of higher education.

2. **Measurable:** The planned target of learning or the process of learning can be assessed (Written tests, observation, reports, papers, etc.)

3. **Practical & reachable:** The expected achievement should be feasible, reachable, and practical (based on students' need and English proficiency levels).
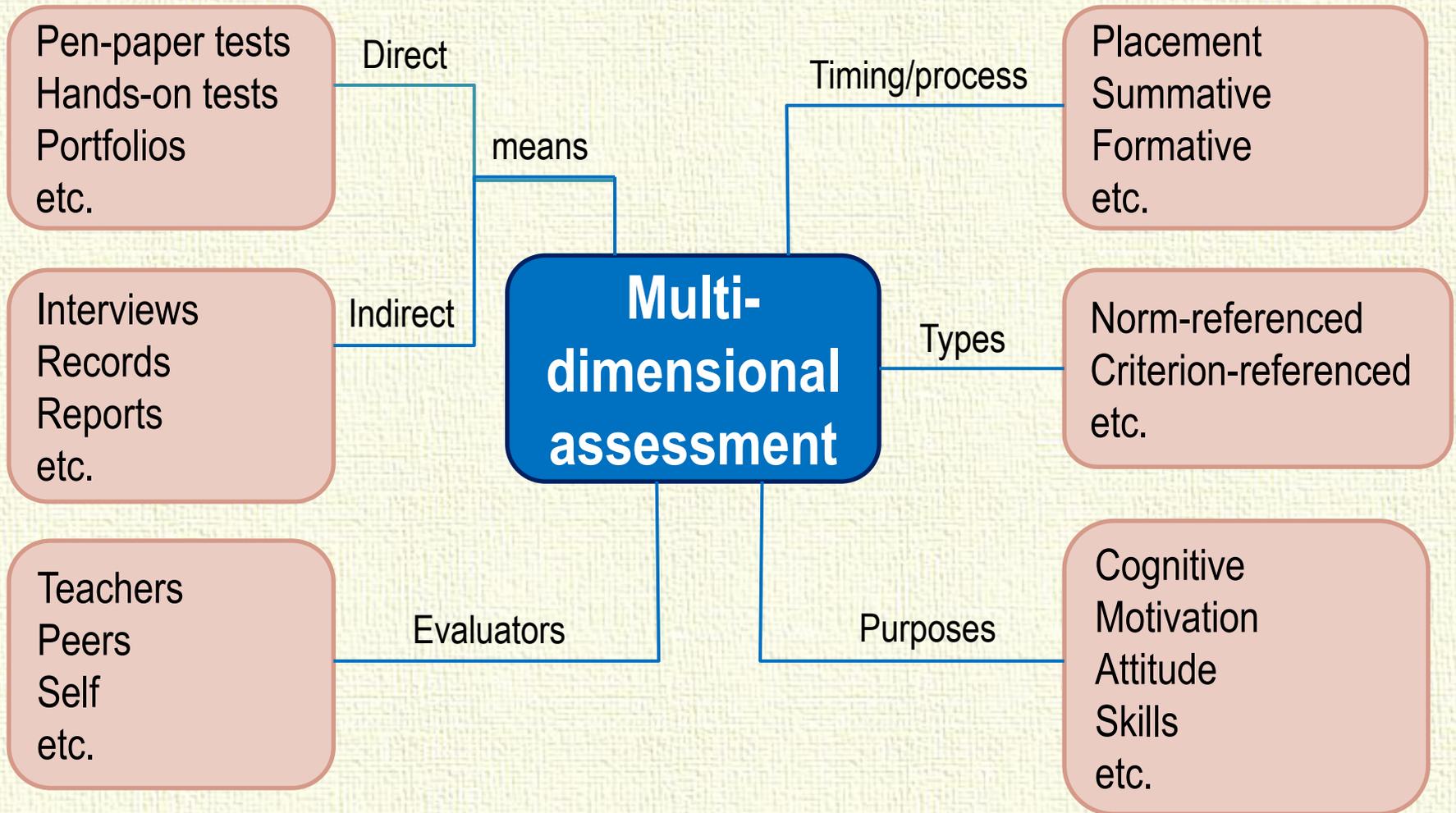
Evidence of student learning can take many. Examples of the types of evidence that might be used include (but are not limited to):

1.  **faculty-designed comprehensive or capstone examinations and assignments;**

2.  **performance on external or licensure examinations;**

3.  **authentic performances or demonstrations;**

4.  **portfolios of student work over time; or**

5.  **samples of representative student work generated in response to typical course assignments.**

Evidence such as survey **self-reports about learning**, focus groups, **interviews** and student **satisfaction studies** are certainly useful in the accreditation process, **but do not constitute direct evidence of student learning outcomes** (CHEA, 2006).
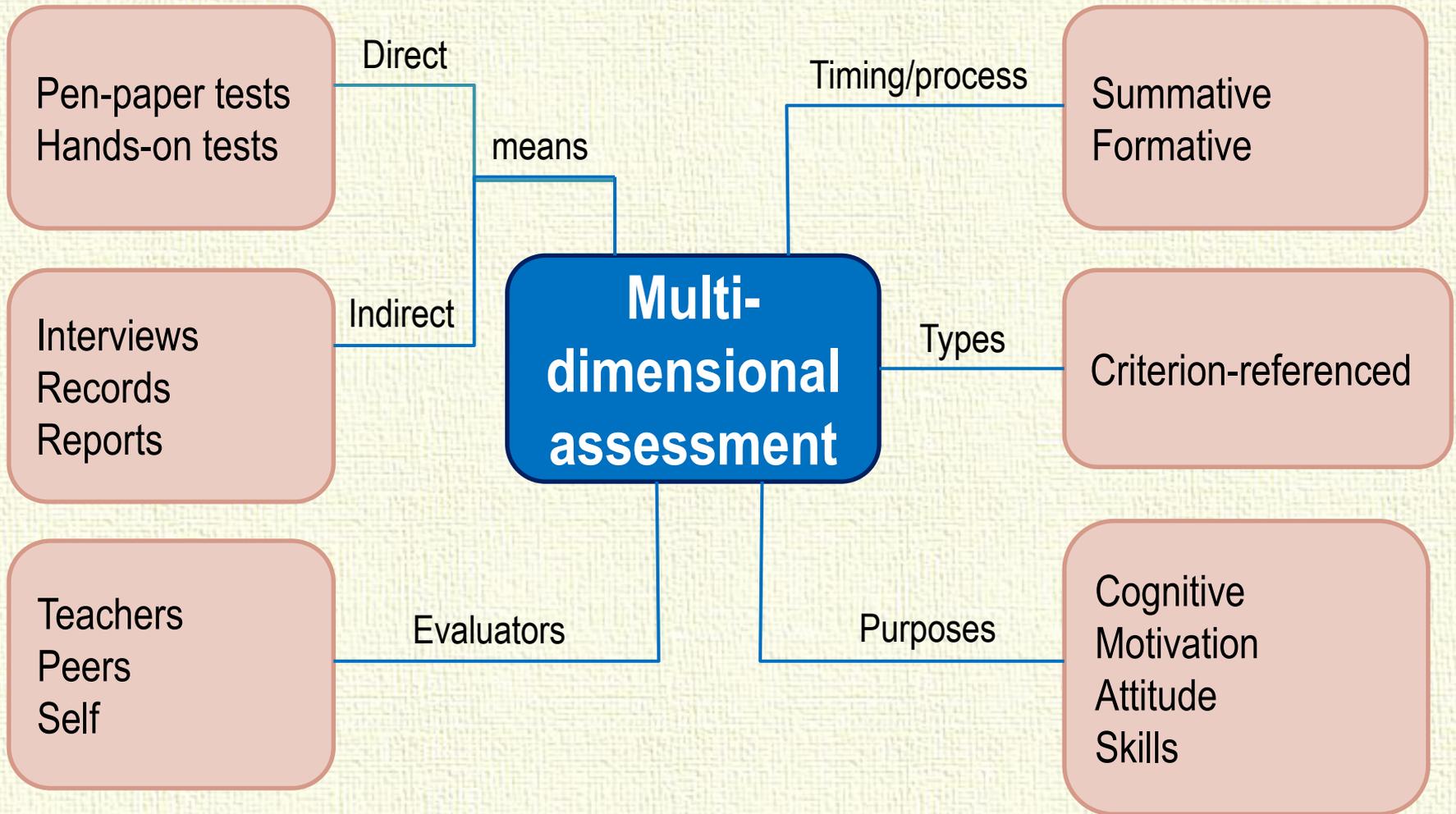
# How to evaluate hu[...]

**Humanities courses**

Collection of direct or indirect evidence

| Types | Direct | Indirect |
|---|---|---|
| Qualitative | Learning portfolio, project report, professional performance in class, etc. | Interview, conferencing, participation, feedback, etc. |
| Quantitative | Summative tests about the subject, criterion-referenced tests, norm-referenced tests, etc. | Questionnaires regarding students' learning experiences |
| Quantitative (outside campus) | Certificates, language proficiency tests, "national examinations," etc. | Employer satisfaction index, career development of the graduates, etc. |

# How to evaluate humanities courses

Pen-paper tests
Hands-on tests

Direct

means

Timing/process

Summative
Formative

Interviews
Records
Reports

Indirect

**Multi-dimensional assessment**

Types

Criterion-referenced

Teachers
Peers
Self

Evaluators

Purposes

Cognitive
Motivation
Attitude
Skills

1. Subject courses: English phonetics (Freshman) and English writing (Sophomore)

2. Number of students: 57 students in English phonetics and 15 in English writing

3. Time: 18 weeks

4. Materials: One textbook for each course and plenty of additional materials related to the topics.

5. Instruction: Lecture (30%-40%); discussion (30-40%); hands-on practice (30-40%)

6. TA: Only in English phonetics, not in English writing

# The objective and the resources

1. General objective: A course that introduces fundamental theories and practical applications of these theories

   (1) Introducing fundamental theories related to English vowels, consonants, rhythms, stress, tones, intonation units, etc.

   (2) Introducing the instrument--PRAAT

   (3) Leading students to use PRAAT to analyze real sound data and find evidence to support the fundamental theories introduced in class.

   (4) Encouraging students to find their own topics related to the topics introduced in class and write a report to serve as a "mini" term paper (in 4 pages).

2. Resources: Make the best use of the E-learning platform

   All teaching materials (including how to use the tools) are uploaded to the E-learning platform and students can read them in advance.

# Creating rubrics (fundamental theories)

3. Creating rubrics: Descriptors of different levels of learning outcomes based on the core competencies of this course.

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| Quality / Category | Excellent (A to A+/86 -90+) | Good (B+ to A-/80 - 85) | Fair (C+ to B/70 - 79) | Poor (C- to C/60-69) | Fail (F/59 or less) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Being able to use sound analyzers (e.g., PRAAT) (Using PRAAT, a sound analyzer) (10%) | Fully understanding the qualities and characteristics of PRAAT and being capable of applying the sound analyzer in class assignment and the course project | Understanding the qualities and characteristics of PRAAT and being capable of applying most of the major functions of the analyzer | Understanding the key qualities and characteristics of PRAAT and being capable of applying some of the major functions of the sound analyzer | Partially understanding the qualities and characteristics of PRAAT and being capable of applying only limited functions of the sound analyzer | Understanding little/limitedly the qualities and characteristics of PRAAT and being incapable of applying the sound analyzer |
| 2. Understand-ing the qualities of the English vowels and consonants (30%) | Fully understanding the features of the vowels and consonants and their allophones | Understanding most of the features of the vowels and consonants and their allophones | Understanding the key part of the features of the vowels and consonants and their allophones | Limited understanding of the features of the vowels and consonants and their allophones | No/Little understanding of the features of the vowels and consonants and their allophones |
| 3. Understand-ing the supra-segmental features of English (e.g., assimilation and deletion, liaison (25%) | Fully understanding the phonetic changes in all supra-segmental environments, e.g., assimilation & deletion | Understanding most of the phonetic changes in all supra-segmental environments, e.g., assimilation & deletion | Understanding the key part of the phonetic changes in all supra-segmental environments, e.g., assimilation & deletion | Limited understanding of the phonetic changes in all supra-segmental environments, e.g., assimilation & deletion | No/Little understanding of the phonetic changes in all supra-segmental environments, e.g., assimilation & deletion |
| 4. Understand-ing the qualities of the rhythm, the pitch, the stress, intonation unis, the tone, intonation, etc. (25%) | Fully understanding the features of all the elements related to intonation, e.g., pitch range, local stress & global stress, break index & intonational phrases | Understanding most of the features of all the elements related to intonation, e.g., pitch range, local stress & global stress, break index & intonational phrases | Understanding the key part of the features of all the elements related to intonation | Limited understanding of the features of all the elements related to intonation | No/Little understanding of the features of all the elements related to intonation |
| 5. Other prosodic features of English, including down-stepped effects and declination (5%) | Fully understanding the meaning of the different tones in English, e.g., high pitch stress vs. low pitch stress; down-step effect & declination | Understanding most of the meaning of the different tones in English, e.g., high pitch stress vs. low pitch stress; down-step effect & declination | Understanding the key part of the meaning of the different tones in English, e.g., high pitch stress vs. low pitch stress; down-step effect & declination | Limited understanding of the meaning of the different tones in English, e.g., high pitch stress vs. low pitch stress; down-step effect & declination | No/Little understanding of the meaning of the different tones in English, e.g., high pitch stress vs. low pitch stress; down-step effect & declination |
| 6. Diagnosis of the deviating pronunciation of the EFL learners (5%) | Fully understanding the "cause" of the errors or mistakes produced by EFL learners | Understanding most of the "cause" of the errors or mistakes produced by EFL learners | Understanding the key part of the "cause" of the EFL learners' errors or mistakes | Limited understanding of the "cause" of the EFL learners' errors or mistakes | No/Little understanding of the "cause" of the EFL learners' errors or mistakes |

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| 2. Understand-ing the qualities of the English vowels and consonants (30%) | Fully understanding the features of the vowels and consonants and their allophones | Understanding most of the features of the vowels and consonants and their allophones | Understanding the key part of the features of the vowels and consonants and their allophones | Limited understanding of the features of the vowels and consonants and their allophones | No/Little understanding of the features of the vowels and consonants and their allophones |
| 3. Understand-ing the supra-segmental features of English (e.g., assimilation and deletion, liaison (25%) | Fully understanding the phonetic changes in all supra-segmental environments, e.g., assimilation & deletion | Understanding most of the phonetic changes in all supra-segmental environments, e.g., assimilation & deletion | Understanding the key part of the phonetic changes in all supra-segmental environments, e.g., assimilation & deletion | Limited understanding of the phonetic changes in all supra-segmental environments, e.g., assimilation & deletion | No/Little understanding of the phonetic changes in all supra-segmental environments, e.g., assimilation & deletion |
| 4. Understand-ing the qualities of the rhythm, the pitch, the stress, intonation unis, the tone, intonation, etc. (25%) | Fully understanding the features of all the elements related to intonation, e.g., pitch range, local stress & global stress, break index & intonational phrases | Understanding most of the features of all the elements related to intonation, e.g., pitch range, local stress & global stress, break index & intonational phrases | Understanding the key part of the features of all the elements related to intonation | Limited understanding of the features of all the elements related to intonation | No/Little understanding of the features of all the elements related to intonation |
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# Creating rubrics (Application of the theories)

3.1 Creating rubrics (report/paper): Descriptors of different levels of competencies in applying the learned theories to a mini project

| Quality / Category | Excellent (A to A+/86 to 90+) | Good (B+ to A-/80 to 85) | Fair (C+ to B/70 to 79) | Poor (C- to C/60-69) | Fail (F/59 or less) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The format of paper/report writing (5%) | Following the guidance of how to write the term paper almost in every aspect | Following most of the guidance but miss one or two noticeable parts | Following only the important part of the guidance but neglect many details | Not following the important part of the guidance and miss many details | Not following the guidance in any aspects |
| 2. Being able to describe problems, responses, and providing solutions (15%) | Clearly describing the problem, how the problem is treated and how the solution is found | Statements of the problem, treatments, and solutions are understood but not well written | Statements of the problem, treatment and its possible solution are vague | Incomplete statements of the problem, treatment and its possible solution | Not stating any problem, responses, or solutions |
| 3. Being able to describe methodology in great detail (10%) | Methodology is well written including participants, materials, instrument, procedures, analyses, etc. | Most part of the methodology is described but not perfect (e.g., the procedures are not complete) | Only important part of the methodology is described (e.g., the participants, materials and procedures) | Many important parts of the methodology are ignored (e.g., the participants and procedures) | Little or no description of methodology is done |
| 4. Being able to explain why and how the "theory" is employed in the study (20%) | Fully explaining the method used in the project, including how the participants and materials are chosen, how the instrument is used, how the data is analyzed, etc. | Explaining most of the method used in the project satisfactorily | Roughly explaining the method used in the project, though it still leaves a lot of room for improvement | Tring to explain the method used in the project but it is done poorly | Not explaining the method used in the project |
| 5. Being able to report and interpret the findings of the study (25%) | Clear presentation of the findings and convincing interpretations for the findings | Clear presentation of the findings but lacks convincing interpretations for some of the findings | Both presentation of the findings and interpretations for the findings are not well developed | Both presentation of the findings and interpretations for the findings are poorly done | Little or no presentation or interpretation is described |
| 6. Being able to draw a conclusion combining the research questions, the theory, and the findings (25%) | Fully integrating the problem, the treatment, and the findings into the conclusion with insights or suggestions together with explanation of limitations | Integrating most of the problem, the treatment, and the findings into the conclusion with insights or suggestions together with explanation of limitations | Integrating only the important part of the problem, the treatment, and the findings into the conclusion | Integrating only limited part of the problem, the treatment, and the findings into the conclusion | Failing to integrate the problem, the treatment, and the findings into the conclusion |

# Creating rubrics (Application of the theories)

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# The relationship between the course and the core competencies of the department

**The core competences of FLAL, National Taipei University**

| | Rubric 1 | Rubric 2 |
|---|---|---|
| 1. High English proficiency (CEFR B2-C1) with professional applications | 25% | 25% |
| 2. Translation and interpretation or professional knowledge and application of TEASL | 25% | 10% |
| 3. Competencies in locating problems, analyzing problems and finding solutions | 15% | 20% |
| 4. Critical thinking with innovative creativities | 10% | 20% |
| 5. Competencies in communication and negotiation in a team | 10% | 20% |
| 6. Showing humanitarianism and getting ready to join the trend of globalization | 5% | 5% |

Point to ponder: Should the percentage be added up to 100%?

# Questionnaires of students' learning experiences

The questionnaires consist of 4 factors: Outcomes of learning, tools & instruments, learning strategies, and forms of presentation.

| Factors | Statements |
|---|---|
| The outcome of learning | 1. I _____ the physical features of English phonemes. <br> 2. I _____ the differences between phonetics and phonology. <br> 3. I _____ the theories, functions, and application of acoustic phonetics. <br> 5. I _____ the differences between the tense vowels and the lax vowels. <br> 6. I _____ the features and functions of the English consonants. <br> 7. I _____ the features, mechanism, and functions of the stress, the rhythm, and the intonation of English. <br> 9. I _____ the differences between Chinese sound system and that of English. <br> 10. I _____ how to improve my English pronunciation by analyzing my own English sounds. <br><br> Responses choose from: <br> ☐ do not understand at all; ☐ do not understand; ☐ understand; ☐ fully understand |

# Questionnaires of students' learning experiences

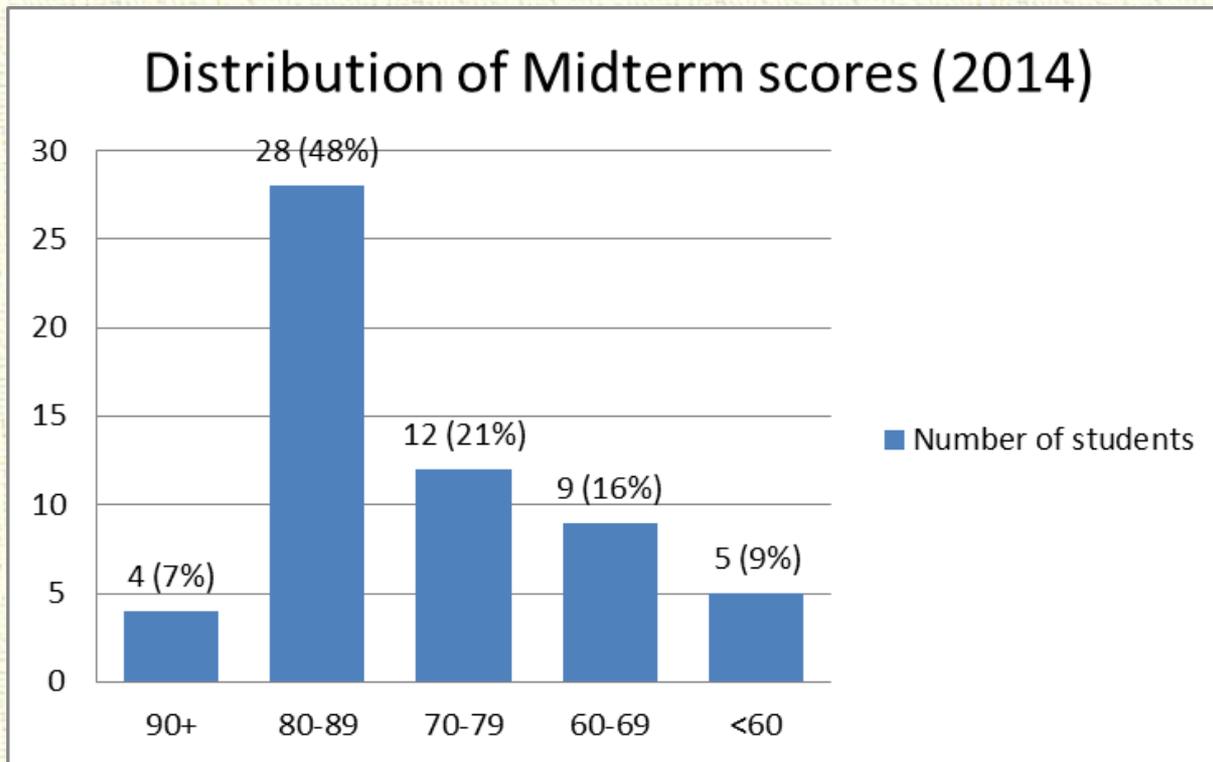| Factors | Statements |
|---|---|
| Tools and instrument | 4. I _____ the function of PRAAT.<br>8. I _____ how to analyze sound samples through PRAAT and learn the physical features of the samples.<br><br>Responses choose from:<br>□ do not understand at all; □ do not understand; □ understand; □ fully understand |

# Questionnaires of students' learning experiences

| Factors | Statements |
|---|---|
| Learning strategy | 11. I _____ the function of group discussion and how to participate.<br>12. I _____ how to play an appropriate role in a group discussion.<br><br>Responses to be chosen:<br>☐ do not know at all; ☐ do not know; ☐ know; ☐ know very well |
| | 13. I _____ the way of instruction focusing on discussion in class with students studying and getting familiar with the materials at home in advance.<br>14. I _____ the way of instruction focusing on "problem solving" through discussion instead of "the teaching giving a lecture."<br><br>Responses choose from:<br>☐ do not like at all; ☐ do not like; ☐ like; ☐ like very much |

| Factors | Statements |
|---|---|
| Forms of presentation | 15. I _____ reporting and sharing my proposal and the results in front of my classmates.<br><br>Responses choose from:<br>☐ do not fear at all; ☐ do not fear; ☐ fear; ☐ fear to a large degree |
| | 16. I _____ reporting and sharing my proposal and the results in front of my classmates.<br><br>Responses choose from:<br>☐ do not like at all; ☐ do not like; ☐ like; ☐ like very much |

# Understanding AoL from the Midterm

1. The midterm test was given on the basis of the rubrics 1.

## Distribution of Midterm scores (2014)

| Score range | Number of students |
|---|---|
| 90+ | 4 (7%) |
| 80-89 | 28 (48%) |
| 70-79 | 12 (21%) |
| 60-69 | 9 (16%) |
| <60 | 5 (9%) |

We can always readjust the text items to help students understand or learn more about the materials.

# Understanding AoL from term papers

## The core competencies of the term paper (Rubrics 2):

1. The format of paper/report writing (5%)
2. Being able to describe problems, responses, and providing solutions (15%)
3. Being able to describe methodology in great detail (15%)
4. Being able to explain why and how the "theory" is employed in the study (20%)
5. Being able to report and interpret the findings of the study (25%)
6. Being able to draw a conclusion combining the research questions, the theory, and the findings (20%)

### Distribution of paper scores (2014)

- 90+: 4 (7%)
- 80-89: 14 (34%)
- 70-79: 5 (57%)
- 60-79: 24 (2%)

■ Number of students
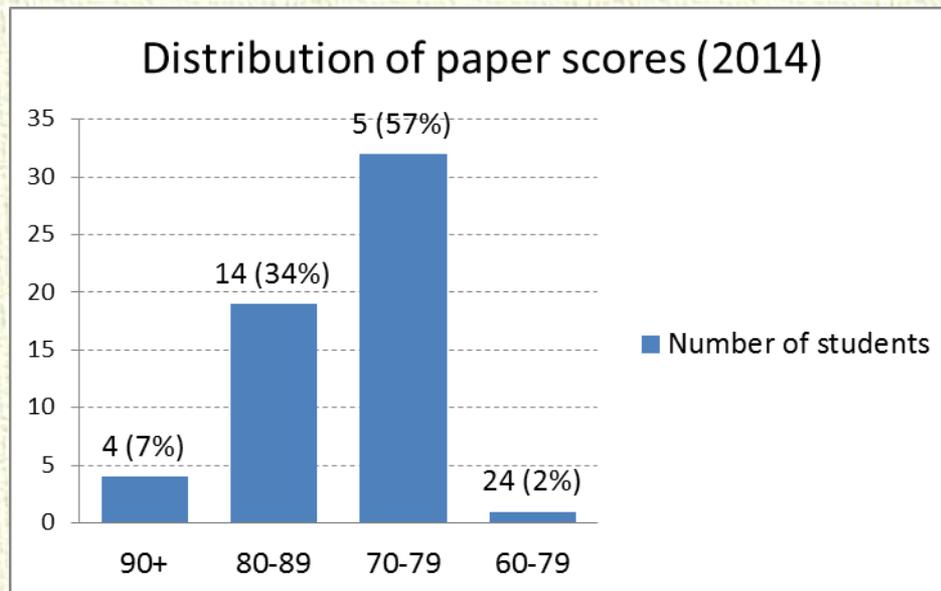
The midterm scores and those of the term papers are significantly correlated ($r = .65$, $p < 0.001$).

# The final scores of the course

## Distribution of the scores of the cours (2014)

# The final scores of the course



Distribution of the scores of the cours (2014)

Students responses to the questionnaire
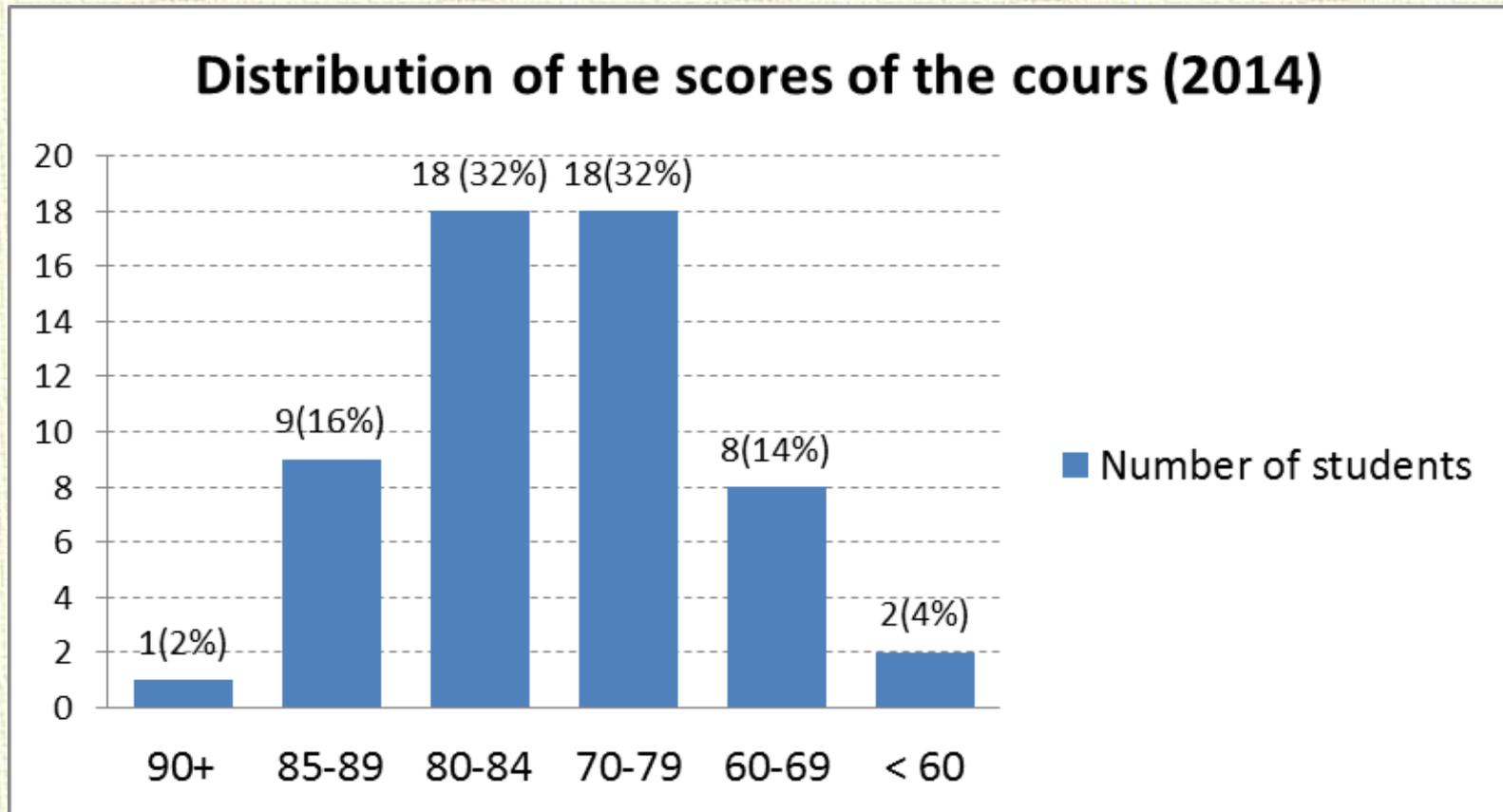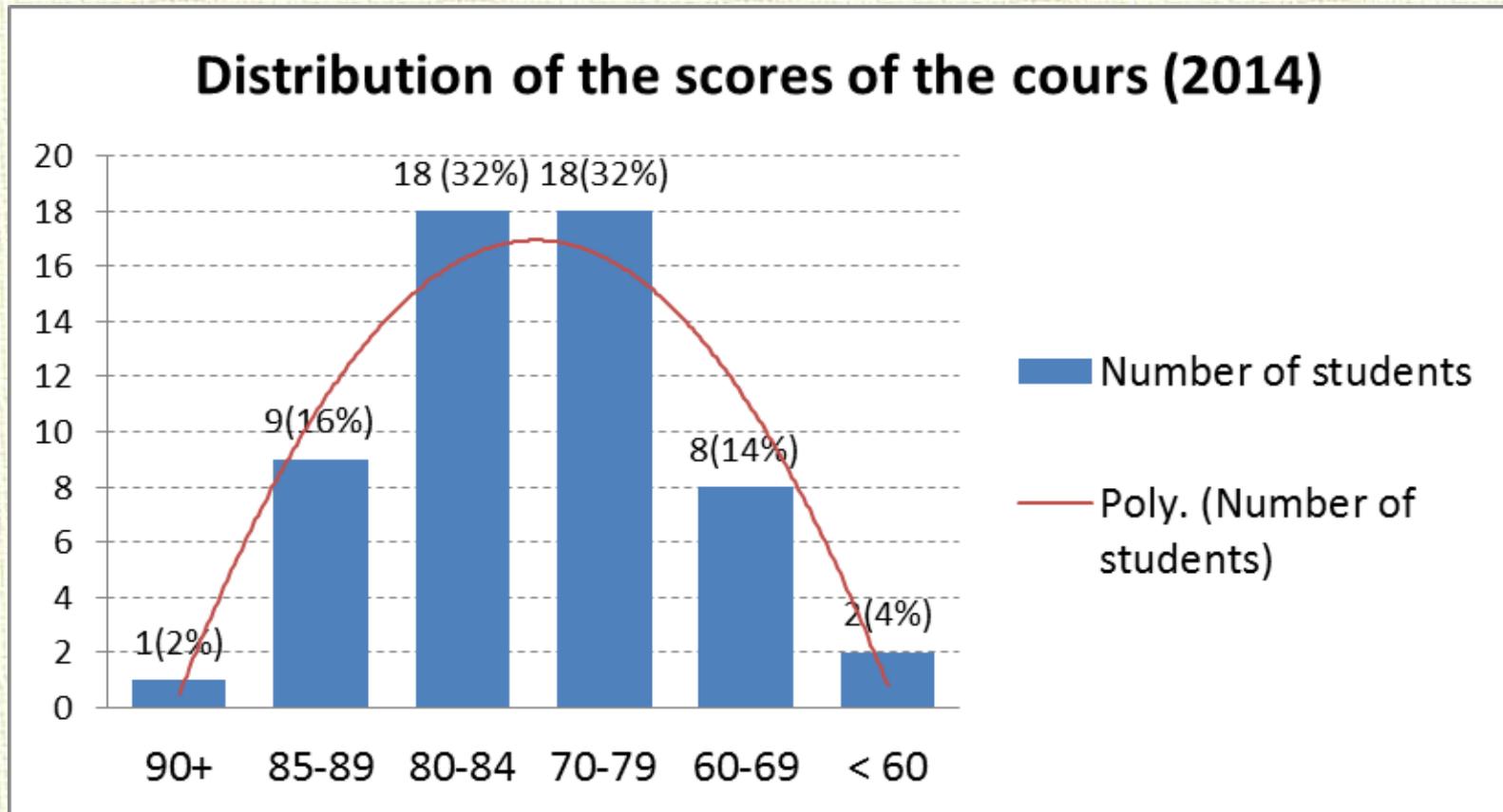


Contrasting the scores of the questionnaires (pretest vs. posttest)
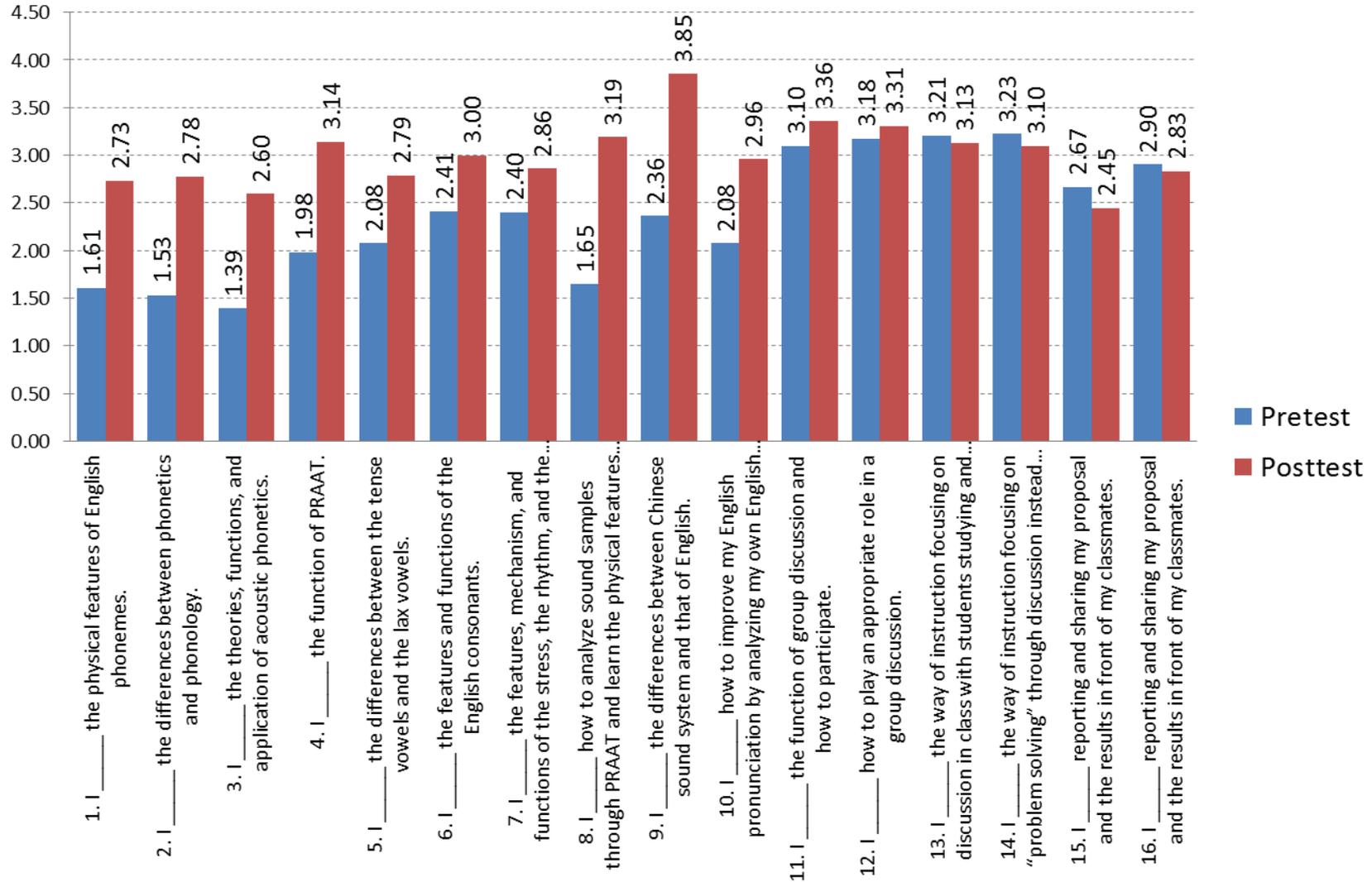
# A statistical result of a *t*-test

The result of a t-test shows that there are significant differences between the scores of the pretest and those of the post test (2014).

|          | Mean  | Variance | DF | *t*    | p (two-tailed) |
|----------|-------|----------|----|--------|----------------|
| Pretest  | 2.380 | 0.405    | 15 | -4.222 | 0.001          |
| Posttest | 3.004 | 0.114    |    |        |                |

# What do students' responses say?

Between the responses of the pretest & those of the posttest.

| Factors | Statement | Pre | Post |
|---|---|---|---|
| The outcome of learning | 1. I _____ the physical features of English phonemes. | 1.39 | 2.60 |
| | 2. I _____ the differences between phonetics and phonology. | 1.53 | 2.78 |
| | 3. I _____ the theories, functions, and application of acoustic phonetics. | 1.39 | 2.60 |
| | 5. I _____ the differences between the tense vowels and the lax vowels. | 2.08 | 2.79 |
| | 6. I _____ the features and functions of the English consonants. | 2.41 | 3.00 |
| | 7. I _____ the features, mechanism, and functions of the stress, the rhythm, and the intonation of English. | 2.40 | 2.86 |
| | 9. I _____ the differences between Chinese sound system and that of English. | 2.36 | 3.85 |
| | 10. I _____ how to improve my English pronunciation by analyzing my own English sounds. | 2.08 | 2.96 |
| | Responses choose from: 1 = do not understand at all; 2 = do not understand; 3 = understand; 4 = fully understand | | |

# What do students' responses say?

| Factors | Statements | Pre | Post |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tools and instrument | 4.  I _____ the function of PRAAT. | 1.98 | 3.14 |
| | 8.  I _____ how to analyze sound samples through PRAAT and learn the physical features of the samples. | 1.65 | 3.19 |
| | Responses choose from: 1 = do not understand at all; 2 = do not understand; 3 = understand; 4 = fully understand | | |

# What do students' responses say?

| Factors | Statements | Pre | Post |
|---|---|---|---|
| Learning strategy | 11. I _____ the function of group discussion and how to participate. | 3.10 | 3.36 |
| | 12. I _____ how to play an appropriate role in a group discussion. | 3.18 | 3.31 |
| | Responses to be chosen:<br>1 = do not know at all; 2 = do not know; 3 = know; 4 = know very well | | |
| | 13. I _____ the way of instruction focusing on discussion in class with students studying and getting familiar with the materials at home in advance. | 3.21 | 3.13 |
| | 14. I _____ the way of instruction focusing on "problem solving" through discussion instead of "the teaching giving a lecture." | 3.23 | 3.10 |
| | Responses choose from:<br>1 = do not like at all; 2 = do not like; 3 = like; 4 = like very much | | |

# What do students' responses say?

| Factors | Statements | Pre | Post |
|---|---|---|---|
| Forms of presentation | 15. I _____ reporting and sharing my proposal and the results in front of my classmates. | 2.67 | 2.45 |
| | Responses choose from:<br>1 = do not fear at all; 2 = do not fear; 3 = fear; 4 = fear to a large degree | | |
| | 16. I _____ reporting and sharing my proposal and the results in front of my classmates. | 2.90 | 2.83 |
| | Responses choose from:<br>1 = do not like at all; 2 = do not like; 3 = like; 4 = like very much | | |

1. Objective: A course that introduces theories about writing persuasive essays and trains students to be able to apply these theories to real writing.

   Effective lead-in, specific thesis statement, well-organized paragraph development with sufficient and logical illustrations and exemplifications, convincing conclusion.

   All the detailed descriptions will be listed in the rubrics for evaluating how students lean in the course.

2. Resources: **Make the best use of the E-learning platform**

   All teaching materials (including sample essays and students' weekly assignment) are uploaded to the E-learning platform and students can read them in advance.

# Rubrics for evaluating students' learning

The Rubrics of "English Composition-sophomore-2nd" (Areas including illustration, process, comparison, contrast, definition, classification, causality, and argumentation with warranted logical supports)

| Quality / Category | Excellent (A to A+/86 to 90+) | Good (B+ to A-/80 to 85) | Fair (C+ to B/70 to 79) | Poor (C- to C/60-69) | Fail (F/59 or less) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Writing different types of essays (40%) | Fully understand the qualities & characteristics of each type of essay and be capable of applying the know-how in completing a well-organized, well-elaborate composition | Understand the qualities & characteristics of each type of essay and be capable of applying the know-how in completing an organized and coherent composition | Understand the key concepts of the qualities & characteristics of each type of essay and be capable of applying part of them in completing a coherent and readable composition | Partially understand the qualities & characteristics of each type of essay and may not be capable of applying them in completing a readable composition | Understand little/limitedly the qualities & characteristics of each type of essay and be incapable of applying the know-how in writing |
| 2. Command of the English language in writing (30%) | Fully display consistent facility in the use of language, demonstrating syntactic variety, appropriate word choice, and idiomaticity, though it may have minor lexical or grammatical error | display facility in the use of language, demonstrating syntactic variety and range of vocabulary, though it will probably have occasional noticeable minor errors in structure, word form, or use of idiomatic language that do not interfere with meaning | display some facility in the use of language, limitedly demonstrating syntactic variety and range of vocabulary, with noticeable minor errors in structure, word form, or use of idiomatic language that may interfere with meaning | May demonstrate inconsistent facility in sentence formation and word choice that may result in lack of clarity and occasionally obscure meaning; may display accurate but limited range of syntactic structures and vocabulary | A noticeably inappropriate choice of words or word forms and an accumulation of errors in sentence structure and/or usage |
| 3. Peer evaluation and commenting (10%) | Fully participate in the discussion of written productions produced by the classmates and give insightful and valuable comments | Participate in the discussion of written productions produced by the classmates and give useful and comprehensible comments | Passively participate in the discussion of written productions produced by the classmates and give limited but useful comments | Passively participate in the discussion of written productions produced by the classmates and give limited comments | Do not participate in the discussion of written productions produced by the classmates and give little/no comments |
| 4. Attitude (10%) | Fully participate in preparation for class (preview the class materials), upload the homework on time with fully developed products | Participate in preparation for class (preview the class materials), upload the homework on time with developed products | Sometimes prepare for class (preview the class materials), most of the time upload the homework on time with fairly developed products | Rarely prepare for class (preview the class materials), and do not often upload the homework on time, though still upload the make-up homework | Do not prepare for class (preview the class materials), and often fail to upload the homework on time and do not upload the make-ups |
| 5. research work outside the class (10%) | Sufficient library research (or other types of research through the Web) and employ the materials in the written products appropriately | Some library research (or other types of research through the Web) and employ the materials in the written products appropriately | Limited library research (or other types of research through the Web) but employ the materials in the written products appropriately | Limited/no library research (or other types of research through the Web) and fail to employ the materials in the written products appropriately | No library research (or other types of research through the Web) at all |

# Rubrics for evaluating students' learning

| Quality / Category | Excellent (A to A+/86 to 90+) | Good (B+ to A-/80 to 85) | Fair (C+ to B/70 to 79) | Poor (C- to C/60-69) | Fail (F/59 or less) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Writing different types of essays (40%)** | Fully understand the qualities & characteristics of each type of essay and be capable of applying the know-how in completing a well-organized, well-elaborate composition | Understand the qualities & characteristics of each type of essay and be capable of applying the know-how in completing an organized and coherent composition | Understand the key concepts of the qualities & characteristics of each type of essay and be capable of applying part of them in completing a coherent and readable composition | Partially understand the qualities & characteristics of each type of essay and may not be capable of applying them in completing a readable composition | Understand little/limitedly the qualities & characteristics of each type of essay and be incapable of applying the know-how in writing |
| **2. Command of the English language in writing (30%)** | Fully display consistent facility in the use of language, demonstrating syntactic variety, appropriate word choice, and idiomaticity, though it may have minor lexical or grammatical error | display facility in the use of language, demonstrating syntactic variety and range of vocabulary, though it will probably have occasional noticeable minor errors in structure, word form, or use of idiomatic language that do not interfere with meaning | display some facility in the use of language, limitedly demonstrating syntactic variety and range of vocabulary, with noticeable minor errors in structure, word form, or use of idiomatic language that may interfere with meaning | May demonstrate inconsistent facility in sentence formation and word choice that may result in lack of clarity and occasionally obscure meaning; may display accurate but limited range of syntactic structures and vocabulary | A noticeably inappropriate choice of words or word forms and an accumulation of errors in sentence structure and/or usage |

# The relationship between the course and the core competencies of the department

## The core competences of FLAL, National Taipei University

| The core competences of FLAL, National Taipei University | Rubrics |
|---|---|
| 1. High English proficiency (CEFR B2-C1) with professional applications | 30% |
| 2. Translation and interpretation or professional knowledge and application of TEASL | 30% |
| 3. Competencies in locating problems, analyzing problems and finding solutions | 10% |
| 4. Critical thinking with innovative creativities | 20% |
| 5. Competencies in communication and negotiation in a team | 5% |
| 6. Showing humanitarianism and getting ready to join the trend of globalization | 5% |

The questionnaire consists of three factors: The outcome of learning, learning strategy, and learning attitude.

| Factors | Statement |
|---|---|
| The outcome of learning | 1. I know how to use illustrations in my essays. |
| | 2. I know how to write essays on "process analysis." |
| | 3. I know how to embed "comparison" and "contrast" in my essays. |
| | 4. I know how to use definition in my writing. |
| | 5. I know the meaning and important features of classification and division. |
| | 6. I know how to categorize data in my writing with successful classification. |
| | 7. I know how to apply causality (relation between cause and effect) in my essays without logical fallacies. |
| | 8. I know how to identify logical fallacies and how to improve them. |
| | 9. I know how to make my essays persuasive with good argumentation. |
| | 10. I know how to employ "cons" and "pros" in my persuasive essays. |
| | 11. I know how to structure a persuasive argumentation essay. |
| | Responses to choose from: <br> ☐ Totally disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Totally agree |

# Questionnaires of students' learning experiences

| Factors | Statement |
|---|---|
| Learning strategy | 12. I learn new things whenever I read and evaluate my partners' essays. |
| | 13. I learn new things whenever I read the comments from my partners. |
| | 14. I learn new things whenever discussing with my group partners on different topics. |
| | Responses to choose from:<br>☐ Totally disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Totally agree |
| Attitude | 15. I will do my best to complete my homework every week. |
| | Responses to choose from:<br>☐ Totally disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Totally agree |

# Students responses to the questionnaire



**Contrasting the scores of the questionnaire (pretest vs. posttest)**

| Question | Pretest | Posttest |
|---|---|---|
| 1. I know how to use illustrations in my essays. | 3.18 | 3.33 |
| 2. I know how to write essays on "process analysis." | 2.91 | 3.17 |
| 3. I know how to embed "comparison" and "contrast" in my essays. | 3.36 | 3.58 |
| 4. I know how to use definition in my writing. | 3.09 | 3.50 |
| 5. I know the meaning and important features of classification and division. | 2.64 | 3.17 |
| 6. I know how to categorize data in my writing with successful classification. | 3.00 | 3.17 |
| 7. I know how to apply causality in my essays without logical fallacies. | 3.09 | 3.08 |
| 8. I know how to identify logical fallacies and how to improve them. | 3.18 | 3.50 |
| 9. I know how to make my essays persuasive with good argumentation. | 3.18 | 3.33 |
| 10. I know how to employ "cons" and "pros" in my persuasive essays. | 3.00 | 3.42 |
| 11. I know how to structure a persuasive argumentation essay. | 2.82 | 3.00 |
| 12. I learn new things whenever I read and evaluate my partners' essays. | 3.27 | 3.50 |
| 13. I learn new things whenever I read the comments from my partners. | 3.18 | 3.50 |
| 14. I learn new things whenever discussing with my group partners on... | 3.18 | 3.33 |
| 15. I will do my best to complete my homework every week. | 3.64 | 3.42 |

# A statistical result of a *t*-test

The result of a t-test shows that there are significant differences between the scores of the pretest and those of the post test in "composition" (2014).

|  | Mean | Variance | DF | *t* | p (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pretest | 3.12 | 0.06 | 14 | -4.69 | 0.000 |
| Posttest | 3.33 | 0.03 |  |  |  |

What do students' responses say?

Between the responses of the pretest & those of the posttest.

| Factors | Statements | Pre | Post |
|---|---|---|---|
| The outcome of learning | 1.  I know how to use illustrations in my essays. | 3.18 | 3.33 |
| | 2.  I know how to write essays on "process analysis." | 2.91 | 3.17 |
| | 3.  I know how to embed "comparison" and "contrast" in my essays. | 3.36 | 3.58 |
| | 4.  I know how to use definition in my writing. | 3.09 | 3.50 |
| | 5.  I know the meaning and important features of classification and division. | 2.64 | 3.17 |
| | 6.  I know how to categorize data in my writing with successful classification. | 3.00 | 3.17 |
| | 7.  I know how to apply causality (relation between cause and effect) in my essays without logical fallacies. | 3.09 | 3.08 |
| | 8.  I know how to identify logical fallacies and how to improve them. | 3.18 | 3.50 |
| | 9.  I know how to make my essays persuasive with good argumentation. | 3.18 | 3.33 |
| | 10.  I know how to employ "cons" and "pros" in my persuasive essays. | 3.00 | 3.42 |
| | 11.  I know how to structure a persuasive argumentation essay. | 2.82 | 3.00 |
| | Responses to choose from:<br>1 = Totally disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; 4 = Totally agree | | |

56

# What do students' responses say?

| Factors | Statements | Pre | Post |
|---|---|---|---|
| Learning strategy | 12. I learn new things whenever I read and evaluate my partners' essays. | 3.27 | 3.50 |
| | 13. I learn new things whenever I read the comments from my partners. | 3.18 | 3,50 |
| | 14. I learn new things whenever discussing with my group partners on different topics. | 3.16 | 3.33 |
| | Responses to choose from: 1 = Totally disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; 4 = Totally agree | | |
| Learning attitude | 15. I will do/did my best to complete my homework every week. | 3.64 | 3.42 |
| | Responses to choose from: 1 = Totally disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; 4 = Totally agree | | |

# Conclusion

1. Assurance of learning in many humanities courses often fails to convince people who expect to see objective Key Performance of Indicators (KPI) because most teachers who teach humanities courses cannot provide convincing methods in evaluating their students' learning outcomes. Some even try to "ignore" the requirements of accreditation.

   However, many assessment tools may not be able to help us. We should find a valid and reliable way to do our own evaluation on the basis of our own KPI (as suggested in this report). The report today is trying to build up our own evaluation system to assess our "unique" courses. In addition, we can provide convincing evidence to support our students' effective leaning.

# Conclusion

2. With the rubrics of the core competencies of the course, instructors are able to monitor closely how students learn and therefore readjust the "pace" of teaching and learning activities in class. Thus, the students may be able to follow better the instructors' lecture and expected objective of learning.

3. With the direct and indirect evidence collected through the multi-dimensional assessment (regular tests, papers, questionnaires, etc.), instructors can not only convince people how well the students have learned from the course, but also evaluate and improve the course materials accordingly.

4. This may be the starting point, but I am sure we can find more appropriate ways to help establish valid and reliable ways of assessment for humanities courses without hurting the true value of these courses.

5. Finally, we still need to differentiate different types of humanities courses in that some are more skill-based, some are more knowledge-based, but most of them are inspiration-based from which the KPI may not be able to be observed immediately after instruction. The enlightenment and transcendence may occur after many years of life experience, as Morris Chang once said (2012) that the most unforgettable courses he took are not the technical courses at MIT, but the general humanities courses in general education at Harvard University. And that was about 50 years after he left school.

# Thank You

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