

Using “bite-sized” chunks to teach academic essay skills to low-level learners

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Outline

- Background
- Course and assessment
- Benefits
- Pitfalls
- The student perspective
- Avoiding the pitfalls

Background

- Course participants
 - Language Foundation Year
 - Language level - IELTS 4.5(?)
 - Nationalities - mainly Saudi but also Chinese, Western and Eastern European

Course and assessment

- 1st of 2 Academic Skills for Undergraduate Study units
- Assessment
 - Note-taking from a reading text
 - Note-taking and summary writing from a listening text
 - Essay plan
 - Paragraph writing and citing references
 - Bibliography

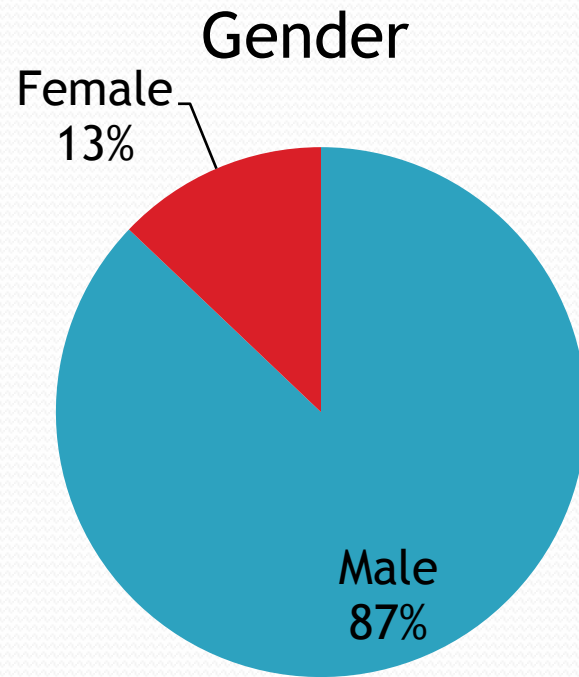
Benefits

- Note-taking skills
- Listening skills
- Summary writing
- Bibliography

Pitfalls

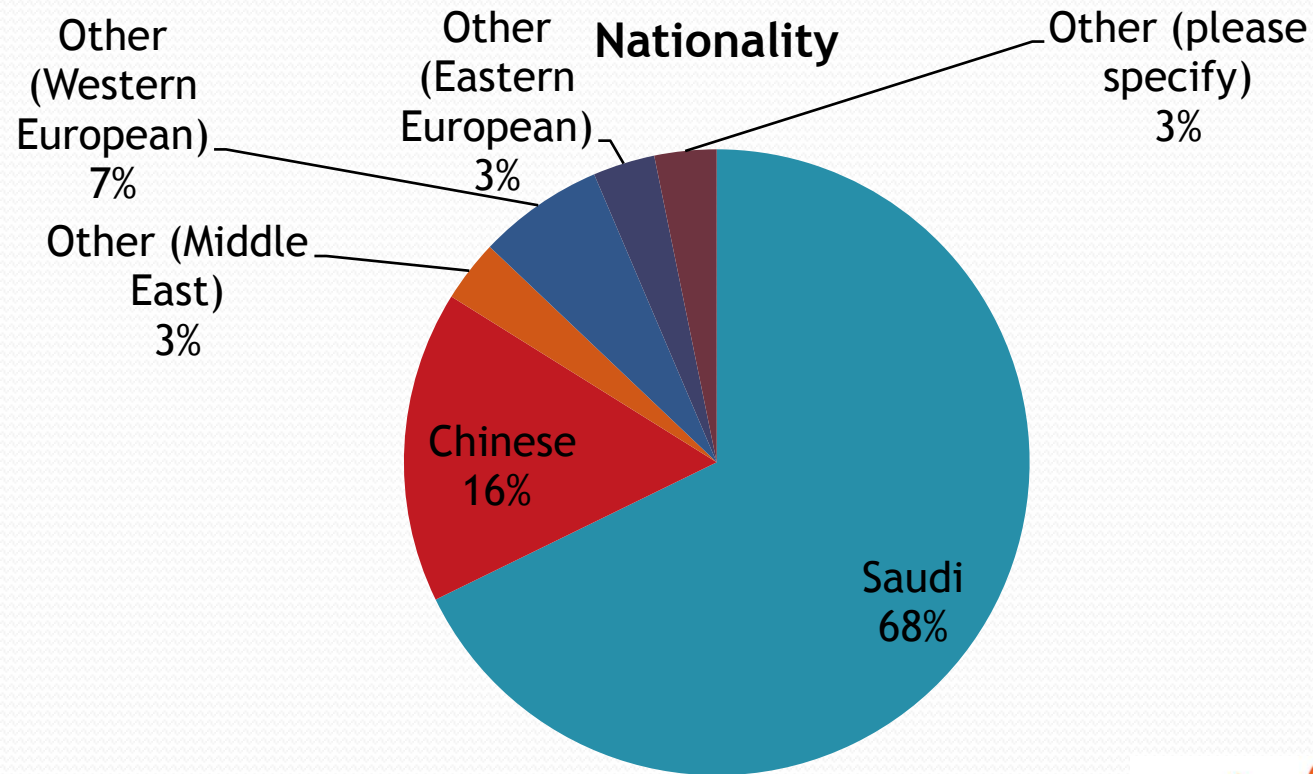
- Essay plans
- Citing references
- Paraphrasing
- Understanding academic texts
- Difficult tasks not attempted
- Research skills - electronic resources

Questionnaire results



Male: n=27; Female: n=4;

Questionnaire results




Questionnaire results

1. How helpful did you find the 5 portfolio pieces in helping to prepare you for the essay you need to write in Academic Skills for Undergraduate Study 2? If you did not submit a particular task, please tick N/A. [Create Chart](#) [Download](#)

	Very helpful	Quite helpful	A bit helpful	Not very helpful	Not helpful at all	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
Portfolio piece 1 - Note-taking task from reading text	23.1% (6)	38.5% (10)	19.2% (5)	11.5% (3)	3.8% (1)	3.8% (1)	2.32	26
Portfolio piece 2 - Summary writing task from listening text	19.2% (5)	26.9% (7)	30.8% (8)	7.7% (2)	11.5% (3)	3.8% (1)	2.64	26
Portfolio piece 3 - Essay outline	15.4% (4)	38.5% (10)	30.8% (8)	3.8% (1)	7.7% (2)	3.8% (1)	2.48	26
Portfolio piece 4 - Citing references task	19.2% (5)	30.8% (8)	26.9% (7)	7.7% (2)	11.5% (3)	3.8% (1)	2.60	26
Portfolio piece 5 - Bibliography task	3.8% (1)	50.0% (13)	23.1% (6)	11.5% (3)	0.0% (0)	11.5% (3)	2.48	26
If you think any of the portfolio pieces were not helpful, what other assessment(s) would you suggest instead?								1
								Show Responses
answered question								26
skipped question								5

Questionnaire results

2. Would you have preferred to have been given any of the following pieces to do instead of one of the portfolio pieces?

 [Create Chart](#)  [Download](#)

	Yes	No	Don't know	Response Count
Presentation	61.5% (16)	15.4% (4)	23.1% (6)	26
Report	50.0% (13)	34.6% (9)	15.4% (4)	26
Short essay (500 words)	76.9% (20)	15.4% (4)	7.7% (2)	26
Long essay (1500 words)	26.9% (7)	57.7% (15)	15.4% (4)	26
Long essay (1000 words) as a follow-up to the essay outline task.	46.2% (12)	38.5% (10)	15.4% (4)	26
Please feel free to make any other comments about the unit / assessment for this unit which will help the unit leader to improve the unit in future. Show Responses				2
answered question				26
skipped question				5

Avoiding the pitfalls

- Give lots more practice!
- Perhaps spread the tasks over longer and/or increase contact time?
- Make the importance of the tasks clearer
- Change one or more of the assessments???

Thank you for your
attention!

Comments / questions
welcome!

