

# Transformations in UOW College's Assessment tasks

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UOW  
COLLEGE  
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# English for Tertiary studies (ETS)

- Direct entry pathway program for international students
- 18 week course, broken down in 3 by 6 week sessions (ETS1, 2 and 3)
- Students can enter the course at any session, having met entry requirements
- Major review every 5 years

# ETS COURSE STRUCTURE

- ETS 2 and 3 are divided into Academic Reading and Writing (ARW) and Academic Listening and Speaking (ALS) streams
- ETS1 is the foundation course and is more holistic
- Each skill is taught and tested separately

# Planning process

- Teacher feedback (continuous feedback sessions and surveys)
- Student feedback and reflections (continuous and surveys)
- ETS and subject coordinator feedback
- Working committee was formed

# Working committee

- Studied all the student and teacher feedback
- Conducted meetings with Faculty staff and studied their course outlines (assessment tasks section only)
- Conducted meetings with ex-ETS students at the University
- Discussions and regular meetings with College ELICOS Manager and ETS Coordinator

# Rationale for Assessments

- To increase relevance of assessment tasks at university
- To ensure multiple formative feedback to students
- To ensure students remained engaged throughout sessions
- To continue assessing the 4 macro skills

# Major change in course structure

## Old course

- 3 independent sessions

## New course

- 2 independent sessions  
(ETS 18 and 12 weeks)\*

- To accommodate  
assessment tasks and  
feedback better

# Changes in Assessment tasks:

## ETS 1

### Old course

#### ARW

- Paragraph supporting an opinion
- Vocabulary and grammar quiz (week 4\_10%)

### New course

#### ARW

- Short report based on graphs (Based on 2 graphs: Findings, Analytical discussion, Conclusion)
- Grammar quiz (week 3\_5%)
- Vocabulary quiz (week 6\_5%)



# ETS 2 ARW

## Old course

Only 2 assessment tasks (both exams)

- Critical Reading Assessment (40%) week 4
- Report Writing exam (60%) week 5/6

(Based on 3 graphs: Introduction, Findings, Analysis and interpretation, Conclusion)

## New course

3 assessments (only 1 exam and 2 formative assessments)

- CRA and Annotation (30%)
- Draft Introduction and body paragraph 1 (week 4\_10%)
- Research Report (week 6\_60%)

(Based on research from journal articles: Introduction, Critique, Conclusion, Reference list)

# ETS 3 ARW

## Old course

- Draft Introduction (week 2\_2%) Moodle submission
- Draft body paragraph 1 (week 3\_3%) Moodle submission
- Research essay (35%\_week 4) **based on 4 journal articles (searched from the library website)**
- Final exam (Argument essay) 60%\_week 5/6

## New course

- Critical Reading assessment (15%\_week 3)
- Academic essay development assessment (week 4\_20%)
- Final exam (week 5/6\_60%)\*
- Moodle discussion post (weekly\_5%) Reflections and response to other students' posts

# ETS Final exam

## Old course

Argument essay

- IELTS type, evidence from students' own general knowledge/memory or experiences
- Introduction, 2 body paragraphs and conclusion

## New course

Argument essay

- Evidence based on the reading extracts provided (2 A4 pages max)
- Same structure as EDA

**Source 1**

(Jessica Duncan & Sara Lewis – “World Transport” (2013) – page 163)

As more local governments around the world start to provide free bus or rail transport, city planners are finding that they are spending less money on local transport infrastructure. As more people use the free buses and trains, the number of cars on the road is decreasing. This leads to a fall in the number of roads requiring repair, as well as a reduction in the need for new roads to be built. The city of Wagga in New South Wales, Australia, found that their road maintenance costs dropped by 11% after the introduction of a free bus in 2008.

**Source 2** (Ryan Jones – 2010 – page 19)

While it is true that cities increase their workforce by hiring drivers and staff to run and maintain their bus fleets, research has found that for every 1 job created by free bus routes, 1.4 jobs related to car use are lost. In addition, when private bus routes come into conflict with free public transport systems, it has been found that the private companies lose their customers to the free services, resulting in job losses, business closures and a reduction in bus and taxi services available in that area.

**Source 3** (Neville, Damien – pg. 73, 2015)

Data on the Hoboken free shuttle bus was collected in recent research. It was observed which stops were most popular to leave the bus for people who boarded the 34A free bus route at three times. The data is summarised below.

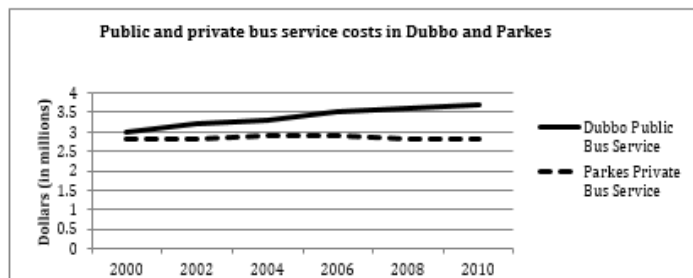
Number of passengers disembarking at the most popular stops of the 34A bus route in Hoboken, 2016.

Bus stop	8.35am	12.35pm	4.55pm
Hospital	4	12	7
Shopping mall	9	11	11
Train station	17	3	4
Community college	7	22	2
Aged Care Facility	5	6	0

**Source 4** (Irene Jackson, 2014)

Free buses can be used by governments to provide transport to areas that private bus companies consider too unprofitable such as those with older or poorer populations. This can allow the people of those areas to travel easily to medical services, public libraries or for employment. However, recent research has been conducted by the Australian Transport Group (2013) into

the long-term costs associated with public transport when compared with more efficient private transport companies. Their results are shown below.

**Source 5** (Vincent, H.P. – 2018 – page 23)

A recent trend to occur within many cities around the world is to provide free public transport within the city's central business district. This practice first began to appear in cities that were heavily reliant on tourism for a large percentage of their annual income. Tourist shuttle bus routes were created to take visitors easily from one major attraction to another. However, it did not take long for the local population to also start using these buses for travelling to work or for doing their weekly shopping. Cities that have created a free bus service have found on average an 8% drop in inner-city traffic.

**Source 6** (Carmen Brookes and Robert Allard – 2014, pg. 162)

Below is a chart showing the number of visitors to Sydney from 2004 to 2010. Sydney introduced a free bus in 2008.



# Aligning of assessment tasks

## ETS3 CRA paragraph

### Part B: Essay paragraph evidence selection

**Q.4** Complete the following plan for an essay paragraph by paraphrasing relevant evidence from the article. **At least one of the reasons must be supported by one of the figures (a table or graph) in the article.**

**The essay question:**

**Modern technology is harmful to education. Do you agree?**

**Claim:** Modern technology distracts students from their learning.

**Justification:** This is because technologies are designed to draw the immediate attention of users.

**Specific Reason 1:** Technology distracts students focus and thereby reduces their exam performance.

**Examples/evidence from the article (must include Harvard reference):**

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## ETS3 EDA and exam essay body paragraph structure

Stage 1	Claim
Stage 2	Justification
Stage 3	Specific Reason
Stage 4	Evidence
Stage 5	Critical Comments
Stage 6	Conclusion

# ETS 2 ALS

## Old course

- Online listening test (about interview skills)
- Individual presentation (based on primary research)

 ETS3

## New course

- Online listening test (about debate skills)
- Debate\*
- Moodle discussion post (weekly\_5%)

# Debate

- Week 6
- Based on a theme and background readings given at the beginning of the session
- Reflective Moodle posts
- Similar structure as ETS 3 argument essay
- **On the day of the debate**
  - Debate topic
  - Team members
  - Speaker numbers
  - Affirmative or negative team
- 30 minutes preparation time
- 30 minutes for each debate (15 minutes per team)
- Designated roles for each speaker (particularly first and last)
- Debate practice- roles of each speaker
  - Convenor
  - Time keeper

# ETS 3 ALS

## Old course

- Lecture listening exam (live and based on a theme)
- Group presentation (based on a news item)  
{week 6}

## New course

- Online listening test
- Individual presentation (group work precedes) based on primary research {interviews, data collection, collation, analysis and presentation} (week 6\_60%)



# Challenges

- New assessment tasks so writing new task sheets, marking criteria and models.
- Trialling them and fixing them
- Concerns for increased number of assessment tasks

# Conclusion

- Changes have been welcomed by staff and management
- Greater consistency of results between sessions
- Improved quality of students response in exams (final exam)
- Better engagement of students in assessment tasks, especially debate
- Better understanding of assessment tasks due to better alignment between them

Thank you

Questions?



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