

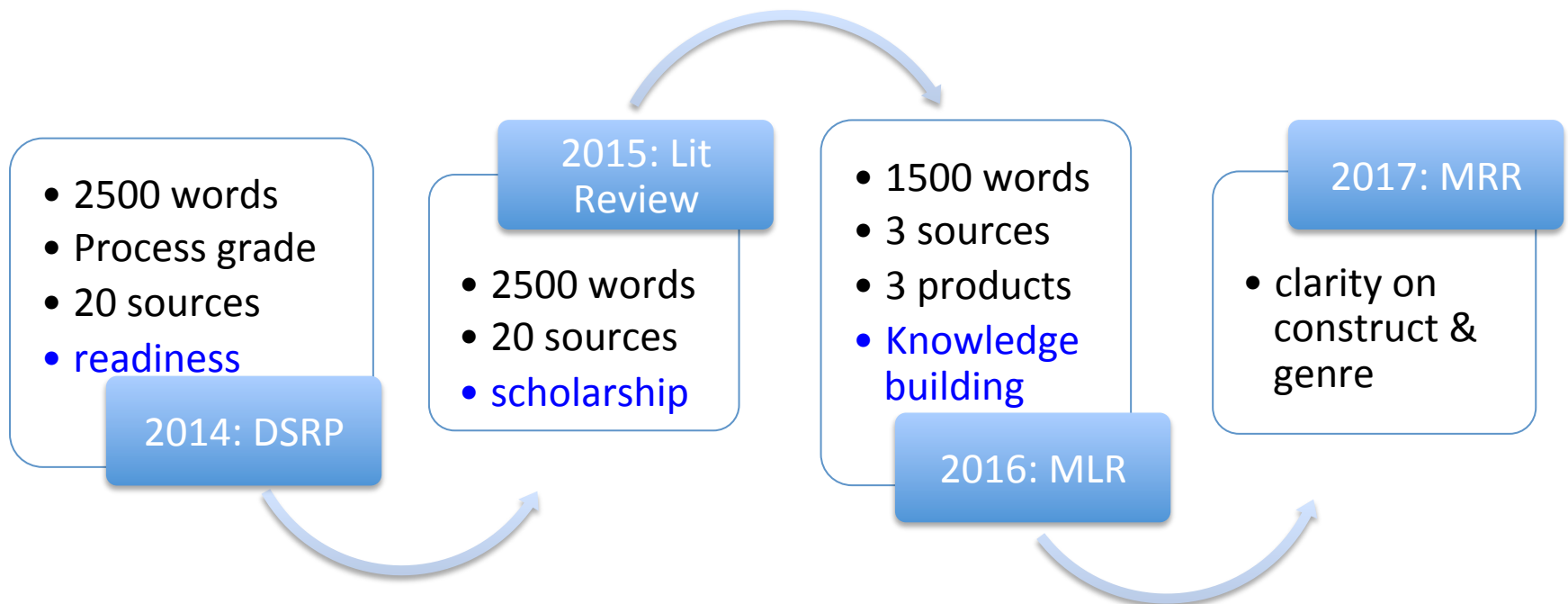
The Evolution of a Pre-sessional Assessment Task in Theory and in Practice

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OVERVIEW

Social genre

Cognitive genre



Achievement = critical application of learning

ESAP

EMDAP

2014: Discipline Specific Research Project

Theory

- ESAP element of EGAP course
- evidence of readiness for PGT independent research
- mirror **one** social genre to be encountered there

Practice

- library research process with titles from schools/sts
- description vs evaluation
- research vs scholarship

Evolution

- Innovation = blind marking of final product
- process grade for teacher input + student motivation
- survey of 37 tutors and 5 groups (71 students)

Assessing the process: what is it worth?

(TEASIG, Granada 10/ 2014)

If I were a student I would want a grade because it is something concrete and I would understand clearly at what 'level' I was. As a teacher I believe it's more beneficial to receive clear feedback and encouragement rather than a stark number.

Should a grade be awarded for the outline and first draft?

TEACHERS (n=37)



STUDENTS (n=71)



Greater proportion of students than teachers said 'no'

Why did students say 'no'?

I do really like to see some advices from my tutor but I don't like to see a certain number.

(7)

the first draft requires more a qualitative feedback than a quantitative

I heard that in some classes their tutors just gave them marks for the first drafts and the students did not know how to improve as the feedback is very little.

Writing process is much more important than the result in the learning of academic writing. (2)

At the beginning my thoughts and organisation are vague and not complete (6)

That reflects the process of writing which is still a learning step, not a result. (7)

If I am given grade for my first draft I will feel stressful (5)

Don't give us a grade. Make us happy and we'll have the confidence to do better. (3)

We would like to expose our faults to improve.

Literature

- the need for formative assessment to be low stakes, so that students are free to gain the most from it without the need to 'fake good'.
(Bloxham, 2014)
- grading participation may discourage students from exposing their misunderstandings
(Biggs & Tang 2011)

2015 : Literature Review

Theory

- Peripheral participation in **scholarly** community of practice
- Self-efficacy

Practice

- Same written product with new name
- Same process but no grade
- New 3-part oral presentation structure

Evolution

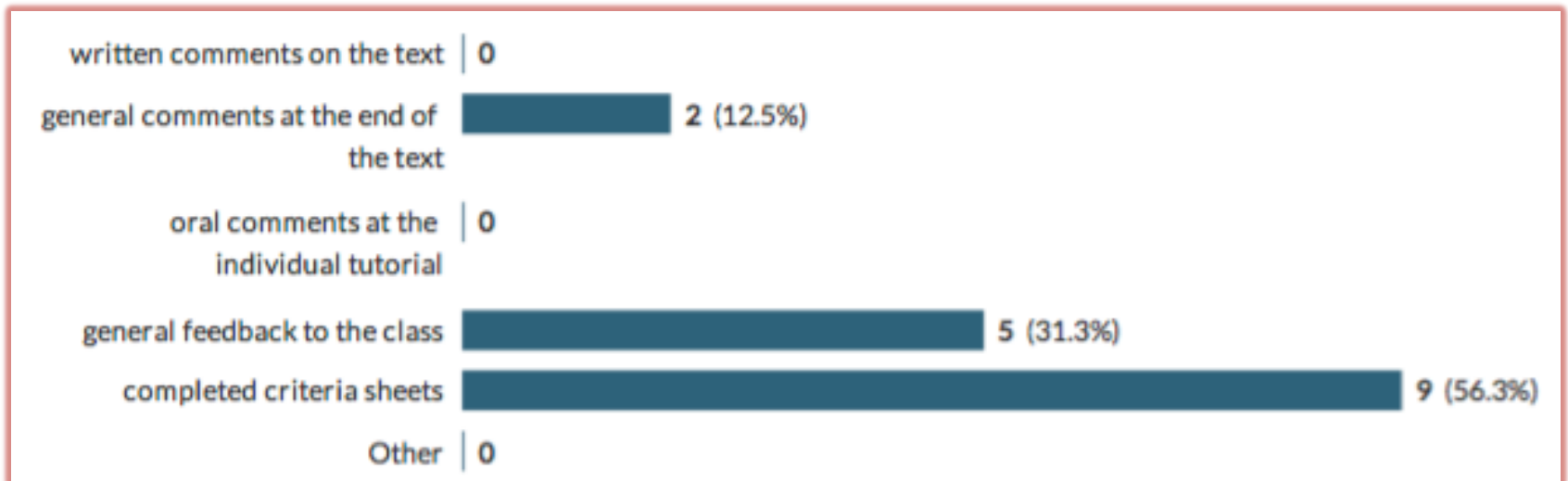
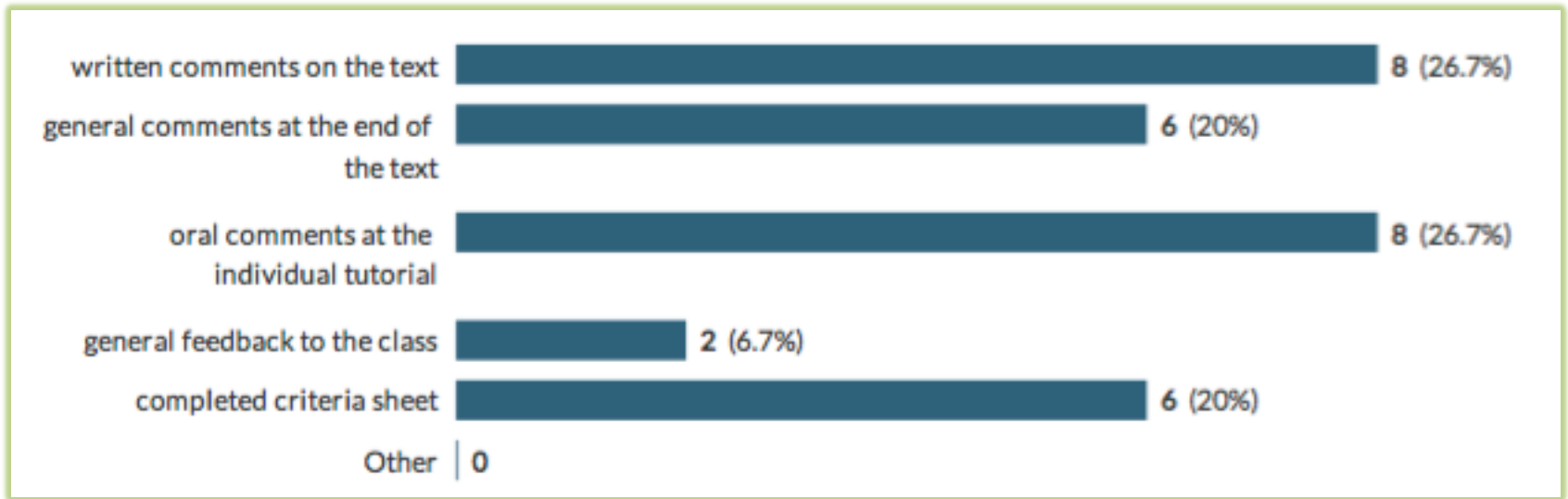
- CPD: consistent formative feedback
- Mode; form; focus; function

Teacher feedback processes:



Does the process have an impact on the product?

FORM: Most useful vs least useful re students



FOCUS: Student order of preference

IMPORTANCE FOR LIT REVIEW	IMPORTANCE FOR WRITING	USEFULNESS	DIFFICULTY
content	content	language	content
organisation	organisation	content	language
conventions	language	organisation	organisation
language (0)	conventions	conventions	conventions (0)

SO...prioritise content and organisation = useful, important, difficult AND treatable

Issue? Language or content?

- He finds that the independence and expertise of audit committees are significantly negatively related to the incidence of internal control problems.
- This area should be governed.
- Different feedback focus -> different results
- Which more successful?

Positive impact on product

FORM **ELICITATION**; FOCUS **CONTENT** -> **TRANSFER**

Original abstract: The results indicate that independent audit committees and audit committees with financial expertise are significantly less likely to be associated with the incidence of internal control problems.

1st draft: He finds that the independence and expertise of audit committees are significantly negatively related to the incidence of internal control problems.

Think Aloud: now that seems to contradict what she just said...so...re-reads...surely that means...oh alright .oh what a convoluted way of saying it

Feedback: So this concurs with the previous study's findings? (when I have correctly understood '**negatively related to...**')

2nd draft: He found that there were a significant negative relationship between independence and expertise of audit committees and the incidence of internal control problems, which concurred with the previous study's findings from Y Zhang, J Zhou, N Zhou (2007).

Negative impact on product

FORM **ELICITATION**; FOCUS **LANGUAGE** -> **AVOIDANCE**

1st draft: This area should be **governed**.

Think aloud: need to make students think for themselves not correct

Feedback: Are you sure you have the right word here?

Tutorial:

St: This one....you say governed is not a very good verb so I change it
administered

T: Yes or **controlled** maybe...*T reads*...because you say...regulated,
that's the word we want OK so not administered...**regulated**

S: Sometimes I want to make some words synonyms so maybe...

T: Yes, but there are certain collocations especially with specific
language to economics

2nd draft : sentence disappears -> **loss of voice**

Regulated, regulations, rules used elsewhere in both first and final draft

Was formative feedback consistent?

FOCUS	TEACHER 1 (n=16) 343	TEACHER 2 (n=15) 268
LANGUAGE	156 (46%)	215 (80%)
CONTENT	83 (24%)	5 (2%)
ORGANISATION	49 (14%)	10 (4%)
CONVENTIONS	55 (16%)	38 (14%)

FORMULATION	TEACHER 1 (302) -QM	TEACHER 2 (313)
REFERENTIAL	88	117
DIRECTIVE	170	158
EXPRESSIVE	44	38

Focus (re beliefs on nature of EAP)

Formulation (re beliefs of role relationship)

2016: Micro Literature Review

Theory

- Application of learning (LOA)
- Knowledge building
- Time for careful reading

Practice

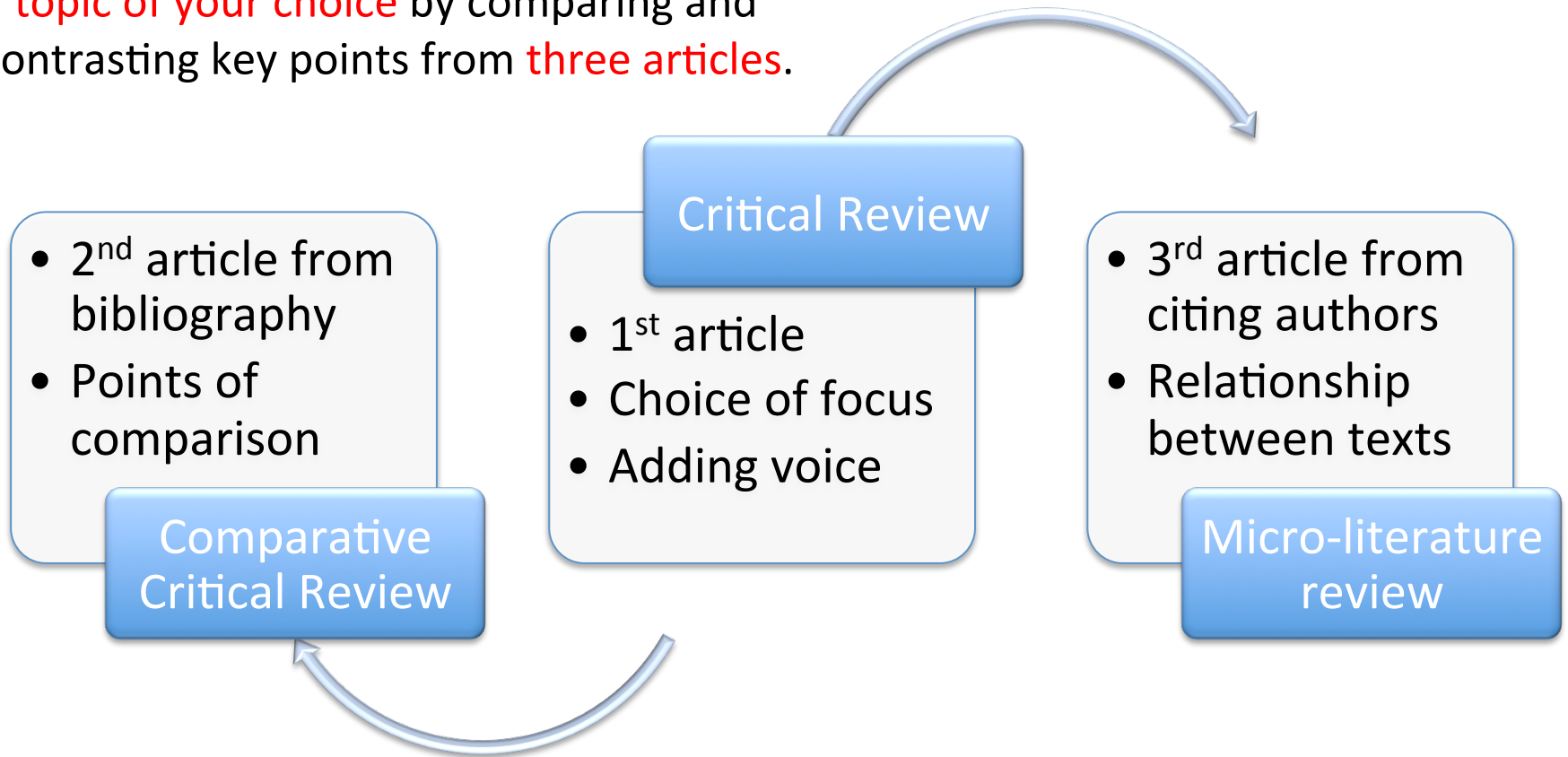
- 3 shorter products (organisation)
- 3 sources (content)
- Includes results as visual summary (oral link)

Evolution

- TLCs (Feedback Fridays)
- Transferability; sustainability

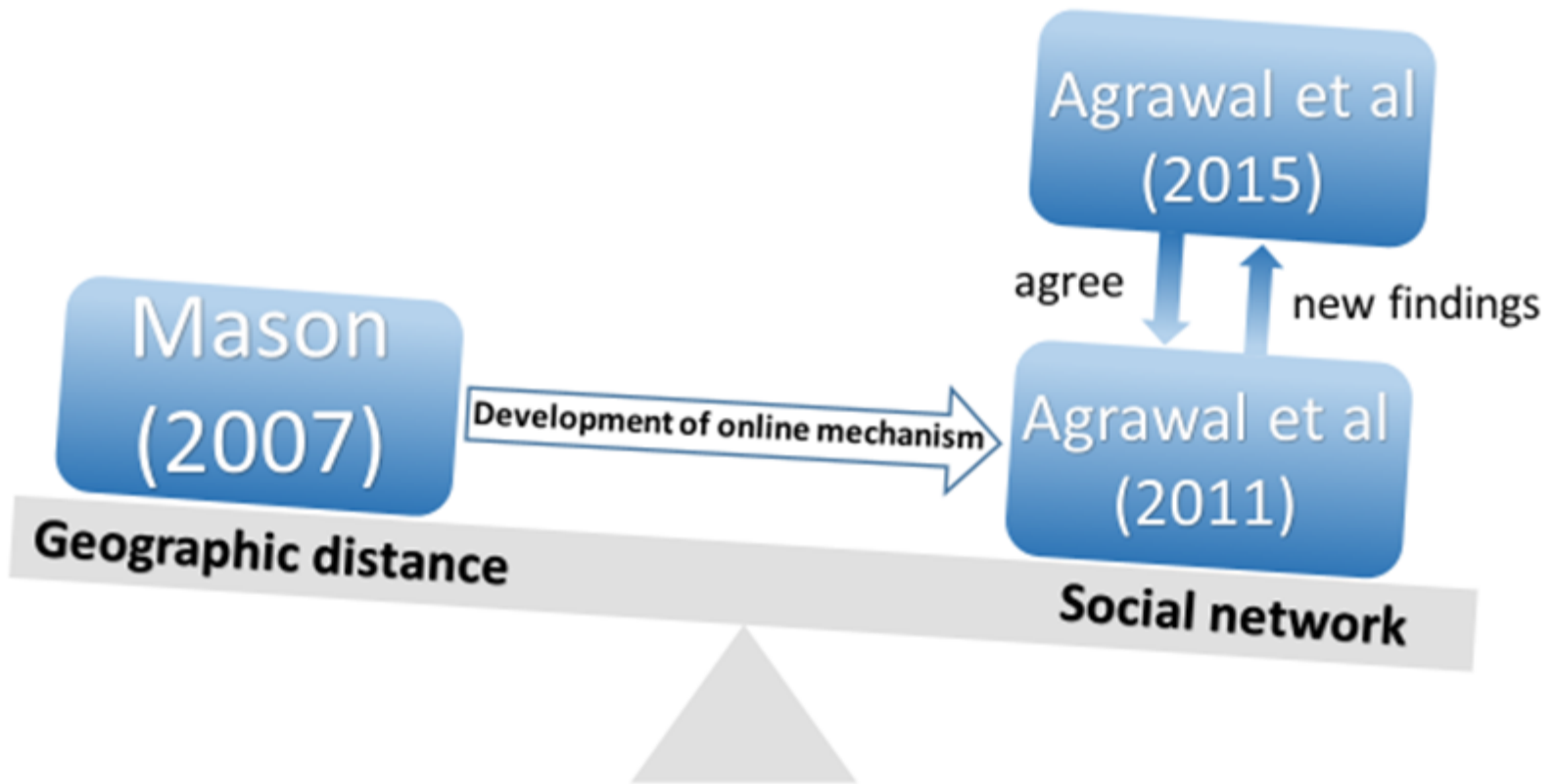
Knowledge Building

Discuss the **development of knowledge** on a **topic of your choice** by comparing and contrasting key points from **three articles**.



Example visualisation

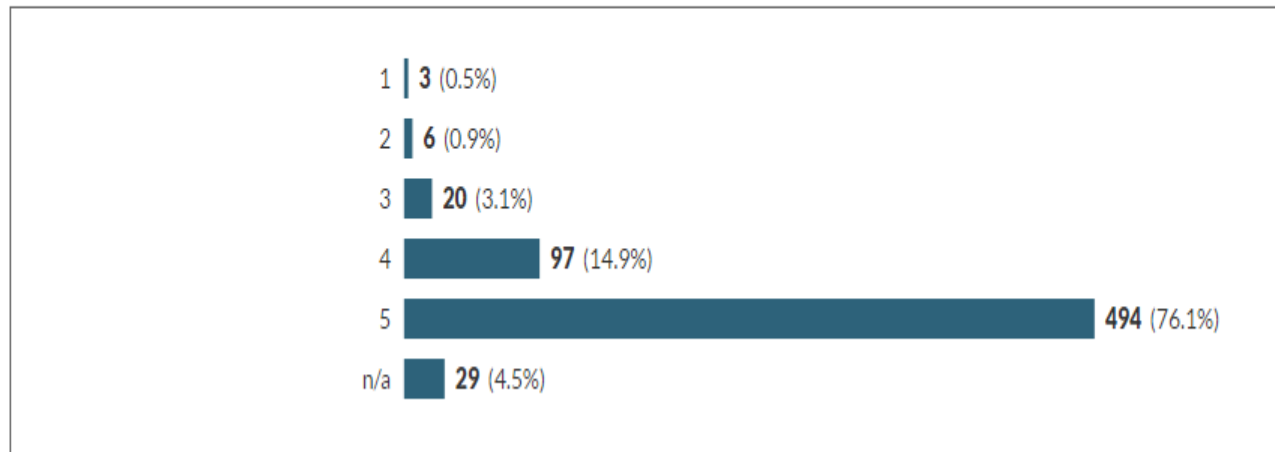
Figure1: The influence of geographic distance on investment decisions in early-stage ventures



How useful did you find the following components of the course?

2.6 Learning to Write (MLR) (Thu 09:30)

2.6.a Learning to Write (MLR) (Thu 09:30) - Not at all useful (1) Very useful (5)



Feedback from students on MLR

- Very useful!!
- Essential important, very very useful to my future study
- it's a big task and tackling it makes me proud of myself.
- this is a brand new experience, and super helpful even it's really difficult
- the whole journey to finish the MLR is amazing. I can learn a lot from it.
- more time on this aspect
- more tutors suggestion and peer review can be done after class

Student ratings of high 5 on usefulness

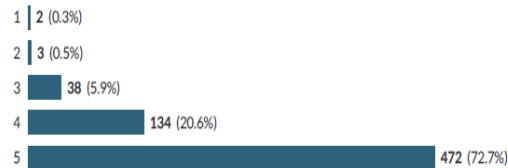
	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
09:30-11:00	Language FOR Writing 74%	Learning to Read And Respond 55.6%	Learning To Listen And Respond 55.9%	Learning to Write (MLR) 76.1%	Learning to Speak 65.6%
11:30-13:00	Lecture: Listening To Learn	Seminar: Speaking To Learn 59%	SAQ: Writing To Learn 73.3%	Learning To Write (SAQ) 71.8%	Language FROM Writing
14:00-16:00	Tutorials 69.8%	Learning To Listen And Respond Social English - 55.3% Subject lectures – 45%		Learning To Be A Successful Student 58%	

Did the assessment help you to learn?

4.3 helped me to learn.

Critical Review (Task 2)

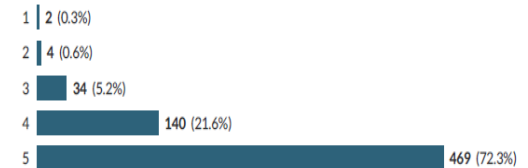
4.3.a helped me to learn. - Strongly Disagree (1) Strongly Agree (5)



5.3 helped me to learn.

Comparative Critical Review (Task 3)

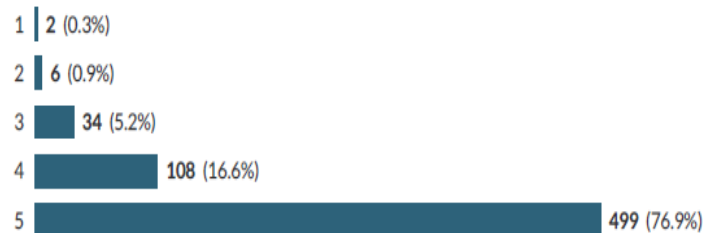
5.3.a helped me to learn. - Strongly Disagree (1) Strongly Agree (5)



6.3 helped me to learn.

Micro Literature Review (Task 4 & 5)

6.3.a helped me to learn. - Strongly Disagree (1) Strongly Agree (5)



‘I knew how to write a critical review, using academic style and words, and also learnt some professional knowledge about the major.’

Which aspects of the pre-sessional programme did you **value most**? Why?

Of 338 comments

222 mentioned writing component (66%)

100 mentioned MLR specifically (30%)

- reasonable tasks and pressure
- I think it is the MRL programme that I learnt a lot. These five tasks are really useful and helpful because they give a good guideline to help me write a MLR step by step.
- It divides the MLR into 5 tasks, from easy to difficult. I think it helps me to finish the final task step by step and makes it easier.
- Five tasks to MLR. This helps me know about the development of knowledge in my major. And it's important to evaluate different resources and write papers in our future study.
- Actually the whole organization of course programme is almost perfect. Every week, we study academic English step by step, meaning that we need to do some small tasks till toward the final exam, such as MLR (five tasks) with a clear goal.
- My favorite part is MRL, because it is a long journey and I can finish it step by step with a clear goal. During the whole process, I really learnt a lot.
- I think the SAQ and MLR really make me learn useful skills which can be used in postgraduate program. Although the process of learning them is so difficult, the outcome is wonderful.

Which aspects of the pre-sessional programme did you **value least**? Why?

Of 304 responses

17 mentioned writing (6%)

7 mentioned MLR (2%)

- The lecture. It is a little boring. And the second lecture is too late, and at that time, we are busy with MLR.
- MLR. We spent too much time on it.
- we put our most attention at MLR , SAQ and presentation. we do need more help to improve our listening skills. there could be more exercise about listening on black board
- Prospective undergraduates and postgraduates are mixed in class. As a prospective undergraduate, I found difficulties on micro literature review due to the lack of knowledge about my major.
- Secondly, the requirements of MLR and SAQs are quite different between tutors and that's a little bit confused.
- MLR. Actually, the requirements of selecting three articles (the former ones must be cited by the latter ones) is comparatively unreasonable. In fact, researchers keen to select articles based on their content firstly rather than their citation relationship.

How do you think the pre-sessional could be improved for future students?

Of 304 comments, 17 mentioned MLR

- **Standardisation**
 - I hear about that students have different instructions from different tutors, which might make students confused. Maybe you could make a very clear standard or map for tutors so that students could have efficient learning experience.
- **Transparency**
 - For the MLR, it could be better if it is well explained what will we do from task 1 to task 5 at the beginning.
- **Time pressure on 6-week course**
 - For a 6-week pre-sessional student, the time for task 5 is very short. We can get our feedback of task 4 on Friday or Saturday and we have to finish task 5 before Monday, so the time is really short. Maybe we can combine task 1 and 2 together and have a long time for the final task.
- Specific eg thesis statements, references, sample for science

Teacher course evaluation

- Massive improvement on literature review from last year
- More *good*, authentic samples (in order to avoid students imitating bad examples, caused lots of problems for tutors); provide samples not related to education theory
- Put FAQs and answers in MLR assessment booklet
- Task 5 unclear – what is the map on? development of knowledge?

Clarity on Task 5:

always check task expectations

- Micro Research Report (social genre)
 - Introduction
 - Method (what and why)
 - Results (visual summary of the relationship)
 - Discussion
- Presentation
 - Intro = rationale for choice of focus
 - Body = visual summary of relationship
 - Conclusion = reflections on the process

Clarity of construct: cognitive genre for teaching and feedback focus

- Application of learning
- Constructive alignment
- Clear focus for/in each task
 - CR = analysis & adding voice
 - CCR = synthesis & labeling voices
 - MLR = argumentation across sections of report
 - answering a research question
 - telling the story – fishbone

ULTIMATE AIM

Building blocks and tools, not templates

- Critical application of learning as appropriate for audience and purpose
- Critical transfer of feedback as appropriate to novel situations

How are we doing?

- MLR task [booklet](#)
- MRR [criteria](#)
- Good [sample](#)

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