Redesigning the EAP Curriculum Using Feedback From Former Students

University-bound ESL students perceive good scores on the TOEFL as the key to their future and expect their instructors to provide the linguistic and test-taking skills needed to improve them. Although instructors know that students need additional academic skills and cultural orientation to do well in an American university, it can be difficult to persuade them that such training is necessary. Believing that IEP students who have transitioned to college can offer valuable insights about what students need to succeed in college, the presenters asked former students to reflect on what they had learned in their IEP classes. Using a questionnaire and follow-up interviews, “alumni” from several advanced English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classes reported on helpful activities and suggested new ones which they thought should be included in future EAP classes.

The presenters will discuss how they used this feedback to create a more meaningful educational experience for their students. They will share the questionnaire and results, explaining how what they learned inspired them to adapt or add activities to help students develop academic skills (such as critical thinking) and survival strategies (such as understanding course syllabi). To add a student voice to the discussion, the presenters will invite a former student who will share her perspectives on the transition process. Participants will be encouraged to contribute their own experiences to this conversation about learning from students’ experiences to plan EAP courses.

This session will give participants an opportunity to look beyond feedback from current students, or evaluations from exiting students, and discuss how the insights of former students can help teachers align course design and instructional activities to serve students better. Participants will receive copies of the questionnaire and results, as well as practical advice for soliciting and using feedback from former students.
Abstract:
What academic skills and survival strategies do students need for college? The presenters discuss how they used a follow-up survey with former EAP students to adapt their curriculum for current students transitioning to university studies. Participants receive copies of the questionnaire used by the presenters as well as students’ responses.