

Evaluation of an EAP Reading Course at the Faculty of Education, Kuwait University

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This paper describes the assessment of the revised objectives of an English reading course offered at the Faculty of Education, Kuwait University. Students generally need English to comprehend texts written in that language, related to their discipline. According to a needs analysis, the course was designed to foster reading comprehension for academic purposes. After implementing these objectives for a year, it was decided to determine if they had been achieved. The results were obtained from pre-and post-tests conducted on 254 students. Analysis of data showed improvement in reading skills. However, there were differences between students from Arts and Science majors. Some recommendations for further modifications are suggested.

INTRODUCTION

Students in Kuwait are taught in their native language, i.e. Arabic. Those who wish to complete their university education and join the Science or Medical Faculties will be instructed in English. Other students in the Faculty of Arts or Education will continue their studies in Arabic. But the latter have to demonstrate their ability to handle the English language used for academic purposes. Upon graduating from secondary school, students have had eight years of English as a foreign language. However, they lack the essential skills in English required to succeed academically. Hence students must take English courses offered by the University which will provide them with the necessary skills to meet the requirement.

This study focuses on the Faculty of Education, since its Language Unit offers two courses in English which every student has to complete as part of the University requirements. Students need English mainly to comprehend texts written in English which are related to their discipline. This paper describes our attempts to determine (i) the extent to which the revised objectives of the first required reading course (English 110) were achieved; (ii) the extent to which the focus on reading for EAP (English for Academic Purposes) enabled student-teachers to acquire reading skills; and (iii) the extent to which there were significant differences between the reading achievements of students majoring in science-related subjects and of students majoring in arts-related subjects.

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