

Students' Perceptions of English Academic Writing: A Needs Analysis of EAP in Vietnam

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Despite the growing demand for academic writing instruction of EFL/ESL learners and the pivotal role of needs analysis in curriculum development, no comprehensive needs analysis of EAP writing has been conducted in Vietnam EFL context. Furthermore, there has been limited exploration into students' understanding of English academic writing and the development of this skill during the writing courses for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the perceptions and needs regarding English academic writing among ELT major students who previously attended 2 IELTS writing courses at a university in Vietnam. The study employs the mixed method design with a survey of 42 students, followed by semi-structured interviews with 5 students from the same group. The findings reveal the students' insufficient understanding of English academic writing, particularly in terms of academic genres, citation styles, and reading-related skills. In addition, when writing academic assignments, the students encountered several issues such as lacking vocabulary, inappropriate word choice, lacking ideas, and writing incoherent paragraphs, which were partially addressed by the IELTS writing courses and self-studying. Reading and engaging with academic literature were also deemed challenging by the students, yet hardly was a measure taken to enhance the skills. These results suggest that the English Department should develop a separate EAP writing course which focuses on unique features of academic writing, academic vocabulary and structures, the relation between reading and writing, as well as the skills of reading and working with academic literature.

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