

NECESSITY OF PROPER EVALUATION IN EAP (ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES) COURSES

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<https://dx.doi.org/10.24071/uc.v6i2.13358>

received 21 August 2025; accepted 11 December 2025

Abstract

The paper shows the necessity of proper evaluation in EAP courses. It focuses on the roles of different stakeholders (learners, instructors, administrators) in evaluating EAP courses and settings, drawing on previously published articles. Further, it focuses on the impacts of evaluation on different stakeholders. This study emphasizes the positive impacts of proper evaluation and the negative impacts of improper evaluation, simultaneously considering the overall academic settings and organizational goals; to identify different variables; a rigorous analysis of the opinions of the participants is made. Besides, different spectacles are added in this paper by analyzing different literature and documents regarding EAP evaluation. Mainly, the focus of the paper is to show how the evaluation of EAP courses acts as a vital factor in academic contexts. As evaluation is one of the pillars of ESP, and proper evaluation can directly show the performances of the learners and instructors and can also show the viability of running a course or program in an academy, all the stakeholders, including administrators, need to remain careful to evaluate the other stakeholders properly and in a well-maintained academic manner. For this research, the qualitative descriptive method was employed. The analysis shows the impact of evaluation on different stakeholders of EAP courses.

Keywords: EAP, evaluation, impact, stakeholders

Introduction

In academic settings, EAP courses are English courses that are supposed to meet the specific academic needs of students of different departments, precisely “non-English major students” (Wang, 2022, p. 134). Evaluation is the method to measure the academic proficiency of different stakeholders. Without a proper evaluation by “ensuring fairness and inclusivity (Cheng, 2017, as cited in Farid, Fakhruddin, & Dalle, 2024, p. 409), different stakeholders may lose their motivation, and an EAP course may lose all its extrinsic values; learners, instructors, and administrators all may focus on intrinsic values which will make an EAP course a monotonous process of a mere formality. Whereas the purpose of EAP courses is to tailor instruction to specific rather than general purposes (Pandey, 2019, p. 1). Proper evaluation will facilitate the learners because they will remain motivated if



they can score according to their efforts and expectations. Instructors of EAP courses should be evaluated based on how much improvement the learners are making, which is aligned with the total academic goal. Moreover, the concept of “evaluation between ‘good’ and ‘weak’ students” (Maizatulliza & Kiely, 2017, p. 212) needs to be analyzed.

From different research articles regarding evaluation frameworks of EAP courses, it seems that proper evaluations of learners, quality of instructors, and the EAP courses are equally important. A proper evaluation system needs to be “designed, implemented, monitored” (Islam, Hasan, Sultana, Karim, & Rahman, 2021, p. 1) in academic settings, though there are some limitations. Administrators sometimes allot the instructors very limited time to evaluate the learners. For the instructors, it is very hard to properly diagnose the lack of learners within a short timeframe. “Reliability, validity, practicality” (Brown, 1989) and authenticity of evaluation can hardly be maintained with a constrained number of resources and limited time. Moreover, “the ongoing linguistic revolution, and the need to focus on the learner” (Pešić & Jokačević, 2024, p. 890) must be analyzed during EAP course evaluation. Sometimes administrators who are supposed to evaluate the instructors and the overall progress may lack knowledge of EAP settings, as they sometimes offer different foundation courses, which are EAP courses only for increasing the credit hours in an academic program. As English is the “language of globalization” (Sharndama, Samaila, & Tsojon, 2014, as cited in Basak, 2016, p. 48), it became a specialized sector in English Education.

However, in some cases, some pre-sessional courses or non-credit courses are offered by institutions; most of the time, administrators focus on institutional profit more than the quality of those courses; the overall evaluation process of EAP courses of the institutions that value profit more than quality is thus malfunctioned. The most important stakeholders are the learners who face the impact of EAP courses; evaluation of the credit courses directly affects their academic results. A drop in academic education may have a long-lasting impact on the professional career of the learners. Another fact that should be taken into consideration is whether the courses that are offered are well evaluated to support the “necessity, lacks, and wants” (Anthony, 2018, p. 47) of different stakeholders. Administrators must evaluate the necessity of the course and must ensure the proper settings where EAP instructors can conduct reliable, valid, practical, and authentic tests, which will be helpful for “diagnostic, formative, and summative” (Anthony, 2018, p. 124) assessment of the learners.

The paper aims to show the impacts of evaluation on different stakeholders and the importance of proper evaluation. This paper attempts to prove that conducting a continuous process of proper evaluation can highly facilitate the academic goals; on the other hand, incorrect evaluation will create a collapse in the academic goals, and the reputation of the academy will be highly damaged. The major academic goal of the EAP course is to develop “students’ ability to follow lectures” (Taylor & Geranpayeh, 2011, as cited in O’Grady, Rotsinger, & Carver, 2025, p. 1). To support this idea, the study will focus on the role of instructors in evaluating the learners and the academic settings; the role of the administrators and learners in giving proper feedback to evaluate the instructors correctly; and the current situation of the evaluation system and its impact.

Method

This is a qualitative descriptive study based on the already existing literature on EAP courses. The research rationale is that it places the impact and necessity of proper evaluation in EAP courses. The research question is “What is the importance of proper evaluation for different stakeholders of EAP courses?” This research, named “Necessity of Proper Evaluation in EAP Courses” is intended to show how different stakeholders are related in the process of evaluation, and the impact of evaluation on different stakeholders of EAP courses at the tertiary level. This research is done considering socio-cultural, economic, and political perspectives. Most of the research studies that were done previously focused on specific stakeholders. This research is done considering the perspectives of all the stakeholders. Most of the existing literature evaluates the ESP or EAP courses; this study will be focused on the roles of different stakeholders: the role of instructors to properly evaluate the courses and learners, the role of administrators to evaluate the necessity of a course and quality of instruction, and the role of learners to understand the academic settings to perform well to get good grades. Grade plays a vital role that directly impacts the learners. This research shows how proper evaluation can be motivating for the learners, which will eventually be helpful. This research also exhibits how demotivating a namesake and improper evaluation system can be for different stakeholders. This research discusses both the positive impacts of proper evaluation and the negative impacts of improper evaluation simultaneously; the previous research, most of the time, was linear. Some of the previous studies have been analyzed below.

Tsou and Chen (2014) discussed program evaluation from the perspective of Taiwan. In their paper, they mentioned proper planning and implementation of those plans, which are crucial for the continuous improvement of an ESP program. They noted that program evaluation is crucial for measuring and ensuring the goals of an ESP program. Then they discussed two levels of evaluation from Hutchinson and Waters (1987), where both course evaluation and learners’ assessment are noted. For evaluating the course's importance, data collection has been mentioned, which will reflect how much learning needs are met. For learners’ assessment, different types of tests, such as “placement, achievement, and proficiency” tests, are suggested in their paper. The researchers analyzed Watanabe, Norris, and Gonzalez-Lloret (2009) and discussed “the positive aspects of evaluation” with a note of “professional accountability, and teacher empowerment”. Positive and effective evaluation should not be just the process of evaluating different stakeholders; the aim of evaluation should be to establish a beneficial process that will facilitate all stakeholders. While discussing course evaluation, Tsou and Chen considered whether the course is fulfilling the needs of the learners, the authenticity of the course, and the autonomy of the learners. They gave importance to teachers’ participation and empowerment, which is important for proper evaluation. They included an analysis of different stakeholder groups, such as groups of sponsors, advisors, teachers, and students. They demonstrated that learners’ evaluations will provide only “partial information” and thus evaluations of other stakeholders are also equally important. They emphasized the necessity of teachers’ empowerment, hiring proficient EAP teachers, and inclusion of specialist professors. They noted Scherie (2002) to show the importance of teachers’ need for clarity, role expectations, and job satisfaction, which is connected to their performance

standards. They showed how a positive framework for instructors' empowerment is related to the overall success of a course. They also noted the weakness of their framework as the measurement required for evaluating all the stakeholders can hardly be met at once. They claimed their approach towards the participation and empowerment of the instructors as the strength of their framework, besides evaluating the course and learners.

Bilal and Gul (2014) focused on the obstacles and impact of the grading system of evaluation in a research article. They noted that evaluation reflects the effectiveness and quality of learning. They also mentioned some affective factors, such as "stress and anxiety" created by the evaluation and grading system. Further, they mentioned the fact that evaluation has an impact on learners' motivation. Though the researchers did not focus on EAP, they mentioned general aspects of evaluation and grading systems that have significant impacts on learners' autonomy and motivation.

Üstünel and Kaplan (2015) collected feedback from freshman undergraduate students to evaluate EAP courses. They attempted to analyze the data to meet the needs of the students and improve their success rate in "academic endeavors". They collected qualitative and quantitative data from the students' perspectives and suggestions, and offered some implications for their improvement. In their research, they noted that EAP programs are supposed to help students use English for communication and academic purposes. They attempted to evaluate the EAP courses from the perspectives of the students to determine whether the course materials, assessments, and instructions are appropriate or not. According to their research, efficiency and effectiveness highly depend on program evaluation. They noted Richards (2001) that evaluation is about "collecting information about different aspects of a language program to understand how the program works and how successfully it works, enabling different kinds of decisions to be made." Then they noted evaluation as a process "to guide classroom instruction and enhance student learning on a day-to-day basis" (Genesee, 2001, p. 146). After that, they discussed different aspects and the necessity of formative and summative evaluations. Further, the researchers noted post-course evaluation, which can give an idea about the effectiveness of the EAP course, whether the course and evaluation were "well-planned and well-conducted" or not. Then they again emphasized the fact that learners' feedback is highly valuable for evaluating an EAP course. They further investigated the "strengths, weaknesses, adaptations, and alterations" of a course to evaluate whether the course is facilitating or not. Besides considering the learners' feedback, the researchers also considered the teachers' perspectives. They suggested the collaborative efforts of both teachers and students, which will be useful for better decisions and better evaluation of the course. In the section named "Testing and Assessment" of the research, they suggested from the analysis of their quantitative data that the "evaluation system required improvement". In that section, they also mentioned students' problems with the existing test, assessment system, and examinations. Some of the students complained they were not getting the chance to learn from their mistakes, as sometimes some instructors and administrators did not provide them the chance to see their examination scripts to know about their mistakes and which area of that EAP course they should focus more on. The concluding suggestion of that study was that students' assessment systems need some sort of improvement, and the

students may be given the chance to attend sample examinations. The validity of the formative and summative assessments may be evaluated by considering the feedback of the learners and the consistency between examinations and EAP objectives.

Umar (2018), in his study, discussed the impact of assessment on learners; assessment is a part of evaluation. According to him, “students’ perception attitude” toward the assessment has a major influence on their achievements. He analyzed both qualitative and quantitative data to show the attitude of students toward assessment. He showed in research that assessment is not just a process to evaluate the learners; it also opens up the path for modifying the system of instruction to achieve better results. Assessment is a continuous process of evaluating, where the students get the chance to identify their shortcomings. Instructors also understand the importance of correct feedback, where the learners get the opportunity of “self-assessment and self-correction”. He investigated how assessment helps improve the performance of learners. He also noted that not every time are the learning outcomes satisfactory. If the assessment does not facilitate correction, the learners may also face failure in the end-of-course assessment. Previously, the results of the students were highly dependent on the summative assessment, but nowadays, continuous assessment plays an important role in improving students’ academic performance. The reason behind that is this type of assessment helps the students to come out of fear, “anxiety, and tension” of examinations.

Çelik (2018) mentioned the significant role of evaluation in ESP courses; she focused on students’ end-of-course evaluation in her research. In her research, she collected quantitative and qualitative data from the students to analyze whether the ESP course maximized the learning of the learners. She commented that anything and everything that can facilitate learning can be evaluated, whether formally or informally, and all stakeholders related to the ESP course can be evaluated. She mentioned Hutchinson and Waters (1987), who expressed their apprehension about whether the information gathered from different stakeholders is appropriate or not, because not all stakeholders may express their feelings and are often cautious about criticizing the higher authorities. Fear of prejudiced assessment and evaluation cannot be ignored. In her study, she mentioned various timeframes of evaluation, such as evaluation of initial impressions, end-of-course evaluation, or after-course evaluation, as different aspects of learners and their learning progress can be evaluated from their feedback. Quite a few times, she mentioned the scarcity of research on the evaluation of ESP courses in her study. In her mixed-method research, she showed most of the students wanted some improvements in the course, which “would ease the exams”.

This concern of examination cannot be ignored; instructors of the ESP courses need to remain aware of that fact and need to arrange valid assessment methods. She concluded her study with the note that learners’ awareness is one of the most significant aspects of evaluating a course, and their active involvement has a significant impact on their assessment and evaluation.

Anthony (2018) mentioned evaluation as one of the pillars of ESP. He discussed various aspects of evaluation, including the courses and programs, the roles of different stakeholders, and, most importantly, the impact of evaluation on different stakeholders. He also emphasized the importance of “transparency, honesty, and trust” between different stakeholders. He noted different formats of

assessment; besides, he mentioned how different formats of evaluation have different impacts on the learners. He also discussed how grades can influence the lives of the learners. He pointed out how impactful the end-of-course tests are, and thus, this type of test is not usually preferred by the learners. The students also remain conscious about the transparency and fairness of the evaluation. Then, Anthony noted some characteristics of effective evaluation from Brown (1989); these are “reliability, validity, and practicality”. Reliability is noted as the repetition of similar results by different tests under similar circumstances. Validity is noted as measuring what is supposed to be measured in a particular test. Practicality is noted as the feasibility of the test under the given setting. Then he also noted the evaluation of the instructors and the role of administration in this process. Administrators are also responsible for evaluating and maintaining whether the instructors can help the learners meet their learning goals.

Amin and Greenwood (2018) discussed the examination system and its impact on different stakeholders and settings. The examination is a type of evaluation that is intended to test the “knowledge and skills” of the learners, but in that study, it is noted that the examination system has an influence on academic and even non-academic settings. The study shows both “educational and societal pressures” of high-stakes testing. The study also shows how examinations play a dominant role in “English language teaching and learning”. Further, it shows how examinations are connected with various social factors.

Findings and Discussion

The study of published papers reveals that the impact of evaluation varies among different learners, which is an obvious fact. However, most learners or participants who were previously enrolled in EAP courses agreed that the evaluation had a notable impact on their motivation. Grades of EAP courses, in some cases, are added while computing the overall CGPA of the students. Results of the EAP courses thus matter in a significant way for the learners’ motivation. Most students feel motivated if they get moderate or good grades; on the other hand, getting poor grades makes them feel demoralized because poor grades in EAP courses hurt their overall academic results. Sometimes the learners are supposed to take 2-4 EAP courses in their freshman year, so these courses play a big role in their foundation year CGPA.

Motivation and opportunities for self-correction can be an effective tool for facilitating the formation of autonomous learners. “Gathering information about students’ needs and preferences” (Graves quoted in Floris, 2008, p.54) is also a vital aspect to be considered. Proper evaluation of students’ coursework is thus very important because improper evaluation can demoralize the learners and narrow their paths of self-correction. Moreover, in the case of biased evaluation, it not only decreases the motivation of the learners but also hinders the autonomous learning process; besides that, it is academically totally unethical to evaluate students in a biased manner. So, ethically, there is no scope for biased evaluation in academia, and a transparent evaluation process can facilitate unbiased evaluation.

In some educational settings, evaluation is merely a means, “a device of measurement” (Das, 2019, p. 27) of students’ performance. Instructors have to take on various roles in the evaluation process. Not only are the results and marks the variables for evaluation, but also the course and course materials are notable works

that are dominantly done by the instructors. Basically, in an EAP setting, the instructor plays the role of creating a connection between learners and the overall academic goals set by the administrators. The more challenging part of the evaluation is making a proper assessment of all the students in EAP courses. All the participants of this research are involved in at least two EAP courses, and the instructors are given a very short time to evaluate the examination scripts of the learners before publishing the final results. As instructors, they understand that proper evaluation is necessary, not only as their professional responsibility but also for keeping up the motivation level of the learners at a high level. They also understand that improper evaluation of any part of the assessment process can have a notable negative impact on the motivation of the learners, which may hinder the path of creating autonomous learners.

The administration, examination controlling body, and IQAC all share the same responsibility for ensuring proper evaluation of EAP. These bodies are not directly involved in the evaluation of the students; rather, they provide the instructors with a guideline to organize the scale or weight of marks in different categories, like quizzes, assignments, presentations, midterm examinations, and finals. The IQAC needs to “initiate, plan and direct” (Manikamma, 2019, p. 1262) the teachers about the evaluation of the students in EAP courses. The more significant part the administrators play is that of evaluating the teachers. “Rethinking the role of language assessment and testing” is also proposed by scholars (Elder & Davies, mentioned by Schmitz, 2012, p. 250). Teachers who teach EAP courses are most of the time fresh graduates with the designation of lecturer at that university. That means the university administration does not interfere with the respective department to appoint more experienced teachers, and the respective department also does not usually appoint experienced teachers for foundation or fundamental English courses. The administrators should consider the evaluation of both stakeholders with equal importance. The proper evaluation of the students helps to maintain the quality of graduates; the proper evaluation of the instructors ensures the quality of education; and the administration of the universities should try their best to maintain balanced settings so that all the stakeholders benefit from the academic settings, which may help the stakeholders to contribute towards the overall institutional goal.

From the analysis of data, the necessity of proper evaluation seems very important for all stakeholders. “The correlation between scores on standardized ELP tests and academic achievement” (Barkaoui, Holmes, & Viegen, 2025, p. 2) is a considerable issue. Evaluation has both instant and long-lasting impacts on all the stakeholders. Instant impact is visible in the CGPA of a student, and the trimester scholarship is also influenced by CGPA. The long-lasting impact of a poor grade in EAP courses is that a poor CGPA also affects future study opportunities of the students by limiting their chances for higher studies; this fact is quite true. Besides that, a poor CGPA also has an impact on the job opportunities of a person. The fact here is that a poor grade in EAP courses not only impacts the trimester result but also has a long-term impact. That is why the instructors of EAP courses need to evaluate the learners in a proper and, if possible, transparent method. That may enhance the chance of creating motivated learners with the ability of self-correction; the students may get a better opportunity of achieving a good result, which may enlarge their career opportunities too in the long run.

Furthermore, learners are not the only stakeholders of EAP courses who are evaluated. The instructors of EAP courses are also evaluated by the administration with the feedback of the learners. As proper evaluation of the learners is necessary for the formation of autonomous learners, proper evaluation of the instructors must be made to empower them and to create a feeling of job satisfaction. Like the learners' evaluation, the evaluation of the instructors also has a direct impact on their careers. So, both the administration and the learners need to be impartial during their feedback. Otherwise, the whole process of quality education will be hampered, because without the empowerment of the instructors, the formation of autonomous learners is quite impossible.

The role of administration is also quite important for establishing a proper evaluation system. The instructors who are new to EAP courses can be guided by the seniors of the respective departments so that the instructors can understand the standard of grading in the institution. The IQAC can also have some consultation with learners, instructors, and administrators to provide their suggestions about the quality of education maintained by proper evaluation of all the stakeholders. Besides that, in most cases, the administrators are responsible for creating the proper setting for learning and teaching, and proper technological and logistical support for proper evaluation must be ensured by the administrative body. So, the role of the administrative body to support other stakeholders and their evaluation process cannot be ignored to meet the overall academic and organizational goals.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, different aspects of evaluation in EAP courses are notable. As evaluation is an inseparable part of EAP and ESP frameworks, the evaluation of EAP courses at the tertiary level of education must be done properly and efficiently. All the stakeholders need to maintain a level of collaborative progress for reaching the academic goal, and to accomplish this, an evaluation of all stakeholders and settings must be done in a professional, unbiased, and fair manner. Both the learners and instructors need to be ethical and fair to evaluate each other, and the administration needs to speculate and ensure the settings for both stakeholders to ensure academic integrity.

One of the biggest challenges of implementing a proper evaluation framework in EAP is the lack of collaboration between different stakeholders. From different analyses, it seems that the stakeholders usually do not freely express their feelings about other stakeholders who are in a higher position. Lack of communication and collaboration thus takes place between different stakeholders because of the power relations. The discrepancy in the evaluation system is also an outcome of that imbalance in the power relation. This discrepancy can be minimized if, instead of the power imbalance, the academic and the administrative bodies cooperate. Cooperative work by different stakeholders will also open up the path for proper evaluation of different stakeholders, which may ultimately lead the institute to reach its ultimate goal of establishing quality education.

As EAP courses lay the foundation for the students in their medium of instruction in English, the quality of these courses should not be compromised. Otherwise, the learners may feel the lack of basic English knowledge in their upcoming educational life. Furthermore, collective progress must be gained by forming a proper standard of academic evaluation. All the stakeholders must remain

honest and unbiased to evaluate other stakeholders to create a situation where team spirit must be fostered by motivated participants of EAP courses, and the administration must ensure the proper academic setting with updated frameworks. Besides that, as improper evaluation of the learners and the instructors can have a long-lasting impact on their future, the administration must keep all the stakeholders of EAP courses under proper surveillance so that improper evaluation of any stakeholder does not take place. Otherwise, the goal of the institution cannot be met correctly. This paper does not include a lot of data. For further research on the necessity of proper evaluation in EAP, more qualitative data can be collected to make a proper analysis and add different perspectives to the research. Moreover, quantitative data can also be collected on this topic to come up with numerical facts of evaluation and its impact on different stakeholders. Besides that, a mixed-method research framework can also be established by collecting qualitative data and quantitative data and comparing those with different documents and research related to EAP evaluation. Further research may include more data to conduct large-scale research, and the impact of evaluation on different EAP stakeholders can be elaborately presented in that research to provide a better suggestion by analyzing the opinions of more participants.

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