

2. The significance of sociolinguistic backgrounds of teachers of IELTS Test preparation courses in selected Malaysian institutions

Authors

Carol Gibson
University of South Australia

Anne Swan
Canterbury Christ Church University, UK

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ABSTRACT

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This research investigates the teaching of IELTS Test preparation classes in Malaysia. It focuses on the linguistic, social and cultural values which different teachers bring to the classroom and to washback into the curriculum.

This research investigated the teaching of IELTS Test preparation classes in Malaysia. Malaysia has been ranked 7th in a list of top 25 IELTS Test locations worldwide (*IELTS Review 2002*). This ethnographic study focused on the linguistic, social and cultural values which different teachers bring to the IELTS Test practice classroom and to washback into the curriculum according to the requirements of IELTS Test preparation and associated academic and social language skills.

We visited six institutions which held IELTS Test practice classes. These were both public and private, located in and around the Kuala Lumpur area and in the state of Pahang. Within these institutions, 92 students completed questionnaires and we interviewed nine teachers. As the student questionnaires were researcher-administered in all centres but one, the return was high (90%). Of these 92 students, 47 claimed Bahasa Malaysia as the first language (with most having English as another language), 30 claimed Chinese, Mandarin or Cantonese as the first language (with most having English as another language), the remainder claimed a mixture of Tamil, Punjabi, Indonesian, Burmese, Persian, English (one student) and Malaysian ethnic languages.

Within this context, the relevance of the term 'non-native speaker teacher' was revisited alongside the suggestion that the richness of multilingual speech communities should be better appreciated by centre-based researchers than is currently the case. We found that the teachers' varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds enabled them to understand the relevance of the IELTS Test in their programs, institutions and in their country, and hence to teach its skills appropriately. Furthermore, despite not being familiar with the term 'washback', both teachers and students commented in detail on the positive effects they perceived the Test to have on the Malaysian teaching/learning environment.

Finally, we discovered that teachers working in this region had a strong desire for more specific information about the IELTS Test and candidate assessment; they felt that such information would enable them to provide better guidance for their students.

Note: Ethnic backgrounds Malaysia

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic, multilingual country with a population of about 23.27 million people (according to the 2000 census). Although at least a hundred languages are used daily, (Gaudart 2003), there are three principal languages in use: Bahasa Melayu, Chinese (which in itself is represented by both Mandarin and Cantonese and other dialects) and Tamil.

Special note should be made here concerning the nationality, ethnic background and linguistic background of the students. Of the colleges we involved in this research, one had enrolments restricted to Bumiputera (Malays and natives of Sarawak and Sabah). Private institutions had varied enrolments of Malay, Chinese and Indian Malaysians as well as students from other countries (Iran, Mongolia, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Myanmar, PR China, Morocco, Somalia, French New Guinea, Nigeria, Pakistan and Vietnam). In the case of Chinese, some claimed to speak Mandarin, some Cantonese and others nominated an all-encompassing Chinese. Of interest, some of the students from other countries claimed to be studying English in an English-speaking country (Malaysia).

AUTHOR BIODATA

CAROL GIBSON

Carol Gibson has a PhD in Sociolinguistics and has been an ESOL teacher and teacher trainer for many years. She has collaborated on previous IELTS research, has been an IELTS Test Examiner since the inception of the Test in 1989 and is currently an Examiner Trainer. She has lived and worked in Thailand, Cambodia and Japan, including providing IELTS Test training and assessing. She is co-author (with colleagues Anne Swan and Wanda Rusek) of three separate IELTS Test practice books, two published in Australia and one in China.

ANNE SWAN

Anne Swan is currently a PhD candidate at Canterbury Christ Church University, UK. She is researching the strengths that multilingual teachers of English bring to the profession and has recently presented papers at international conferences in the UK and Mexico on this topic. At the time of this research, she was developing a three-year transnational program in Malaysia for native Malay (Bumiputera) students. Before that, she worked in Italy, the UK, Australia and Japan. She has been an IELTS Examiner since 1989 and has taught and developed IELTS training courses in Australia, Japan and Malaysia, in addition to assessing candidates in all of these countries. With colleagues, Carol Gibson and Wanda Rusek, she has written IELTS Test practice materials for publication in Australia and China.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The debates and discussions over the different expressions used to describe the changes, movements and spread of the English language over the past 50 years are too complex to fully describe in this report. However, such background is important to our discussion of how English teaching, learning and usage are situated in Malaysia.

Briefly, Tan (2005) in a discussion on the policies of English as a Malaysian language refers to non-Anglo Englishes (Schneider 2004) or ESL (English as a Second Language (Schneider 2004), English as an International Language (Jenkins 2000, Alptekin, 2002), English as a Global Language (Crystal 2003), World Englishes (Jenkins 2003), World English (Brutt Griffler 2002), the definitive explanation of the inner, outer and expanding circles (Kachru 1986) and, finally, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (Seidlhofer 2003, 2005) which is described as a contact language between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen or necessary foreign language of communication, such, for example, as used in hundreds of international organisations. (For more detailed studies of how English has spread and become to be seen as a global, international, world language and/or a lingua franca, see Kachru 1986; Quirk 1985; Brutt-Griffler 2002; Crystal 2003; Jenkins 2000, 2003; Widdowson 2003; Seidlhofer 2003, 2005, Holliday 2005, among many others. These expressions can be extended to more pertinent and particular descriptions which include the varieties of English used in different regions, countries or contexts.)

Brutt-Griffler (2002) suggests that there are 1.5 to 2 billion speakers of English in the world. By speakers of English, we understand she means people who speak English in some context or another in their daily life. Of these, at least 80% belong to what she terms a bilingual group of speakers, that is that 80% of the users of English also speak at least one other language on a daily basis. (Brutt-Griffler, 2002). This belief is supported by other linguists such as London (2001), who gives the figure of 3 billion people throughout the world who have knowledge of English and can be considered to be users of English. Crystal (2003) claims that a quarter of the world's population is fluent or competent in English and gives statistics of the number of English users by country (pp 62-63). Jenkins (2006) claims that through the sheer numbers using English as an international language, most of the meaningful interactions occur between non-native speakers rather than between either native speakers or between a native speaker and a non-native speaker. English can be seen as having social and economic prestige, (Pennycook, 1994), or more recently, that it is widely accepted as the language of science and technology (Crystal 2003). Crystal reports a count by the British Council claiming that 1 billion people around the world are currently engaged in learning English. According to London (2001), among others, the ability to communicate in English can help to provide entry to the labour market in many parts of the world.

Seidlhofer (2005) believes that because English does function as a global lingua franca, we need to accept that English is being shaped at least as much by its non-native speakers as by its native speakers. She adds that 'this has led to a somewhat paradoxical situation: on the one hand, for the majority of users, English is a foreign language, and the vast majority of verbal exchanges in English do not involve any native speakers of the language at all'. At the same time there is still a tendency for native speakers to be regarded as custodians over what is acceptable usage. This view is also supported by Pennycook (1994), Widdowson (2003), Crystal (2003), Brutt-Griffler (2002), Holliday (2005) and Jenkins (2006). As Jenkins says:

...there seems to be no good reason for speakers from the outer or expanding circles to continue to defer to the NSs of the Inner Circle... (Jenkins 2006, p 43)

And Hung (2002) says that since English is being used more and more as a tool of communication among people who speak English as a second or foreign language, we should look at the issue of

‘international intelligibility’ not from the viewpoint of speakers of traditional varieties of English but from a truly international perspective.

1.1 Native and non-native teachers of English

Teachers are in the front line in facilitating the language acquisition process and therefore in understanding the required standard which will lead individual students to reach their goal.

Holliday (2005) sees this as the ‘we’ and ‘they’ discussion. He uses the inclusive ‘we’ to mean all teachers, academics, curriculum developers, writers, publishers and so on, who are involved worldwide in the work of what he refers to as World TESOL. Holliday notes that the commonly accepted terms ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ speaker:

...fail to recognise that many varieties of English in Kachru’s outer circle countries, such as Singapore, are spoken not only as official languages but also in the home...that English is often one of several languages available in the repertoires of the multilingual populations of, for example, India and African countries...[where] it is often difficult to ascertain which language is a person’s L1 and which is their L2. These accepted understandings of native and non-native speaker perpetuate the idea that monolingual/native speaker is the norm, when, in fact, precisely the opposite is true of the world at large.

(Jenkins 2000, pp 8-9, citing Brown and Bisong, cited in Holliday 2005, pp 4-5)

Cook (1999) argues that:

...language teaching would benefit by paying attention to the L2 user rather than concentrating primarily on the native speaker. It suggests ways in which language teaching can apply an L2 model and exploit the students’ L1. The most important argument here is that because L2 users differ from monolingual native speakers in their knowledge of the L2s and L1s and in some of their cognitive processes, they should be considered as speakers in their own right, not as approximations to monolingual native speakers. In the classroom, teachers can recognize this status by incorporating goals based on L2 users in the outside world, bringing L2 user situations and roles into the classroom, deliberately using the students’ L1 in teaching activities, and looking to descriptions of L2 users or L2 learners rather than descriptions of native speakers as a source of information. The main benefits of recognizing that L2 users are speakers in their own right, however, will come from students’ and teachers’ having a positive image of L2 users rather than seeing them as failed native speakers.

(Cook 1999, p 185)

Indeed, Alptekin (2002) suggests that with its standardised native speaker norms, the model is ‘utopian, unrealistic, and constraining’ in relation to English as an International Language (EIL). His reasoning is based on the widely held belief that there is only one perception of the native speaker’s language and culture. This perception does not reflect the lingua franca status of English and ultimately constrains both teacher and learner autonomy. He suggests that a new concept of ‘English as a world language’ is needed which includes both local and international contexts as settings of language use, and which would involve native–non-native and non-native–non-native discourse participants, as well as native–native. Competent users of the language would include those who are bilingual and who have intercultural or cross-cultural awareness.

1.2 Pedagogic considerations

In the traditional model of English in the international context the ‘non-native’ user is normally situated along what has been called the ‘interlanguage’ continuum with the ‘native’ speaker as the point of reference. The language of the non-native user is normally assessed against this native speaker standard. (For in-depth discussions on this, see Rampton (1990), Pennycook (1994), Jenkins (2000, 2006), Hamp-Lyons and Zheng (2001), Seidlhofer (2005).) If claims can be made that English should only be taught in English and by native speakers, then the English-speaking core is able to maintain a strong hold over the production of language textbooks and English teaching methodology. Holliday (2005) uses the term ‘native-speakerism’ to describe the inherent prejudices which allow the native speaker model to dominate.

Indeed, it has been pointed out that many materials in Western textbooks are inappropriate for the Malay/Muslim world (eg Pennycook 1994). There is an argument that Western-produced textbooks remain ethnocentric and give little consideration to the sociocultural contexts in which they may be used. Teaching methodologies are cultural practices that occur within specific contexts and imply particular understandings of: language; teacher and student roles; the importance of (student-initiated) speaking in class; what are desirable topics for speech; reading practices; what constitutes a well-written text; learning as a fun activity; education as learner-centred as opposed to teacher-centred; the importance of ‘authentic texts’ and activities; motivation as an autonomous subject’s desire to speak; plagiarism as a crime; correct grammar being less important than the courage to speak; and so on.

Ha (2004) and Nambiar (2005) both assert that cultural practice within classrooms in some countries, (Malaysia, for example) is contrary to Western concepts of successful interpersonal communication. Many Malaysians consider it rude to interrupt others when they are speaking and therefore find it very difficult. When they finally get the courage to speak up, it can be abrupt and shocking and appear out of context. This may have strong relevance to test preparation which includes debate and opinion-offering in speaking tests.

The issue of standardisation of the language and what forms are presented in the classroom is most crucial and complex when it comes to an international test. Whatever the individual student goal – whether studying English for business, career, education or migration – English is seen as a vital asset to reach that goal. Therefore it would seem that the standard of English needs to reflect the ultimate desired usage of the language.

Jenkins (2005) says that where tests of English are concerned, the status quo leads to the situation where candidates taking tests which claim to have international currency (and she gives examples), may be penalised for using internationally-communicative forms of the language. Indeed, she claims that very often testing practice inhibits the teaching of accommodation and convergence strategies by discouraging the use of forms (written as well as spoken in the case of lexicogrammar) which are not standard in native speaker English but which may nevertheless be communicatively efficient and acceptable in non-native speaker interactions.

2 THE IELTS TEST IN MALAYSIA AND THE AIMS OF THIS STUDY

The true power of tests is in the pedagogical benefits they offer in the form of feedback leading to more effective teaching and learning. (Shohamy 2004, p 89)

The IELTS Test has been in operation worldwide for over 16 years and has grown in acceptance for both university entrance and for migration purposes. The role of test preparation and the associated implications of washback into classroom activities and curriculum development have, in turn, expanded.

Statistics show that more non-native English-speaking teachers of English are preparing students for the IELTS Test around the world. In addition, many of these teachers have had no direct experience with the IELTS Test (that is, many have never taken a test nor undertaken Examiner training and have never seen an actual test).

The aim of this research was to identify the sociolinguistic background of the teachers of the IELTS Test practice classroom (their use of English in all areas of their lives and their perceived awareness of cultural and linguistic factors which impact on the IELTS Test) in a selection of Malaysian English language centres. The aim was also to explore how the teachers employed the different linguistic and cultural practices available to them when preparing their students for the IELTS Test and how these practices may affect other aspects of their classroom practice.

3 METHODOLOGY

This study is an ethnographic study using qualitative analysis of the teaching of IELTS Test preparation courses in Malaysia. Such methodology allows the emergence of themes which may have been unanticipated. Interview protocols were devised and questionnaires constructed with a view to allowing respondents the flexibility to provide answers which went beyond the scope envisaged by the researchers. It is thus an example of ethnographic research, insofar as it deals with the concerns of the individuals observed and interviewed, as interpreted by the interviewers.

Although we were to some extent outsiders to the organisations involved, both of us as the researchers, had the common ground of familiarity with the IELTS Test as Examiners, and both of us had taught English and IELTS Test preparation classes in non-English speaking countries, (one of us in Malaysia while introducing the Test to staff in a college). This shared contextual background allowed us to establish an initial rapport with the participants.

Educational research at all levels, from action research to effect classroom change to policy-based institutional or government-motivated research, reduces the gap between researcher and research situation even further as it is usually carried out by educationalists.
(Baxter 2003, p 50)

We believe that a qualitative, ethnographic approach to the research served our aims best because we chose to focus on teachers and students in a particular setting and we wished to present the attitudes of these particular stakeholders in the IELTS Test in Malaysia in order to interpret the cultural and linguistic capital which Malaysians perceive the IELTS Test brings them. By visiting the colleges and interacting with the stakeholders, we intended to present a picture of how IELTS is woven into the fabric of English language teaching in Malaysia.

Due to difficulties of access and time and travel constraints, it was not possible to spend more than a day at each of the selected institutions and so there were some amendments to the original research plan. The following indicates the original research plan with relevant comments on changes and limitations in brackets.

1. Protocols will be developed for in-depth interviews to establish sociolinguistic backgrounds of teachers on IELTS preparation courses at Malaysian institutions, selected on the advice of IDP. (See Table 1 below.)
2. A classroom observation schedule will be developed and arranged with teachers covering, for each class, explanations, question and answer routines, patterns of interaction, use of language and intercultural analysis. (See Appendix 3 for observation schedule.)
3. Program documentation for each course will be studied, including all outlines and artefacts developed by teachers. (Since all but one of the teachers did not prepare their own materials, this aspect of the original research plan could not be completed and, in fact, was irrelevant. One teacher showed us her own materials but most asserted they used readily available commercial texts.)
4. A series of lessons (three per course) will be observed and audio-recorded at different stages of each course. (Due to time and cross-country travel constraints, it was not possible to observe three classes in progress in all schools.)
5. An analysis of each lesson will be conducted with each teacher and audio-recorded. (Due to teachers' commitments and time constraints, it was not appropriate to expect them to give further time to analyse classroom activity in addition to time already given for the interview. It also seemed to be culturally inappropriate to audio-record classes in progress.)
6. At all times the project will be collaborative, with each step being validated by the teachers involved. (Teachers were very obliging with time for interviews but did not respond to invitations to participate further. One teacher replied to follow-up email in detail – see Appendix 6. Another promised to but did not, and another had left her position. Since neither researcher was in Malaysia at the time of writing up the research, there was no further opportunity for follow-up.)
7. Institutions will be selected on the advice of IDP and teachers will be selected, with due observance of ethical considerations, to capture the sociolinguistic variability of Malaysia. It is envisaged that three teachers of IELTS preparation courses from each of six institutions will participate in the study. (Further institutions were selected by the in-country researcher and a total of nine teachers from six institutions were interviewed – see summary in Table 1.)

The questionnaire which was given to the students attending the IELTS Test practice classes served to add extra dimensions to the information gathered from the interviews with teachers. The classroom observation also supported the information gathered from the interviews. Triangulation of the data from these three sources added a further layer of validation to the findings, in particular to the discussion on the effects of washback, which was one of our principal aims.

3.1 Selected institutions

Most students taking an IELTS Test do so in centres in Kuala Lumpur with the option of also taking the test in Penang, Sarawak or Kuantan, and other centres around the country by arrangement. The institutions we visited were mainly clustered in and around Kuala Lumpur, with the exception of two colleges in Pahang.

For this study, four institutions were approached on the advice of IDP and three others were approached through connections established by the researchers themselves. Of the total of seven, one was unable to assist, as there were no IELTS Test preparation classes scheduled over the four-month period of data collection but the others were all willing to be involved, even though one institution was not continuing to offer IELTS practice courses within the period. The teacher at this institution was happy to be interviewed, as s/he was already known to one of the researchers.

Of the institutions visited, most were giving IELTS Test preparation classes for students who intended to study abroad but one institution required its students to take the test practice classes as part of the curriculum even though the students had no intention to study abroad. In addition, some students said they were choosing these classes out of personal interest. The six institutions represent the variety of post-secondary educational choices available in Malaysia, and exhibit the following characteristics, which relate to Malaysia's particular cultural and linguistic diversity. The factors that influence this diversity involve:

- colonial past
- migrations from, especially, China, southern India and Sri Lanka
- government policy of boosting opportunities for native (Bumiputera) Malaysians
- Malaysia's position of being able to provide inexpensive, quality education in English more cheaply than countries where English is the official first language, such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK and the USA.

The profiles of the institutions we surveyed are summarised below. As stated in our proposal, we selected them on advice from IDP, combined with independent research. As far as we were able to ascertain, they represent the only institutions conducting IELTS Test practice classes outside the recognised British Council and IDP centres in Malaysia, in 2005, although this may change according to demand. One institution recommended by IDP, for example, was unable to assist us in our research, as they were not conducting IELTS Test practice classes for the period under observation.

3.1.1 Profiles of institutions

- A. Post-secondary government-funded college providing professional training courses to Bumiputera students. Students were undertaking IELTS Tests as a benchmark indicator for English level as part of their award.
- B. Private college, offering training courses and degree programs, through affiliations with overseas universities, to local and overseas students. Some students have scholarships awarded by Malaysian companies.
- C. Similar to B, established in Malaysia by a Malaysian conglomerate.
- D. Relatively new private college-approved programs – students may obtain degrees in Malaysia from certain Australian or British universities. This college has affiliations with one British and one Australian university.
- E. Malaysian government-funded university committed to providing education for Bumiputeras. Selected students are awarded scholarships for overseas study, funded by Malaysian companies such as Petronas. The IELTS Test is undertaken by candidates preparing to go overseas on these scholarships.
- F. State-run vocational training college offering transfer to partner universities for candidates wishing to proceed beyond diploma level. Most IELTS Test candidates are taking the test for admission to computing studies programs in Malaysian or overseas universities. No IELTS Test practice courses were being conducted at time of data-collection because of re-structuring.

In summary, it can be seen that colleges offering IELTS Test preparation courses in Malaysia are training both international and local students:

- for study at English-speaking universities or
- for study in Malaysia, in English, for awards granted by overseas universities having agreements with the Malaysian institutions.

Overseas universities thus dictated English language requirements, whether the students were transferring to their countries or completing the award in Malaysia. This meant that all students in our survey were taking the academic module and all classes were taught for this module.

Table 1 shows the total numbers of classes, teachers and students represented in the findings of this study.

As there was no specific question relating to nationality included in the questionnaire, this study cannot draw any conclusions on the differences between responses given by Malaysian nationals and non-Malaysian nationals. There is, however, scope for further investigation of non-Malaysian students studying English in Malaysia.

Institution by code	Number of classes observed	Total number of classes	Number of teachers interviewed	Total number of teachers	Number of students who responded to questionnaire	Total number of students present on day observed
A	1	6	1	4	17	17
B	1	2	1	3	6	17
C	2	2	2	3	13	13
D	3	3	1	1	32	32
E	1	2	3	3	24	24
F	0	0	1	1	0	0

Table 1: Summary of responses by institution

3.1.2 Types of classes

The six institutions had a variety of timetables and course structures. Colleges C and D ran evening courses for part-time study and College B ran a full-day Saturday program, in addition to courses which formed part of the mainstream programs.

The IELTS Test classes also need to be set against the background of alternatives available for study in English in Malaysia, eg the A-level program available in some colleges, and the SAMat (South Australian Matriculation Program). It is not the intention here to consider these alternatives in depth but their existence needs to be signaled. Such a variety shows Malaysia at an educational crossroads in English teaching, with IELTS providing just one pathway to higher education in English. Further research would be useful to indicate the proportion of students studying bridging/foundation programs from overseas universities, university entrance (eg A-level, SAMat) and students taking IELTS Tests, as all but one of the institutions visited offered this variety in differing combinations.

3.2 Sources of data

There were three sources of data: interviews with teachers; observation of classes; and student questionnaires.

3.2.1 How these sources connect – Interviews with teachers

The context of the interviews we conducted has, we believe, impacted significantly on the information received by the teachers. A consideration of this context involves location of participants/interactants, teacher training background of teachers, first language and English language background of students. Within this context, it has to be remembered that ‘the researcher and the researched inevitably become part of a new culture, which needs to be examined’ (Baxter 2003, p 48). Of course, always present in

this examination is the ethical dimension, which obliges the researcher to continually withdraw from the scene and evaluate her attitudes in the light of the roles of all participants.

The network of relationships which develop during the process and the interactions which result are all part of the data to be analysed. They can never be eliminated from the process or neutralised so that they do not matter; rather, reflexivity demands that they must be incorporated into the overall cultural analysis. (Baxter 2003, p 55)

Holliday has this to say about the relationship of the researcher and the researched:

The researcher must try to see through and liberate herself from the professional discourse she brings with her in order to establish relations on the participants' own terms. They are there as people in their own right, not simply to participate in her research.

(Holliday 2002, p 173)

In other words, the everyday lives of the participants continue, regardless of the researcher, who must constantly shift the perspective to situate observed moments in a logical continuum. This may be difficult when the observed moments constitute very brief interludes. Conducting interviews, observing classes and distributing questionnaires are all interruptions to the normal lives of people going about their duties in educational institutions and data collected in these ways must always acknowledge this dimension of artificiality. Hence the researchers have to establish a relationship with the participants which is exterior to the professional one (eg Holliday 2002) but which will enable the optimum conditions for gathering the data they require.

If its objective of pure knowledge distinguishes the research relationship from most of the exchanges in everyday life, it remains, whatever one does, a social relationship. As such, it can have an effect on the results obtained... (Bourdieu 1992, p 608)

A comfortable 'social relationship' was readily established in our interviews with teachers, the second method of data collection but the 'objective of pure knowledge' was less easily obtained, perhaps because of a difference in the expectations of researchers and researched. Although a relationship had been established via email and telephone with the institutions, the teachers interviewed did not have access to the questions we had provided and therefore did not have time before the interview to think about their answers. Thus their responses, while rich in cultural and linguistic detail, did not provide the depth which we had, perhaps inappropriately, sought.

Moreover, the demands on the time of teachers working in Malaysia are extremely heavy and do not allow flexibility for in-depth discussion. Academic staff, employed at senior levels have long working hours, often including weekends, and staff at lower levels usually have many family commitments outside of teaching time. Therefore, coming from what appeared to be a comparatively generous working Western environment, we did not wish to impose on our hosts and were grateful for the valuable time they could spare us. As qualitative researchers, we believe it is important to make this observation concerning background to the project.

3.2.2 Observation of classes

For a number of reasons, classroom observation did not follow the plan originally envisaged. Problems of timetabling and access meant that only one class could be observed in each of the institutions except for one, where three classes were being taught by the college's one IELTS Test practice teacher on the day agreed for observation. (See Appendix 3 for observation schedule.) Its main purpose was to define the activity undertaken in an IELTS Test practice class. To carry out prolonged, in-depth observation, it would have been necessary to spend time in the area and to take up the time of the teachers but neither option was feasible. The limited observation possible, therefore, could serve only to provide an outline of the classes.

The context surrounding the data gathering was a relatively new one for IELTS research because the participating teachers came from different linguistic/cultural backgrounds to the researchers. Consequently, the interaction was between participants who may have had certain expectations of each other which were not always totally justified. Regarding the first method of data collection, observation, for example, it was necessary to reassure some of the teachers that their performance was not being assessed in any way because they associated appraisal with 'observation'. Correspondingly, the researchers, in their notes, needed to remember that they were simply observing the content of the classes and not commenting on the skills of the teachers. On the other hand, the interviews, although recorded (with permission), seemed less threatening as it was not difficult to establish a rapport based on shared knowledge and experience of IELTS, and indeed of English language teaching.

3.2.3 Student questionnaires

The third method of data collection was through questionnaires administered to the students. Again limitations apply – a few students, for example, did not have sufficient mastery of English to understand all the questions and others gave only the briefest of answers but overall we were delighted with the students' reflective skills and depth of perception in their answers.

In sum, we were able to triangulate the data from these three sources – classroom observation of teachers and students, teacher interviews, and student questionnaires – and consolidate our findings. Among these three methods, the classroom observation worked minimally as a data-gathering instrument but served to verify the activities we were researching, namely the teaching of IELTS Test practice classes. On the other hand, the teacher interviews, transcribed and discussed below, provided us with rich sociolinguistic and cultural material for our study, while the student questionnaires illustrated and verified many of the points made by teachers. Furthermore, there were many similarities across institutions which enabled us to construct a clear image of the role which the IELTS Test practice classes play for English teachers, and students, in Malaysia.

3.3 Schedule followed for the research

1. Official start date for project as agreed with IDP	June 2005
2. Designing protocols in Australia and Malaysia	May 2005
3. Contacting Malaysian institutions	April, May 2005
4. First institutional visit and related data collection	May 2005
5. Additional visits to remaining institutions	July 2005
6. Final interview recorded with teacher in Malaysia	September 2005
7. Literature review	Ongoing 2005 and 2006
8. Meetings for analysis of data	August 2005 – January 2006
9. Additional information sought from teachers by email	March 2006
10. Writing up of report	March – June 2006
11. First submission of report	June 2006
12. First revision on receiving feedback	August 2006
13. Second feedback received	October 2006
14. Second revision completed	February 2007

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Overview of findings from interviews with teachers

The six institutions visited included public universities and colleges, private universities and private colleges of advanced education. During the visits, we observed IELTS Test preparation classes in progress. We interviewed nine teachers of IELTS Test preparation classes from the six institutions, including schools in Kuala Lumpur and regional areas. Our interview protocols are in Appendix 1. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes and was audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed. A summary of themes arising from the interviews is in Appendix 5.

4.1.1 Sociolinguistic backgrounds of teachers

All of the teachers except one would fit the category of being bilingual with English as a first or English as a Second Language (using the expression ESL here to indicate that English is not an ‘other’ language but is used competently in all aspects of daily life, not only at work but at home and in social life). Some of the teachers interviewed also claimed to speak more than two languages in their daily life. This would not be unusual in a country such as Malaysia which is considered to be a multilingual, multi-racial, multicultural nation. This also means that most of the teachers interviewed would, as Sandra Lee McKay claims, bring second language awareness to their teaching practice.

But perhaps the greatest strength of bilingual English teachers is that they provide their students with a model of a good language learner that is relevant to their own social and cultural experiences, a model that no language teacher from another culture can ever provide.
(McKay 2002, p 45)

The exception to this claim of being bilingual was from one teacher who spoke only English as a first language and claimed to be monolingual. Of interest, she commented that she had studied in an English-speaking country (India) and now worked in an English-speaking country (Malaysia).

4.1.2 Qualifications

The teachers’ qualifications ranged from no TESOL training to postgraduate level. These included: two teachers with MA TESOL from Malaysian universities; Diploma of Education (four teachers, one Diploma from the UK and three from Malaysia); and one MA in English (not TESOL) from India. Three teachers claimed to have undertaken all schooling in English (as was the practice in Malaysia during the 1960s) and one of these three had no specific teaching or TESOL training. Seven claimed to have lived and/or studied overseas (in an English-speaking country including India). One had never studied overseas. One teacher did not respond to this question.

4.1.3 IELTS Test background

It is important to note that none of the teachers interviewed had any direct IELTS Test experience either as a candidate or as an Examiner, and so all knowledge of test format, question types and assessment requirements came to the teachers from the *IELTS Handbook*, the IELTS website or the commercially produced practice texts.

All teachers claimed to be confident to deliver IELTS Test practice classes. The experience of such teaching ranged from 16 years (two teachers involved since test inception) to only two semesters with the majority having approximately three years’ experience with IELTS Test practice classes. All expressed confidence in being able to explain the Test in aspects such as format, linguistic and cultural demands of responses, and assessment. (All claimed to be satisfied that they could approximate actual assessment of student writing tasks and speaking practice models by using the Overall Band Descriptors in the *IELTS Handbook*.) All teachers used mainly commercial test practice texts with three teachers occasionally preparing some extra materials using local newspapers. Most teachers claimed that there was not enough time in their schedules to prepare supplementary materials.

4.1.4 Teachers as ‘native/non-native speakers’ and their use of English in Malaysia

It is interesting here to consider the role of the native/non-native speaker teacher in the Malaysian context because, as the interviews with IELTS Test practice course teachers testify, the term appears to have limited importance. Teachers were asked to state their first language and then to clarify the uses they had for the various languages at their disposal. Although we had imagined it to be important to find a definition for the term ‘non-native speaker teacher’, as well as ‘native speaker teacher’, we found that in the institutions we visited, only one person claimed to be a ‘native speaker’ teacher of English, and also monolingual, and so there was no opportunity to define native speaker teacher. Hence, we have chosen to focus on aspects of the teachers’ sociolinguistic backgrounds which characterise them as non-native speaker teachers in Malaysia. These aspects present a context for use of English which is vastly different from that of the centre-based teaching environment and indicate possibilities for further research. For example, one area might be the influence of surrounding languages on English which is used for limited purposes. Sweeping generalisations about the value of ‘English only’ classrooms can be challenged if it is acknowledged that inhabitants of countries like Malaysia, while admitting a need for English, do not require native-speaker-like competence and therefore need not be threatened by the insistence on using English in the classroom without being able to have recourse to their first/other languages.

One factor which centre-based researchers tend to ignore about teachers whose first language is not English is that such teachers have an understanding of the role English should occupy in their society, compared with the other languages commonly used. In other words their sociolinguistic skills are developed to the extent that they can move effortlessly from one language to another without causing misunderstanding. All the teachers in this study claimed to use only English in the IELTS Test classroom and were quite confident in doing so but eight out of nine also claimed to use other languages in other parts of their lives. One teacher, for example, declared that she spoke 80% Malay and 20% English at home, while the situation at work was exactly the reverse. Another teacher, who grew up speaking Tamil, claimed that since her marriage 13 years before, she has used English more and more, to the point where she now uses Tamil only when she visits her parents and her father chides her for acquiring an English accent! The other teacher claiming Tamil as a first language asserted that she spoke more English with her husband than Tamil and mainly English with her child. Of course, such claims have implications for the use of Tamil in Malaysia, and also for the use of Bahasa Melayu, which this teacher claimed to use minimally.

Similarly, another teacher, who claimed ‘Chinese’ as her first language, added that she now spoke English at home as well as at work. In summary, the Chinese- and Tamil-speaking teachers tended to speak more English, while the Malay-speaking teachers spoke more Malay at home. This could be because the official language is Malay which is also the cultural background of the two native Malay teachers. The other factor to consider here is that all respondents are professionally involved with English and consequently are likely to use it more frequently than the average Malaysian, especially if they can use it comfortably with family.

The question, then, becomes ‘How is a sociolinguistic background of this nature significant in the teaching of IELTS Test preparation classes?’ The following points may be considered significant:

- understanding of the role of English in Malaysia and the boundaries of its use
- understanding of the cultural difficulties of IELTS for students in Malaysia
- understanding of the cultural contrasts involved in teaching IELTS
- the experience of learning English and, in many cases, of adapting to study in an overseas, English-speaking culture.

The sociolinguistic profiles of the teachers interviewed suggest ways of describing the ‘non-native’ teacher of English in a positive light, which accords with Canagarajah’s (1999) discussion of codeswitching in *Resisting Linguistic Imperialism in English Language Teaching* in which he describes research on the positive influences of L1 in the language classroom:

...we need to understand that for many periphery communities, English is one more code in a rich repertoire of multiple languages. Countless millions of people who live in a linguistically-rich environment acquire more than one language simultaneously from childhood. Furthermore, the codes are often mixed in usage – as in code-switching, code-mixing, style shifting or borrowing. (Canagarajah 1999, p 129)

In their descriptions of how they use English, the Malaysian teachers provide evidence of this linguistic richness, which is not a feature of centre-based linguistic societies, and is therefore often neglected by researchers. The most detailed account of language use came from the teacher whose first language is Malay – see Appendix 6. Her comments show considerable awareness of language issues in her country:

Question: What do you use each language for?

Bahasa Malaysia...mainly for communicating with families and friends. English...for my job as an English lecturer and also when I'm communicating with the business communities. I feel more comfortable communicating with English if I know that the other person is well trained in English. Otherwise, I'm worried that I'll offend the person because a non-user of English normally will think that an English-speaking person is trying to show off.

This example of sensitivity to language use is evidence of the understanding possessed by ‘non-native’ teachers of English working in their own environment and suggests an ability to assign a role to English which will not threaten the first language. Where the IELTS Test is concerned, it suggests an understanding of the functions of the language which students need to be familiar with, for example, dealing with ‘critical thinking’, as discussed below. Malaysian non-native speakers and teachers of English are accustomed to using more than one language in their everyday lives and therefore are more sharply focused on the linguistic requirements of the IELTS Test. They appreciate the structure of the Test and what their students, living in a non-English-speaking environment, need to absorb, to succeed in an English-speaking country.

As discussed above, the native/non-native speaker dichotomy appears less important in the Malaysian context than defining the richness of the non-native speaker context. The starting point for understanding English use in Malaysia is not that of the standard native speaker, it is rather different, as Sandra Lee McKay points out:

English fits into bilingual users' personal language hierarchies differently in different countries and in particular speech communities within those countries. In many cases their needs do not entail achieving native-like competence in English, yet most current SLA research rests on this assumption. (McKay 2002, p 39)

The one teacher who asserted herself to be a native speaker of English also claimed to be monolingual while teachers claiming other first languages were bi- or multi-lingual. Within their particular speech community, and regardless of the number of languages they spoke, all the teachers were able to give the skills necessary for the IELTS Test, a value which was perceived by the students to be essential to their goals of studying and communicating internationally in English.

4.1.5 Teachers' comments on teaching approaches

Three teachers commented that the commercially produced materials were culturally biased and that much of the content had no relevance to their students or that the content was too heavily biased towards the UK and Australian cultures with many lexical items not being understood by their students. This would fit the comments made by some researchers that English language textbooks (and the benchmark tests) are too narrowly prescribed to Western English 'norms' and that monolingual native-speaker models for international users of English should be replaced by models which are based on successful bilinguals with intercultural insights, (Alptekin 2002; Cook 1999; Pennycook 1994; Taylor 2005; Matsuda 2002; Jenkins 2006).

All teachers but one claimed that their students were highly motivated to participate in the IELTS Test practice classes. The one who did not claim high motivation in her students was from a school where the test practice classes were on the curriculum. However, not all students were going to take the Test, nor did they necessarily intend to study overseas and their motivation stemmed from the fact that without a 'pass' or appropriate score, the students could not proceed to the next stage of their educational or career goal. And, as another teacher said: 'Apart from that they're paying a lot of money. Yeah.'

Through discussion of the individual test modules, Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking, most of the comments focused on the Writing tasks, both 1 and 2 for different reasons. It is believed that Writing Task 1 causes concern because of the unaccustomed interpretation and description skills required. Nonetheless, it is seen as a useful skill which can be carried over into other classes and other subjects, and therefore has some washback value to students. Responses to questions about Writing Task 2 provided interest because, although it was claimed that students in Malaysian classes (and this includes those students from 'other' countries) are not normally accustomed to giving opinions, they found this useful, and learning to analyse their ideas was seen as a valuable and creative skill. Writing Task 2 was also seen as employing and practising useful skills, particularly those required for critical thinking.

The teachers also believed that practice for the IELTS Speaking test involved and helped develop the unaccustomed habit of thinking critically. In particular, Part 3 of the Speaking test required practice because the skills of critical thinking and producing their own ideas were new for these students.

One teacher claimed that some of the topics in the Speaking test practice materials were unsuitable for Malaysians to discuss (of course she was referring here strictly to the commercially produced materials and not the actual test materials). Two teachers commented that for the Speaking test, the foreign students had pronunciation difficulties (specifically mentioned were Chinese, Bangladeshi and Korean students). One of these teachers suggested that the assessment of Speaking be modified to take into account the difficulty some candidates might have with pronunciation.

The different accents on the audio-recordings for the Listening test caused many students difficulty, specifically those students from other countries who were studying in Malaysia. While it was generally accepted that listening to native speakers was necessary to gain proficiency, the different accents and unknown lexical items caused difficulty and even distress. One teacher commented that the need to spell correctly was an issue.

Questions relating to the Reading module raised the fewest comments and those were mainly that many of the topics were not relevant to Asian students and were too 'boring' to maintain students' interest. There was a general agreement that the skills required for the Reading subtest were the same kinds of skills required for reading in other subjects students were studying.

It was generally agreed that the academic skills required for the IELTS Test were good preparation for further study in universities in the Western English world (UK, Australia, USA, Canada and New Zealand), that the IELTS Test provided the students with an international standard for higher

degree study. It was, however, admitted that some of these skills, critical thinking, debate, giving opinions and so on, were new to most of the Malaysian students and therefore needed to be specifically taught.

4.1.6 Cultural concerns

Regarding questions on cultural issues relating to Test practice tasks found in the commercially prepared publications, the main comments involved the issues of learning styles. Comments again concerned the differences between accustomed learning styles of rote learning as opposed to critical thinking, the development of an argument and the individual student's own ideas. This issue of learning style stressed again that students have difficulty with Part 3 of the Speaking test and with Writing Task 2. However, one teacher commented that a student had expressed 'you make me a more emotional person because we have to write reflections' with respect to the understanding and practice of critical thinking. It was also mentioned again that the content of some Test items was culturally specific to the UK and Australia (again here the reference is to commercially produced materials not the actual Test content). To quote another teacher, 'All of the material is from English-speaking countries and so there's nothing familiar'.

There were very few clear or pertinent responses to the interview questions relating to curriculum development and curriculum washback. As mentioned above, most of the teachers we interviewed did not participate in curriculum development nor to a great extent in the preparation of materials. The principal and oft claimed reason for this was 'not enough time'.

Further comments about aspects of the taking of the Test may be summarised as follows:

- Students don't like severe-looking Examiners nor those who stop them midway talking because it makes them feel that they have been wrong.
- Candidates get agitated when the Examiner is a native speaker.
- We need practice books with more international flavour.
- Teachers need to be trained to be able to make assessments on Speaking and Writing.
- Teacher training would be useful.
- Put some Asian names into the Listening (street names too).
- More Asian flavour might help contextually.
- More Asian topics and current issues.

One teacher expressed concern that, with the increasing internationalisation of some schools in Malaysia, students from other countries might be disadvantaged through lower scores on the IELTS Test. She understood the issues that such 'periphery teachers' (Canagarajah 2002) as herself faced with teaching students from a third linguistic and cultural context. As she said, commenting on the pronunciation of a Korean student:

*When...OK if the examiner cannot understand the poor Korean girl...the way she speaks...her whole life she'll not be able to go to an English-speaking country but I think that's not fair.
Uh. She's from Korea. They don't expect to speak like an Englishman or an English woman.
I'm teaching language, English but I don't speak it that well because I've been living here most of the time. Right? The cultural influence...all this needs to be taken into consideration.
Right? And I don't think allowance is made at all from the mark the Korean student gets.*
(Teacher P)

There were some interesting perceptions from teachers about the assessment standards from different test centres. Two teachers said they had changed (or were going to change) from sending their students to the IDP Test Centre to sending them to the British Council Test Centre (in Kuala Lumpur) as the perception was that the Examiners at the IDP Test Centre were too strict, or stricter, than those from the British Council Test Centre.

And finally, one college administrator observed that students arriving to study English and IELTS Test practice from other countries had largely variable test results from their own country and from test taking in Malaysia.

...people will come and say I wanna go back to China and take the test...and not do it here because it seems to be easier to pass and I've got students who got IELTS 7 from Pakistan and they come here and they go in my level 3.

This administrator also suggested that more information about how assessment was conducted would reduce the incidences of 'variability'.

So, yes, I've been thinking you know. Human error does occur so one way to...so one way to reduce it, to minimise it, is to make it a little bit more transparent, to tell us what you're looking for...

Further discussion on the effects of washback into aspects of curriculum development, materials preparation and teaching is detailed in Section 4.3: Washback into learning and teaching.

4.1.7 Overall findings from classroom observations

Appendix 3 summarises the main features noted in the classroom observations. By way of introduction, it should be noted that all classrooms were well-equipped with standard features such as appropriate lighting, clean blackboards, OHPs, sufficient numbers of desks and chairs (arranged in rows) and air-conditioning (with one exception, but this college was in a rural area, and had large windows on both sides and ceiling fans). Other features in common were that all classes used English throughout, and that students were quiet and co-operative, following teachers' directions but rarely asking questions (this could have been due to the presence of an observer and, in some cases, unwillingness to speak in English). An exception was a class in college C, where the teacher encouraged students to talk in pairs, and then to volunteer information to the class.

Institutions providing IELTS Test practice did not always make these courses a compulsory part of their curriculum as they were also targeting students keen to develop their test-taking skills. Hence the intensive courses, as the administrator in college C asserted, were focused directly on test-taking practice, while the long-term program at this college was able to take a broader approach, which meant including, in particular, discussions of cultural issues.

4.2 Overview of findings from student questionnaires

We received a return of 92 questionnaires completed by students who were attending IELTS Test preparation classes at the same time as the classroom observations and interviews took place. All student responses are tabulated in Appendix 4.

The content of the student questionnaire (See Appendix 2) can be divided into the following themes:

- Questions 1–4 were related to the sociolinguistic background of the students
- Questions 5–8 described the impact of the IELTS Test on life in Malaysia or elsewhere
- Questions 9–20 gave information of the impact of the IELTS Test on English language learning and general learner washback
- Questions 21–26 were related to students' sociocultural background.

Thus, most of the questions we asked dealt with the core related concepts of washback and impact, essential to our stated aim of analysing the 'cultural and linguistic value of the IELTS Test'. For these purposes, the 'cultural' value of the IELTS Test approximates the 'impact' of the Test on the students' lives as perceived in Malaysia, while the 'linguistic' value is related to 'washback'.

4.2.1 Questions 5–8: Impact of the IELTS Test on life in Malaysia or elsewhere

Student perceptions of the Test reveal a particular mindset that many of them have no doubt been encouraged to adopt. This mindset is best illustrated by their responses using such words as ‘global’ and ‘international’, and utterances such as, ‘...English is pretty handy when it comes to communication with foreigners considering it is an international language and all’. There is also an awareness of the more precise need for English as a specific tool, for example, ‘English widened my opportunity to go further in majoring in geology as most of the research will be done outside Malaysia’.

Student responses in questionnaires indicate that IELTS Test preparation courses for some institutions were electives chosen to suit the student’s own requirements. On the other hand, students taking stand-alone evening or Saturday classes offered to part-time students, were often full-time students elsewhere, but seeking extra IELTS Test practice. Other students were simultaneously studying for other qualifications, such as SAMat (South Australian Matriculation) which provided an alternative pathway through IELTS and on to further study.

Many students were able to articulate responses to our questions which showed that they regarded IELTS as having a role in honing their English skills to the level required, not just for succeeding in the Test, but also for achieving an overall desirable level of fluency. English is also seen as the way to knowledge and the IELTS Test is believed to play a strong role. Within the students’ world, learning English is seen as essential. Their observations illustrate the ‘fresh impetus in post-colonial communities’ mentioned by Canagarajah (1999, p 77), in which he sees these communities appropriating English for their own use, rather than submitting to colonial dictates. As the many responses to our Question 6 (*Why are you studying English?*) indicate, the students see English as a gateway to opportunities.

Question 6: Why are you studying English?

- Response 1: English nowadays is very essential especially in education and work field. Moreover it is the most widely used language in the world. Other reason: further study in overseas.
- Response 2: English is the media of communication in tertiary studies. This language will be the portal to the seas of knowledge.
- Response 3: Because it’s essential to be fluent in English if I were to further my studies overseas in Australia or NZ.
- Response 4: English is the international language that is used to link the world together. Besides that English is also the language of knowledge.
- Response 5: Because other languages than Malay language fascinate me.
- Response 6: To gain more knowledge and be more global as English is the worldwide language.
- Response 7: Because it enables me to communicate with various kind of people as English is an international language.
- Response 8: For communication, better understanding ensuring a better social status.
- Response 9: It’s my interest and English language is very useful in global field.
- Response 10: Because it’s a worldwide language.

These samples reveal a perception of English as a means to an end, with the exception of Response number 5, the only one showing an interest in English as a language and for that reason alone, worth studying. Motivation to learn the language is strong, and the students have absorbed what their teachers have told them.

What then is the role of English?

I see its role as international communication. We need English to communicate with the world beyond the shores of Malaysia, so that we can be competitive in a global market.

(Gaudart in Vethnami, ed, 2003, p 4)

This is the opinion of Dr Hyacinth Gaudart, a respected English language educator in Malaysia.

4.2.2 Questions 9–20: Impact (washback) on English learning

The findings from this set of questions on the student questionnaire is detailed in Section 4.3, along with the discussion of findings from effects of washback from interviews with teachers.

4.2.3 Questions 21–26 and further comments

The following table represents a summary of the findings from Questions 21–26 of the student questionnaire. The question wording is given in the left hand column. For Questions 21–25, the total number of negative responses to the question is given in the middle column and the total number of positive responses is given in the right hand column. In the next table, for Question 26, the breakdown of items is represented in the middle column and the number of positive responses is given in the right hand column. Finally, the opportunity to provide comments or suggestions was given at the end of the questionnaire. In the final row of the table below, the number of students who either responded or who failed to respond is given. The discussion on the findings of all questions is given below.

Questions 21–25	Total number of negative responses	Total number of positive responses
Question 21 Have you ever holidayed in an English-speaking country?	67	22
Question 22 Have you ever worked in an English-speaking country?	86	2
Question 23 Have you ever studied in an English-speaking country?	80	10
Question 24 Have you ever lived in an English-speaking country?	78	14
Question 25 Do you feel that you learn about life in English-speaking countries in this IELTS Test practice course?	24	66

Table 2: Summary of responses to questions 21–26 on student questionnaire
Part 1 Questions 21–25

Question 26	Item	Number of responses given
What other sources do you use to learn and practice English? Tick as many boxes as applicable.	Speaking with native-speaking friends/people	45
	Speaking with non-native speaking friends/people	52
	Sending and receiving emails	69
	Using the internet	81
	Newspapers	73
	Magazines	69
	Books	73
	Television	69
	Movies	82
	Radio	70
	Music	75
Comments or suggestions	No responses given	Number of responses given
If you would like to make further comments or any suggestions about learning English or IELTS Test practice, please do so, on the lines below.	45	50

**Table 2: Summary of responses to questions 21–26 on student questionnaire
Part 2 Question 26 and number of responses to request for comments**

4.2.4 Discussion

The responses to the first four questions, numbers 21–24, give information on the opportunities students had to visit and engage in the use of English in an English-speaking country. While a significant number (22) had holidayed in an English-speaking country (including Singapore and Switzerland), most of these opportunities had been brief. Only two respondents had worked in an English-speaking country (one of which was Singapore) and 10 and 14 respectively had studied/lived (some of these responses overlapped) in an English-speaking country (one of which was Malaysia).

Overall, the opportunities available to these students to use English in an English-speaking country and to gain corresponding cultural experiences were limited and therefore most of the English learning would have taken place within Malaysia, either in the classroom or by other means (see the responses to Question 26, below).

The responses to Question 25 indicate that most students perceived that their IELTS Test practice classroom, through the materials used and from the experience of the teachers, gave them positive opportunities to understand cultural aspects of life in English-speaking countries.

In addition, the high number of positive responses to the use of individual items in Question 26 indicates that most students were taking advantage of other means of gaining knowledge of English and associated cultural awareness, through their own initiatives.

Finally, all students responding to the questionnaire had an opportunity to write comments and/or suggestions. It was pleasing to note that a high proportion of respondents had taken the extra time to do this and that the responses indicated a level of English high enough to express ideas and opinions. Some responses were direct in offering suggestions such as 'give more reading time in the test', 'include interactive learning', 'I would prefer if there is less format in the exam and based more on creative writing', and simply 'Make it something easier please'. Others articulated thoughts such as:

- 'The IELTS test is very useful. Apart from the exam it also help me in daily life.'
- 'IELTS should be taught in secondary schools...'
- 'I wish the test can be practice in all universities and colleges in Malaysia.'
- 'IELTS should be learn by other courses too beside language and communication in skills. It really works.'

The responses and comments discussed above lead us to conclude that from the students' perspective, the IELTS Test practice class is a positive opportunity to gain language skills, general knowledge and cultural awareness. Most students view the IELTS Test practice classes as not only an opportunity to learn a skill but to gain knowledge and awareness of other cultures.

4.3 Washback into learning and teaching

Washback, the influence of testing on teaching and learning (Alderson and Wall 1993), can be distinguished, according to Wall, from the impact '...any of the effects that a test may have on individuals, policies, or practices within the classroom, the school, the educational system or society as a whole' (cited in Cheng, Watanabe and Curtis 2004, p 4). Washback from testing is now acknowledged to be an important concept in understanding the effect of tests on both teaching and learning (Cheng and Curtis 2004). According to Lynda Taylor (2004):

Tests and test results have a significant impact on the career or life chances of individual test takers (eg access to educational/employment opportunities). They also impact on educational systems, and on society more widely.

Although washback is described in the literature as having both positive and negative effects (Cheng and Curtis 2004) we have confined our discussion, for the purposes of this research, to the positive influences of washback. (For a more complete discussion of washback, see Cheng and Curtis 2004.)

In fact, the Malaysian students who responded to our questionnaire seemed to be more aware of the washback effect on their learning than their teachers did on their classroom practice, although neither group was familiar with the expression. Students were asked to comment on the overall benefits of IELTS Test preparation for their language skills and were mostly positive. To investigate their understanding, we chose a two-part question, with the second part open-ended – Question 10: *Do you think doing IELTS practice helps you with your language skills overall? If yes, how?*

Students responded by referring to the features of IELTS Test practice which they believed were helping them. They talked about their language skills in a way that showed how they had reflected on their development. Some of the following examples show the perception of a positive washback effect which goes beyond the requirements of the test itself:

- Student: Yes. It improves my vocabulary grammar and other important aspects in the English language.
- Student: Yes. It polishes my vocabulary and it has definitely contributed tremendously to my academic writing skills.
- Student: Yes. It develops my communication skills so that I can interact better with others. It also improves my writing skills.

The understanding of the role of washback is therefore doubly important to an analysis of how the Test impacts on the Malaysian teaching and learning context. Our questions to the teachers on this topic did not always elicit a clear response but we found that the student responses to our questionnaires provided clear evidence of washback in action and these responses were therefore crucial to our stated aim of analysing the ‘cultural and linguistic value of IELTS’. So, if we take washback to include the impact of the Test on students’ language development, we find that most students were able to comment with clarity on the advantages to them of test preparation courses.

As already mentioned, teachers did not seem to have reflected on the concept of washback but some were able to discuss the relationship of IELTS practice classes to other parts of the curriculum. One administrator had developed assessment criteria based on the band descriptors in the *Handbook* and another claimed that a test she was concurrently preparing students for, SSABSA (Secondary Schools Assessment Board of South Australia) ESL, was becoming ‘more like IELTS’. She described the SSABSA exam as incorporating a visual ‘like the IELTS one’ which she said was good for allaying student fears because the similarities could be pointed out. Furthermore, she informed us that ‘the essay question for SSABSA had become more argumentative in nature’ and implied that this was the result of the IELTS Test, although similar to ‘the old IELTS, when they had modules A, B and C’. These observations show that teachers are definitely making connections between IELTS Test practice and other aspects of their English language curricula. Another teacher commented that the skills she taught in other classes were useful:

Interviewer C: Do you think that the work that you do with the IELTS tests the kinds of skills that you have to pass on to the students in the IELTS Test? This kind of teaching? Is it useful for your other English teaching?

Teacher P: No it’s the other way round. What I do in general paper is very useful in IELTS. In the general paper we, er, teach them the writing technique and um general paper research and it’s an essay, information. In fact I share the things I have in general paper with IELTS Test too.

Expressing similar attitudes to teachers about differences between Malaysian and Western education (as typified by IELTS), students reveal that they understand, perhaps from teacher prompting, that they are required to develop different skills for academic study in English.

Student response to Question 13d: *Do you think writing practice for IELTS is different from writing for other subjects?*

‘IELTS provides me chances to speak my mind unlike secondary school where our syllabus in studying English are focused on textbooks.’

Student response to Question 12: *Which module is most useful to you?*

‘Writing presently, I’m more used to the local education system...IELTS writing helps me with the transition to academic writing.’

Both these student responses show an appreciation of how IELTS Test practice classes demand a thoughtful, critical involvement in responding to writing prompts. They thus illustrate the impact of IELTS in training students for the particular academic writing skills it is widely believed are necessary in Western universities. In addition, if these responses are compared with those which the teachers gave during the interviews, learning critical thinking skills becomes a strong focus to which all stakeholders attach importance.

Interviewer C: Is this something that your students would be used to doing in other subjects or...this...something...also is this critical thinking...is something that IELTS requires but they're not used to?

Teacher D: Er, I agree with what you said...which is er, they're not used to critical thinking. That's not part of our culture er, it's not part of our learning culture er...

Student responses to Question 13a: *Do you think writing practice for IELTS is different from writing practice for other tests of English?*

'Yes. IELTS Test for writing ask argument type of essays. Contrasting to other test of English we must include our own opinion analysis and recommendation and so on.'

'Yes. It ask for different skills and it require more critical thinking.'

'Yes. IELTS writing practice focuses on organisation.'

Student response to Question 13d: *Do you think writing practice for IELTS is different from writing for other subjects?*

'Yes. English is more flexible and IELTS allows me to write my thoughts.'

This approach to learning is contrasted by both teachers and students with rote learning practices which they state unequivocally must be 'unlearned'.

Student response to Question 16d: *Do you think reading practice for IELTS is different from reading for other subjects?*

'Yes other subjects tends (sic) to lean toward memorising. IELTS needs understanding and interpretation.'

This student echoes the observation of the teacher below with respect to rote learning, but the teacher goes on to mention the similarity between teaching for IELTS and other academic preparation courses, indicating that the skills highlighted in IELTS practice are highly relevant for studying in English generally:

Yes. It's not only in IELTS where we try to, er, make them unlearn some rote learning see, it's also in the other papers that I teach. Um we do and then we have, er, have to do an investigation for performance and they have to write their own report, interview people and then we have um creative writing...use creative writing...look at a picture and write as creative as possible based on that given. So nothing like what they've done in school. All this apart from IELTS trains them, you know, to write their own opinion...to write topic things. Very different for them... (Teacher L)

The word 'creative' is used by teachers and students to indicate, it would seem, a departure from the 'rote-learning' skills recognised as typical of prior education experiences.

Student response to Question 13b: *Do you think writing practice for IELTS is different from writing in your first language?*

'Yes. IELTS tend to promote creative thinking about the topics read.'

Another teacher illuminates this approach to learning further:

They can't produce their own opinion. It's very difficult for them to say what they would like to say as if people would punish them. (Teacher M)

This suggests that it is unacceptable to state one's own opinion in the local education system and emphasises the gulf between learning styles:

Teacher M: The IELTS is very good, because I know my students they don't read textbook at all here, they don't read textbooks, they don't read, that's it. What they do is they memorise, like the Chinese, it's the culture of the Chinese, they are very good at rote-learning, OK? So they can memorise lectures, the whole lectures they could memorise, so they're not going to read textbooks.

Interviewer A: Is there a difference between the Chinese approach to learning and the Malay approach to learning?

Teacher M: Yeah, very different. The Malays here, because they are in Chinese community they pick up the skills.

(The 'Chinese approach' mentioned here refers to Chinese in Malaysia and Chinese from mainland China since both groups attend the college.)

This teacher, of Malay background, did not clarify a 'Malay approach' and it seemed better not to insist on further cultural stereotyping at this stage since she had already mentioned that Malaysian students 'can't produce their own opinion' because:

It's just that the system of education in Malaysia...we, especially the system we have now, we have been asked not to question so the students...they won't be able to question anyone or to say their opinion. (Teacher M)

In this comment the use of the inclusive 'we' shows that this Malay teacher is thinking of the education system in Malaysia for students from all linguistic backgrounds, whereas when she talks of the learning styles of Chinese students she acknowledges a difference to when she talks of the 'Malay' students.

Student response to Question 16d: *Do you think reading practice for IELTS is different from reading for other subjects?*

'Yes, other subjects such as chemistry etc have points slapped directly in your face. As for IELTS, not all of the points are direct. Therefore a little critical thinking is of great need.'

Student responses to Question 13b: *Do you think writing practice for IELTS is different from writing in other English classes?*

'Yes, we need to analysis the stimulus given for part 1; for part 2 we need to give sensible opinions and show the wide range of general knowledge that we have.'

'Yes, In IELTS I have to be more specific (when describing the trends in task 1) and thinking critically based on issues given.' (Task 2)

Student response to Question 12: *Which module is most useful to you? Why?*

'Reading. Various skills are needed, texts...it test my critical thinking to the limit.'

There is a kind of lexical string running through these comments and threading them together, emphasising what students perceive to be the main features of IELTS. Adjectives such as 'critical', 'creative' and 'flexible' indicate an awareness of the need to do more than simply accept given facts; that it is necessary to develop a different set of skills which have hitherto not been required. Students perceive a requirement to 'analyse' and 'give opinions', to 'interpret' and 'understand'. Some make comparisons with their first language and although they are writing these ideas in English, their second or third language, they are quite successful at articulating what they feel to be the essential differences

in the way they approach IELTS compared to the way they approach other subjects or languages. Although comments are not always totally clear, they show an awareness of the need for more than surface language skills; there is a perception that the way of dealing with information is different for IELTS. Moreover, the questions themselves which we posed are open-ended, requiring students to think through a response and to give an opinion, a difficult task but one which they managed, on the whole, well and one which enabled us to get closer to how they feel about using English to prepare for the IELTS Test.

It would appear that the most beneficial washback effect of IELTS Test practice is to help the students develop appropriate critical thinking skills for future study in English. Comments from both teachers and students repeatedly emphasise that IELTS Test preparation requires an ability to think analytically and reflect on the deeper meaning of reading texts rather than rely on memorising skills. We observed students being directed to present arguments in class as they grappled with this new learning approach.

4.3.1 Cultural practices

While the students focused on different learning styles, the teachers were able to comment more on the cultural content. Understanding specific cultural allusions did not seem to be a problem recognised by the students, who did not complain of a lack of Asian content, perhaps because they did not see any cultural threat, only the excitement of being able to go to a new country. Teachers, on the other hand, whose experience had awakened in them the need to protect their own culture, were more ready to suggest the appropriacy of adding Asian content. (These contrasting attitudes between teachers and students need further research than has been possible in this paper: it is so far merely a suggestion arising from the data.)

The following exchanges give an example of this.

Interviewer C: In other words if I was to write a book specifically for the Asian content the Malaysian that would be...that would be very good?

Teacher H: Yes very good. Very good. Because it would be familiar to the students.

Interviewer C: Um. When you come to something in the book, in the commercially produced book that perhaps is not understood in the Malaysian context, do you feel confident explaining it? Something that's culturally Western, for example. Do you feel confident explaining it to your students?

Teacher H: Depends what you know. So far I'm confident explaining because before I teach it, teach the unit, I research it. If I'm not sure about something I make sure that, you know, I have all the information regarding it. But I'm confident explaining things to them if I have information.

Teacher L: ...the questions...are the content is usually one UK or Australian based content...

Interviewer C: I see. Can you just give me an example?

Teacher L: OK. There's a task 1 but the most important is 'the tube'.

Interviewer C: They know what a 'tube' is.

Teacher L: They don't understand it, no.

Teacher MM: ... because we have here Jalan, something Jalan something, there are times we have to, we have a little problem there, yes with the names of streets.

Teacher MM: I think the cultural aspects but it would really help our students if there is a mix of Asian ... all the Asian flavour.

These comments suggest a way of using the language which would set it within an Asian context so that students would be using an unfamiliar language within a familiar context by building a bridge from the familiar to the unfamiliar but as Canagarajah (2002) observed:

In a context where cultures and codes are in flux, the project in language teaching is not to make students move from a 'native' language to a target language, or host culture to receiving culture. Rather, the need is to shuttle between cultures and communities.
(Canagarajah 2002, p 146)

Thus the use of familiar terms at the beginning of the program could serve to introduce this dynamic movement between cultures, and students would learn through a process of gradual exposure as the support of the familiar is gradually removed.

A related point was also made by one of the teachers that students should only be tested on what they know:

Interviewer A: Do you think they ought to have a wider range of reading?

Teacher J: I think that'd be useful especially, um, because sometimes you know, in testing they say you shouldn't test students on what they don't know. You should test them on something they've been exposed to before.

This comment was made in conjunction with an observation that much of the reading content appeared to be Australian and, once again, a more familiar context might be appropriate at this stage. Also the idea that many English speakers actually operate mainly within other cultures is a reality.

Since roughly only one out of every four users of English in the world is a native speaker of the language (Crystal 2003), most ELF interactions take place among 'non-native' speakers of English. (Seidlhofer 2004, p 10)

Other comments indicate cultural attitudes to the content of the reading passages. Teacher P, for example, was very direct in condemning passages about art or music and claimed that it would be more relevant to include topics on world issues. In fact, texts on Western art or music could be seen as self-indulgence on the part of the textbook author as it would be extremely rare for young Asian test candidates, who may never have visited an English-speaking country, to be familiar with these topics. One has only to look at percentages of foreign students in university courses to see that such humanities subjects do not attract high numbers. On the other hand, current affairs topics are easier to relate to and write about.

Interviewer C: Current issues?

Teacher P: Yeah like topics like poverty er, and the world situation er, say I think will be more useful and a lot easier for them to understand.

Interviewer C: Mm. Right. More general for everybody.

Teacher P: More general for everybody rather than talking about art pieces or music pieces.

Interviewer C: Mm.

Teacher P: Or talking about the dolphins in Australia. A lot of passages I see that they refer to Australia, the oceans of Australia and this and that.

Interviewer C: Because many students go there to study.

One argument favouring cultural content in the IELTS Test has been that students need to know about the target culture. However, it is debatable whether test conditions are ideal for imparting this kind of information:

Because sometimes when you are put in that situation then you can learn from there you see. You don't really need to say that you have to be prepared for that because you're going there.
(Teacher G)

Some teachers mentioned that the IELTS Test preparation class was just one area where they adopted teaching approaches which differed from those which Malaysian students were used to:

Interviewer C: Is there a difference between the way students approach study generally in Malaysia um the kind of skills they need for the IELTS Test?

Teacher H: Um there's a big difference because in the schools they learn different things the way the teachers teach er, is not so...make them indicate the er, you know, students, they're not really capable of independent study, self-directed learning...

Interviewer C: For example, let's think about Task 2 Writing...

Teacher MM: Yes.

Interviewer C: Is that skill useful and required in other areas of their study? For academic writing and reading tasks?

Teacher MM: Yes I think. Yes. Say in Sociology, in the area of critical thinking paper they do use these skills. They need them yeah. Yeah, to analyse the topic, to be able to rationalise and be able to talk, to translate, yeah.

Teacher P: Er, no. I, I think listening they er, would have done very little during their school days in school. In Malaysia schools they do very little listening in Malaysian schools.

Having taught in the Malaysian system, these teachers are well situated to be able to comment on the relationship of IELTS Test practice to other subjects.

Regarding Writing Task 2, there were many opinions about the difficulties for students in Malaysia:

Teacher H: ...see that because in secondary school they...it appears the students are trained to memorise things but here they're trained to use the application of skills. But they do pick it up. [This belief is validated by student comments below.]

Teacher M: They've got this problem in the last, in the Writing section. They can't produce their own opinion. It's very difficult for them to say what they would like to say as if someone would punish them. And then the last part, the Speaking part, section 3, very difficult, oh dear. I think it's very hard, it's culture, actually.

Interviewer A: So do you think the test ought to take this difference into account?

Teacher M: No, no. I don't agree, because if they would like to sit...if they would like to go abroad they're not going to apply what they have learnt in their country.

This teacher, who had herself studied in the USA, demonstrates a very pragmatic approach to understanding what skills students must develop for overseas study. Coming from the same educational background as most of her students, she finds it easy to recognise the different educational philosophies.

A similar view is then voiced by another teacher, with a different linguistic and cultural background, who nevertheless had obtained her qualifications in Malaysia.

Teacher G: Sometimes or many times students are not used to voicing their opinion about any issue. So you need to give them practice there, you know to get them used to that sort of a requirement, because even in a class if you ask them what do you think about something they just don't say anything.

Interviewer A: Do you have any techniques you've developed for eliciting their points of view?

Teacher G: Techniques? I've tried to give them like um, topics. We start off with topics of course which are closer to them, which they're familiar with. Maybe the dress code here or something like that, you know and then they're able to say something and then we progress to trying to give them an idea, just like this familiar topic, you know all topics have got two sides...

This exchange reveals that the teacher has a very clear understanding of what test strategies her students lack. Her mention of 'dress code' as a familiar topic is strong evidence of her insider understanding of the culture she shares with the students. A teacher from elsewhere would take time to build up this store of knowledge – and with this degree of expertise already in the country, it could be argued that training outsiders is a costly and unnecessary exercise. Furthermore, unlike monolingual teachers, these teachers are speaking from experience of the same culture and education as their students, and this shared knowledge gives them authority. Hence when they say 'in Malaysia, we...' or '...like the dress code here', they are immediately part of the local environment, whereas the foreign interviewer is an outsider. As Canagarajah (2002) has observed, speaking of 'postmethodism':

...periphery teachers are liberated from centre expertise to become more sensitive to their local classroom and sociocultural context. This also makes periphery teachers truly creative in integrating experience, imagination and knowledge to devise learning strategies with/for students. (Canagarajah 2002, p 149)

With regard to teaching IELTS Test practice, it can be argued that Malaysian teachers, who would be defined as periphery teachers according to Canagarajah (2002), have already attained this level of expertise. This authority, it is suggested, explains why the students, in their questionnaires, are also able to express an understanding of the cultural differences in the IELTS Writing. A multi-layered, or triangulated, approach can be used to show that both teachers and students in Malaysia are aware of the cultural demands of IELTS and how these differ from their own educational practices. The fact that student awareness of these cultural differences approximates that of teachers is possible testimony to the local teachers' ideal position as experts in two cultures qualifying them to convey this awareness.

The following is one student response to Question 9: *Do you enjoy IELTS practice classes?*

'IELTS provides me chances to speak my mind unlike secondary school where our syllabus in studying english (sic) are focused on textbooks.'

Expressing similar attitudes to teachers about differences between Malaysian and Western education, students reveal that they understand, from their teachers, that they are required to develop different skills for academic study in English.

5 CONCLUSION

The stated aim of this research was to:

- 1) describe the sociolinguistic background of the teachers in the IELTS Test practice classroom in a selection of Malaysian English language centres
- 2) explore how the teachers employed the different a) linguistic and b) cultural practices available to them when preparing their students to take the IELTS Test and how these practices may affect other aspects of their classroom practice
- 3) find a working definition of both native and non-native English-speaking teacher specifically in the Malaysian context. The needs of teachers working in Malaysia could then be identified and strategies for fulfilling these needs could consequently be suggested.

Changes to the original brief became necessary as the research progressed and these have been noted in the report. (See section 3.) Constraints of time and place resulted in major changes to the proposed classroom observations and follow-up discussions with teachers. Regarding the former, access to the institutions was limited not only because of teaching schedules but also because of the time and expense required to travel to the actual locations. However, a range of teaching styles in a variety of locations provided valuable information (Appendix 3) confirming the professionalism of the institutions involved, and their shared commitment with IELTS Test stakeholders around the world. Moreover, the transcribed interviews with teachers provided in-depth evidence of teachers' interest in, and knowledge of, the IELTS Test.

5.1 English language background of teachers of IELTS Test practice classes

With respect to the discussion on the terms native/non-native English-speaking teacher versus bilingual and monolingual English-speaking teacher, such distinctions have wider implications than a mere description of native and non-native might express. This may also bring into question the expression 'periphery' (Canagarajah 1999, 2002) bearing in mind that there has been very little investigation into what effect the diverse backgrounds of 'periphery' teachers have on their teaching methodology (Canagarajah 1999, 2002; Holliday 2005). What all the teachers we interviewed claimed was confidence in being able to familiarise their students with the varied linguistic and cultural environments and demands of the IELTS Test, in particular the areas of critical thinking, and expressing opinions. They also all claimed the confidence to make appropriate assessments on their students' progress through the Band Scores as described in the *IELTS Handbook*.

5.2 Washback

During the interviews with teachers, it became clear that the teachers did not have the metalanguage of washback and were not accustomed to articulating the effects of the IELTS Test practice materials and pedagogy in other areas of their teaching. In addition, it should be noted that the conditions under which most of the teacher respondents were working did not allow them the opportunity to undertake professional development, nor to prepare their own materials or involve themselves in areas which would take advantage of any positive washback effects. However, some teachers did say that they had been able to use the Bandscore Descriptors given in the *IELTS Handbook* which had provided useful scaffolding on which to develop assessment criteria for other courses.

Student comments on the washback into their linguistic and cultural learning processes were extremely positive. Although we did not pose any direct questions to students about washback, their responses to other questions revealed that their IELTS Test practice classes gave them a great deal of confidence in using English as a tool for knowledge and for being able to think critically and to express their opinions in both writing and speaking. Regardless of whether or not the teachers are native or non-native speaking, the washback effect as perceived by the majority of students, is that the

IELTS Test practice classes gave them English language skills, general knowledge and world cultural awareness to an extent that some students commented that these classes should be offered in secondary schools and all tertiary institutions.

Indeed, since this research makes an initial foray into the area of what effect the diverse backgrounds of 'periphery' teachers have on their teaching methodology from the particular angle of the IELTS Test, one hypothesis emerging seems to be that to be successful in this field, teachers do not necessarily need Western-based TESOL training. What they do need, however, are answers to their questions, not ours! The teachers we interviewed had comments and questions but we had our own pre-conceived ideas of what we wanted to find out and we did not always explore their comments in sufficient depth. Most of the teachers we interviewed were eager to know how the IELTS Test administration could provide information to help them better prepare their students for the Test. They were not aware of the information they could get from the IELTS Test website which has been further enhanced since these interviews were carried out.

The main question which arises concerns the skills of these teachers to prepare students for the Test. The monolingual Western TESOL perspective has assumed (until recently, eg Carrier 2003) that a certain training program is required for all English language teachers. Hence among the recommendations emerging from these observations for IELTS are that there should be more interaction between teachers of practice classes and test administrators. This is an area where the development of practice materials for local experience and environment may well be appropriate. While the teachers are culturally and linguistically aware, their need is to become more test aware.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The current situation of the IELTS Test administration involves a top-down approach where the test specifications are handed down by the administrators, with little opportunity for local discussion/interaction. Teachers with a certain amount of experience are given practice classes but with no resources beyond the official handbook (a very slim volume) and commercial materials. Because most of these teachers in Malaysia are bilingual and, in some cases, have studied overseas, they understand the cultural underpinnings of the IELTS Test (as we have observed through their comments re critical thinking) and are well able to see the differences between the educational background of the students (also their social background) and that of the target English-language environment. Nevertheless, they feel that any acknowledgement of their culture is excluded from the Test content. Since IELTS is an international test, a certain level of cultural neutrality is necessary, but for teachers and students who are teaching/learning in diverse linguistic and cultural environments to feel comfortable, it is desirable to incorporate into practice materials some degree of orientation to the skills developed in the Test, and some justification for their inclusion. Teachers need to be encouraged to develop their own transition process from the local to the international.

To facilitate this, local IELTS Test administrators could regularly advise local teachers of changes to the IELTS Test website specifically where the website includes useful information on assessment. In addition, the IELTS Test website could be expanded to offer advice to teachers in varied locations and there should be opportunities for question and answer sessions. Training sessions and information packs should be provided to all institutions running IELTS Test practice courses. These sessions should encourage teachers to reflect more on how to use their own overseas experience for the benefit of their students and to feel more confident about the expertise they have acquired as bilingual students – to the extent of drawing obvious contrasts between their culture and the target one.

Finally, learners of English may use the IELTS Test materials and indeed take a test even though they may have no intention to pursue further study in an English-speaking country nor to migrate.

The IELTS Test is becoming a vehicle for general English language learning. To reflect this, the Test writers and Test practice writers could endeavour to include themes and topics which reflect the many different cultures and situations where learners live.

6.1 Summary of recommendations

6.1.1 Course/test preparation books

It would be helpful if commercially produced publications were to include a greater variety of texts and themes which represent more widely the entire English-speaking world. This would provide the scaffolding to help students everywhere to move from local to international contexts.

6.1.2 Teacher training

Teachers have expressed a need for more information about what is required for Writing and Reading tasks at different band levels. Examples of Writing scripts and Speaking responses could be commented on, and analysed in greater detail, so that teachers can be guided in this important area of test preparation. This may also alleviate the problem of teachers suggesting inappropriate Bandscores to their students and thereby causing disappointment.

Some of the classes comprised learners from other countries and language and cultural backgrounds unfamiliar to the teacher. In this situation, the students could be seen as passing from a first to a second language but within a third linguistic and cultural context. This may require specific training for teachers which has not yet been addressed.

6.1.3 Interactive website

An interactive website would be useful where teachers could be offered the opportunity to post comments and questions through discussion pages on the IELTS Test website. This would allow them to develop awareness of test and test score issues.

6.2 Recommendations for further research

Although this research has examined the positive effects of washback on teachers and learners in the IELTS Test preparation classroom, further studies could usefully examine both positive and negative washback effects and in greater detail. It would also be useful to undertake a more complex and detailed case study of one classroom in an institution where test practice is given by non-native speaking or periphery teachers in a setting where English is not the first language. Such a case study, carried out in a classroom where both local and international students are the learners may reveal yet another, growing aspect of the English language classroom and the influence of the IELTS Test worldwide.

The relevance of IELTS for study in English, but in a country where English is not the first language, also merits further consideration, particularly with regard to the Speaking and Listening modules. Malaysia is one example of a country where English is not the official language, but where students come to study in English, and although both students and teachers in this situation continue to rate the IELTS Test positively, it is important for test administrators and designers to keep this dimension in mind. Thus the danger, expressed by Shohamy (2004), of violating democratic principles, can be avoided, because there is constant monitoring of the changing IELTS landscape.

This research also revealed that IELTS Test practice classes are being offered to students who have neither study abroad intentions, nor migration/travel intentions, and that it is being included as part of the English language curriculum. It would be interesting to explore how extensive this practice is, and its perceived value in increasing general knowledge and awareness of other cultures, not only in Malaysia but also in other countries.

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APPENDIX 1: TEACHER INTERVIEW PROMPTS: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

- 1 What is your first language? Which language do you mainly speak at home? At work? In the IELTS Test practice classroom?
- 2 What is your English language background (education and experience living/working/holidaying in an English-speaking country)?
- 3 How confident do you feel with your English language – Speaking? Writing? Listening? Reading?
- 4 What is your TESOL training background? How long have you been teaching English? Do you ever have to/choose to do in-service training?
- 5 What is your IELTS Test background? Are you a trained and certified assessor?
- 6 Have you ever taken an IELTS Test? Which module?
- 7 How long have you been teaching IELTS Test practice classes?
- 8 What kind of materials do you use in the IELTS Test practice classes? (commercial/self-produced?)
- 9 If you use self-produced materials, do you prepare these by yourself or with a group of teachers?
- 10 If you produce your own IELTS Test practice materials, do you model them on commercial products or do you model them on other types of English language course materials?
- 11 How familiar are you with the types of academic tasks which appear in commercial IELTS Test practice materials, such as describing a graphic?
- 12 Do you feel that the commercially produced materials are appropriate for Malaysian students? Why?/Why not?
- 13 How confident do you feel in explaining the cultural aspects of the IELTS Test to your students?
- 14 How confident do you feel assessing your students' writing and speaking skills?
- 15 Are you involved in producing the curriculum for this IELTS Test practice course? If yes, can you explain how the curriculum is prepared?
- 16 Do you feel that your students are motivated to succeed at the IELTS Test?
- 17 Do you feel that your students are motivated to develop better general English language skills?
- 18 Do you feel there are demands made on students by the IELTS test which their cultural background does not equip them for? Which module/s in particular? What are the demands?
- 19 Do you feel that teaching IELTS Test preparation has a positive washback effect on your teaching? In what ways?
- 20 Do you feel that preparing materials for IELTS Test preparation classes has a positive washback effect on your preparation for materials for other English language classes? In what ways?

APPENDIX 2: TEXT OF STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the questions as completely as possible. Thank you very much for your assistance in carrying out this research.

1. What language(s) do you speak at home?
2. What language(s) do you speak with your friends at school?
3. What language(s) do you mainly speak in the IELTS Test practice class?
4. What other English language classes do you do at school besides the IELTS Test practice class?
5. Have you ever taken an IELTS Test? Yes No
If no, please continue to Question 6.
If yes, please answer the three questions below.

Which type of test did you take?	Academic	General Training
Did you do Test practice before you took the IELTS Test?	Yes	No
Do you think Test practice helped you do the IELTS Test?	Yes	No
6. Why are you studying English?
7. Why are you taking this IELTS Test practice course?
8. How do you want to use English in your future?
9. Do you enjoy IELTS practice classes? Yes No Why? Why not?
10. Do you think doing IELTS Test practice helps you with your language skills overall?
Yes No If yes, how?
11. Do you think that the skills you gain from the IELTS Test practice course will help you to reach your goals in English? Yes No Why? Why not?
12. Which module (Reading, Writing, Listening or Speaking) is most useful to you? Why?
13. Do you think writing practice for IELTS is different from:
 - a. Writing practice for other tests of English? Yes No If yes, how?
 - b. Writing in other English classes? Yes No If yes, how?
 - c. Writing in your first language? Yes No If yes, how?
 - d. Writing for other subjects? Yes No If yes, how?
14. Does writing for the IELTS Test help you in any of these areas above?
Yes No If yes, how?
15. Do you find your general reading skills are improving as a result of practising the Reading test?
Yes No If yes, how?
16. Do you think reading practice for IELTS is different from:
 - a. Reading practice for other tests of English? Yes No If yes, how?
 - b. Reading in other English classes? Yes No If yes, how?
 - c. Reading in your first language? Yes No If yes, how?
 - d. Reading for other subjects? Yes No If yes, how?
17. Does reading for the IELTS Test help you in any of these areas above?
Yes No If yes, how?
18. Is the Speaking test practice useful for improving your general speaking skills?
Yes No If yes, what improvement have you noticed?
19. Do you think all parts of the IELTS Test are equally useful? Yes No Why? Why not?
20. What impact has Listening test practice had on your listening skills?

21. Have you ever holidayed in an English speaking country? Yes No
If your answer is no, please go to Question 22.
If your answer is yes:
Which country?
How long did you stay?
22. Have you ever worked in an English speaking country? Yes No
If your answer is no, please go to Question 23.
If your answer is yes:
Which country?
What kind of work did you do?
How long did you stay?
23. Have you ever studied in an English-speaking country? Yes No
If your answer is no, please go to Question 24.
If your answer is yes:
Which country?
What subject and to what level did you study?
How long did you study for?
24. Have you ever lived in an English speaking country? Yes No
If you answer is no, please go to Question 25.
If your answer is yes:
Which country?
How long did you live there?
25. Do you feel that you learn about life in English-speaking countries in this IELTS Test practice course?
Yes No
26. What other sources do you use to learn and practise English? (tick as many boxes as applicable.)
Speaking with native English-speaking friends/people?
Speaking with non-native speaking friends/people?
Sending and receiving emails
Using the internet
Reading newspapers magazines books
Watching television movies
Listening to radio music

If you would like to make any further comments or any suggestions about learning English or IELTS Test practice, please do so, on the lines below.

Thank you very much for your assistance in carrying out this research.

APPENDIX 3: SUMMARY OF NOTES FROM CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

Institution	Class length	No of students	Lesson focus/materials	Student/teacher interaction and teacher's role	Proposed test date in relation to current class	Proportion of program dedicated to IELTS*
A	1 hour	17	Reading Types of possible topics were explained (cultural, sociological, historical, scientific, mathematical) and types of possible questions (T/F, completion sentences) and reading skills required (main point, locating key words, skimming, scanning, finding specific information)	Friendly discussion about topics and quick responses to teachers questions	In 9 months. (Test is taken at the end of 2 nd year of 3-year diploma program).	3 hours of 20 hrs p/w for 2 nd year of program. (1-2 hours per week for 1 st year)
B	Full-day (6 hours) 1 st 1.5 hours observed	17	Discussion in pairs to prepare essay question from textbook.	Teacher invited students to present opinions to class and gave feedback focusing on content	Since this was an additional course, decision was up to individuals	Intensive test practice offered in addition to normal program (no of weeks??)
C	1.5hours?	13	Focus on speaking – students given topic to discuss in pairs, then as whole class.	Teacher encouraged students to interact naturally, with her as she moved around and with each other	In 2 – 3 months	Intensive 10-week 30 hour evening program focusing on IELTS test Skills
D	2 hours (3 classes observed)	32	1 st class – cut short because of meeting re o'seas study for students Reading task from t'book 2 nd class reading and writing skills 3 rd class reading and listening skills. Students repeated listening test from an earlier class.	Students were given one-to-one attention as teacher gave back previous writing tasks. Students did not speak in class except to ask teacher to repeat answer. Teacher controlled all stages of class, began with giving back marked h'work and querying latecomers. At the end of timed sections of reading, teacher read out answers.	In 2-3 months but depends on progress	Classes 1 and 2 formed part of fulltime intensive English program, were also offered to business studies students. Class 3 was an evening course which could be taken alone, or in combination with other college courses
E	1 hour	24	Students, who were planning to study in Australia, were invited to ask questions of observers.	Students were confident and willing to talk with observers, asking many questions about the IELTS test and about study in Australia. Teacher's role was minimal, allowing students the freedom to interact with visitors.	In 1 month (or less?)	

APPENDIX 4: TABULATED RESPONSES FROM STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES

Note: The actual words, grammar and spelling have been reproduced without alteration.

COLLEGE A1

Question Number	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5	Student 6
1	Malay	Malay	Malay sometimes English	English Malay	Malay	Malay English
2	Malay English	Malay English	Malay English	English, Malay	Malay English	Mostly Malay
3	English	English	English	English	English	English
4	Other English subject	Gen. English Bus Comm. Academic Studies	Ditto individual and group skills	Ditto	GE BUS.COMM. A S	
5	No	No	No	No	No	No
6	To improve my English skills	Because I love English	Because nowadays English is an important language and need us to master in this language. It will be more easier if we are good in English because nowadays all the job need the fluency in English	To improve my communication skills and also want to learn more about English	I love English very much and I hope to be an English teacher	I find English is an interesting language to be learn. It is very much different from Malay language
7	To gain more knowledge about studying English in variety ways	To pass the IELTS certificate so I can further my study abroad	Because learning IELTS giving us and also help us in mastering the English language. It have been divided into 3 parts and it really help us to improve our English	To see my achievement in this test and this is one of the subject that I must take in my course	It is compulsory in my course and also to know my level in English	It's in the subjects
8	I prefer to use English with every people that work around me. It can improve their English and me also	In my speaking	It is very important to use English in our daily life especially when at work we need to communicate with others in English to gain more knowledge and improve our English language	Use my English in my life such as at work and also to communicate with other's people	I want to be an English teacher and further my study in Australia	Basically I want to use it when doing business overseas
9	No. need more activities in this subject so that student will not use the same skills during the learning progress	No because it quite boring	Yes help us in improving our skills grammar, listening reading and also listening it is one of the best ways to master in English	Yes learn me how to read write listen and speak fluently and better	Yes, I love the lecturer that teach me in IELTS and to pass the IELTS exam	Yes it really make me realise how important to know current issues

10	Yes, It shows me that I need to learn and record more because the issues that appear in the test really challenge and need me to improve my studying style	Yes, to sit for IELTS I need to learn more about English especially grammar and vocabulary and of course I need to be fluent in English so actually it already help me	Yes, If we are learning IELTS Test practice we will have more skills in answering the exam papers which is similar to the IELT Test practice	Yes because with IELTS it give me tips and skills how to answer question easily and correctly	Yes, if my result are good I can further my study in the university and learn more to communicate in English well	Yes, I learn more English words and how to understand it and when to apply it
COLLEGE A1 cont...						
11	Yes we already had a skills that market wants	Yes, because by doing for the IELTS Test practice had helping me to improve my English	Yes because it really works and many of the practices make us really in level of perfect	Yes, because it contains lots of tips that can help me in my English language	Yes, it teach me to be good in reading, speaking and listening in English	Yes, those skills can help me aware my level of speaking, listening and reading and the way I understand
12	Reading. If we read more we know what we are going to talk about. If not you will talk nonsense	Listening and Speaking because it will help me to improve my listening and speaking skills	Writing because writing need more practices rather than reading listening and speaking. The words and sentence structure play the main role in writing	Speaking give me courage and speak correctly in front of people	Writing. I love writing and this module help me to improve my writing	All those skills are important and I can at least improve my skills
13a	no	No	Yes IELTS Test practice is more to skills in reading writing listening and speaking	Yes it show how to write rightly	No	Yes we have to reflect on some of the issues and information
13b	No	No	No	No	No	No
13c	Yes the structure of the writing is a bit different	No	Yes the structure is more difficult	Yes different language and different style	Yes for me writing in English is more simple than my first language	Yes because of the format and the language usage
13d	Yes not every subjects need a skills like the IELTS test	No	Yes the structure needs to be more alert and have to avoid grammar mistakes	No	no	Yes sometimes it doesn't relate that much
14	Yes my writing flow in a good structure	Yes it give me more practice towards English	Yes	Yes easier for me to answer any questions	Yes it was related to each other	Yes academically it has help me to improve my learning skills and knowledge
15	Yes, easy for me to look at the main idea	Yes, it has helped me to be such a good reader		Yes by using all the skills that had been taught by the lecturer	Yes I learn lots of vocabulary and improve my reading skills	Yes I found out the more you read the better my skills are and that reading is fun

16a	no	Yes we need to read the whole passage. We just need to skimming and scanning to understand it		Yes it contains skimming and scanning tasks	Yes The IELTS it is more to skimming and scanning the passage	No I don't know COLLEGE A1 cont...
16b	No	No		Yes by knowing how to read and get information quickly	no	Yes it's quite the same but it's a lot tougher
16c	Yes lots of vocabulary to look at in English	Yes If I read in my first language I need to read the whole passage		No	No	No
16d	No	No		No	Yes we didn't need to know what the passage is all about Just find the important thing	Yes listening is different
17		Yes, it give me more knowledge about grammar and vocabulary		Yes by saving time because the skills to read quickly by not read the whole passage	Yes help me to read quickly but still get the information that I want	Yes I don't know exactly how
18	Yes, more confidence and meaningful	Yes, I can speak more fluent than before I also have a spirit to talk in front of the public		Yes, I know how to speak fluently in front of people	Yes, I can give my own opinion in front of the class	Yes, I tend to be more outspoken
19	Yes we need a complete skills to be perfect	It help me more in improving my English		Yes, give useful information and skills to our English course	Yes all of the parts are important in order to be good in English	Yes because it relates with our daily lives
20	I become a good listener and listen only to the right talking	It has help me to be more excellent on listening		How to listen correctly and patiently	Teach me to focusing while listening	I know the differences between listening and hearing I listen to understand
21	No	No	No	No	no	no
22	No	No	No	No	no	no
23	No	No	No	No	no	Yes UK level 7 1 year
24	No	No	No	No	no	Yes UK 1 year
25	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	yes	yes
26	4 5 newspapers and books 6 7	All	13 5 6 7	All	All	All

Comments	This subject is really good but need some adjustment on the activities to make it more interesting		IELTS should be learn by other courses too besides language and communication courses it really works	So far learning IELTS is enjoyable and I can gain more knowledge in this subject		I think people nowadays are good in English especially in non-native countries are because they love to listen and watch everything from English countries
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COLLEGE A2

Question Number	Student 7	Student 8	Student 9	Student 10	Student 11	Student 12
1	Malay English	Malay English	Malay English	Malay, sometimes English	Malay English	Malay English
2	Malay English	Malay English	Malay English	Malay sometimes English	Malay English	Malay
3	English	English	English	English	English Malay	English
4	GE, AS BC individual and group work, ITLL	GC AS Intro to tertiary study	GE AS BC many more	AS GE BC	AS BC	AS, BC, GE
5	No	No	No	No	No	No
6	Because I want to improve my English language and to gain more knowledge studying English	To speak fluently in English	Because I know that with English I can go far in study or career	I like to learn more about English and hopefully talk fluently one day Besides English is very important in today world and in finding jobs or in the workplace.	The reason is it's a part of my studies and also the learn more than just my native language	It is first language in the globe I want to further my study in English speaking country
7	This is the good course because it helped us to improve our English in reading, listening, speaking and writing	To experience the international test and to further study to abroad country	To learn better English perhaps for internationally stage	To further study perhaps in overseas and want to obtain the certificate	It is part of the course	To master English
8	To make sure I can use English all the day when meeting my friends, clients and so on	Speak English often with the public	As maximum as I can I hope that I can speak English as fluent as I speak my first language	I want to use English as I use Malay language in the future	English in my future is for communication and an advantage then non-English speakers	In everyday life
9	Yes because IELTS classes teach me all the very good knowledge in English overall I enjoy it	Yes it teach me or give me the easy skills to answer the question	Yes because I learn many skills that I haven't know before	Yes because it is important for get good results in the test and the way the lecturer teach	Yes, to learn something that is not taught back in school	Yes because I can learn new words

10	Yes, because from day to day my English language have an improvement I'm proud of learning IELTS	Yes, because it makes me become more comfortable and confident in speaking English	Yes, by improving my skills on reading listening writing	Yes when learning IELTS it helps me in improving my English language This is because it covers most of the important skills – writing speaking and listening	Yes, because of it's an international language system that not all of Malaysian studies	Yes, with practice that being given
11	Yes from the skills that I gain, I can use it in my examination and also IELTS test it really help me	Yes, because all the skills that I have learn in IELTS can be practice in my daily life	Yes because I can see English is not as difficult as I thought it would be when I know and practise the skills	Yes, because it develop my English skills I want to be good at it and it help me	Yes, because of it's up to the standard and it's a world wide education	Yes, it content listening reading speaking and writing practices
12	I think reading and speaking I love to communicate with others and I love reading	Writing and speaking writing will help me to become a good writer and speaking will help me to become a good spoken	Reading and speaking because it is the main skills that are required in my course	Speaking communication is important there are a lot of people converse in English when speaking it help a lot either in obtain information or relation with friends and lecturers	Speaking it is the only direct way to communicate with others	Speaking because I want to speak fluently
13a	Yes quite different because IELTS teach me more and detail of the English language	No	no	No	Yes the standard is much more higher it does follow texts but follow the current media	Yes it is an international standard
13b	No	No	No	No	No	NO
13c	Yes because it was an international language	No	No	Yes in English we learn the topic sentence general idea general statement and so on. These aspects is very important in IELTS or other English class	No	Yes my first language will be easy
13d	Yes it show us the good and formats in writing a good article graph	No	No	No	No	No
14	Yes improve my writing skill and make me do better	Yes in IELTS it helps me how to predict graph, chart and some other topic	Yes because it teaches me the skills that required to make or write a good form of writing	Yes develop many skills of writing	no	Yes improve my language

15	Yes, it make me do better in comprehension	Yes, I can read faster now and easy for me to understand some of the words now	Yes it makes me understand the reading passage easier with the skills	Yes we learn the reading skills and it helps to understand for the difficult passage	no	Yes more bombastic words
16a	No	No	No	Yes the technic or skills is important to answer the question accurately	No	COLLEGE A2 cont...
16b	No	No		Yes same as above	No	No
16c	Yes it's more details and a lot of questionnaire	Yes in my first language the words that have been written is more easier to pronounce	Yes because we need to understand each and every word of the passage	Yes we're the native speakers for Malay language so there is less difficulties to understand	No	Yes English must be more harder
16d	No	No	No	Yes IELTS is like technical	No	No
17	Yes make me better in reading test	Yes, it helps me to read some of the complicated article in every way	Yes by improving my skills on reading and to make me understand any passage easier	Yes the skills that we learn sometime can be apply in other subjects	Yes in speaking which is the most important has improved	Yes the more reading that being done
18	Yes, I can communicate in front of public without any negative feelings	Yes, the way of my pronunciation	Yes I speak more fluent and become more confident compared to before	Yes, I can speak English better than before and with confidence	Yes, have been communicating much more fluent brave to project ideas in public and using English more in daily conversations	Yes, I have more confident in speaking
19	Yes all the parts is useful in our life and our studying English	Yes all parts in IELTS can be practise in all parts of study which is in language	yes	Yes, it is the basic in life	Yes it has the balance of giving the learner information and to exceed in every corner	Yes cover all skill
20	I can listen to many people and listen how they speak in English language	Alert in listening	I'm aware of what people saying and try to understand them my best	Can understand different people that talk English in different accent better than before	To be more observed	I can remember easier than before
21	Yes Istanbul a week	no	no	no	no	no

22	No	no	no	no	no	no
23	No	no	no	no	Yes England kindergarten 2 years	no
24	No	no	no	no	yes England 4 years	no
25	Yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
26	All	all	all	all	1 2 4 5 books 6 7	All
Comments	I hope that IELTS test can give me an improvement in my English language and also help me do more better and success in my IELTS test. IELTS is one of the good subject to learn because it teach us how to become best speaker and also best writer in English. I was one of the lucky person that learn IELTS [This person frequently wrote 'can't' when I assume meant 'can']	I hope that I could get all the sources of IELTS easy in Malaysia and wish this test can be practise in all university or college in Malaysia	It is a good practice and I'm proud that I'm taking it. Frankly saying it is quite hard as I'm not the native speaker of the language but I think I've been doing fine I love this IELTS actually.	This IELTS Test practice is very useful Apart from the exam it also help me in daily life. Good work Keep it up	Just one comment IELTS should be taught in Malaysia's secondary schools for future and ease of the students	The question of reading section should be reduced

COLLEGE A2 cont...

COLLEGE A3

Question Number	Student 13	Student 14	Student 15	Student 16	Student 17
1	Malay,	Malay English	Malay English	Malay	Malay
2	Malay English	Malay	Malay	Malay Some English	Malay
3	English	Mostly English	English	English	English
4	BC GE AS	General English	AS GE BC	All classes	All classes
5	No	Yes A Yes Yes	Yes A No Yes	Yes A yes yes	Yes A yes yes
6	English is a worldwide language it's easy for us when we're abroad	So that it could improve my English and made it more easier for me to communicate with other people when ever I'm travelling overseas	Improve my English	I would like to improve my English and get a good job	The world today is conquered by English economy politics technology and also healthcare To survive English is the key where it becomes like a passport for job application and global communication
7	To practise speaking English	Because it helps me improve on my writing, speaking and reading skills	It's a part of subject in my course	I want to learn more and repair my mistake	IELTS proves my capability strengths and weaknesses and approved internationally The level of the IELTS standard is higher than other types of any English test in Malaysia
8	Maybe in my everyday life teach people who is weak in English	I'm gonna teach my children (when I have some) to speak English as the first language	I want to speak English with my friend and everybody that can speak in English	I would like to speak English all the time	Communication This also include working during leisure time or before sleep
9	Yes in this class I have to talk and that make me feel more confident	No well ... not really I think there should be some material that could make the class to be more interesting	Yes because I can learn more skills like reading, listening and so on in English	No I found that it is difficult to understand in class	Yes, IELTS teaches us to the deep English the techniques and skills which become one of the requirements to be a good communicator, journalist

10	Yes, by speaking in English whole time	Yes, by giving us an idea on how the test would be like and help us to prepare ourself	Yes, in the IELTS class I learn so many type and skill of English So this subject I can improve my English and I can practise it with other subject	Yes I get to know my mistake	Yes, during class sessions students are given articles, passages, questions These change everyday in consequence it improves our grammar enrich our vocabulary and sharpen our skills
11	Yes because nowadays all subject taught in English	Yes, because when my English have improve I could teach others a proper English like what I've learned in IELTS	Yes because it is very important to use the skills that I gain from the IELTS Test practice course I become more easily to understand English based on the skills that I have	Yes, IELTS Test sometimes are easy and hard	Yes, IELTS is a complete package for all English students
12	Speaking speaking in English can help in reading writing and others	Speaking Writing Reading all of these stuff I will not do if I've never ask to do	All because I think all the module is useful to my course	Writing and Speaking I can learn more	All above those three modules are required to master the English language
13a	No	Yes because all of the topics which is given most of it were current issue it is not only a local news but it's all over the world this will make me read thing which I never think to even look at	No	No	Yes different because IELTS provide different techniques for every different types of writing e.g. letters article opinions
13b		Yes but not really because most of the topic is logical topic and making me reading the same thing around will make me bored (always the same issue)	No	No	No
13c	Yes it has the different format	it does really help me to because it help me found some of the wired word which we don't really used	No	No	Yes English has its own 'persona' and 'rhymes'
13d	No	Yes it also help me improve on things such as grammar and stuff	No	No	No
14	Yes I can use the tips from the IELTS to help me	Yes the topic is interesting and make us think	Yes the skills that I have help me writing well	Yes I learn something new and improve my English	Yes improve the skills of writing reading listening
15	No	Yes, actually I don't really like reading only when ask to then I will read but it help me to read same	Yes my reading are improving when I have the reading skills	Yes the many I read the many I improve	Yes

COLLEGE A3 cont...

16a	No		No	No	No
16b	Yes by using the reading skills		No	No	Yes there are reading techniques which taught in IELTS
16c	No		No	No	No
16d	No		No	No	No
17	Yes using the reading skills I can read more faster and get a better understand		Yes scanning and skimming is useful to me	Yes IELTS Test help me from all of those areas above	Yes
18	Yes, I got the confidence to speak		Yes my pronunciation and intonation is improving day by day	Yes, I can speak well and pronounce the word correctly	Yes, more fluent, balanced and the idea flows smoothly
19	Yes it covers all aspects		Yes because we know how to writing speaking and listening in English well	Yes, it has all the skills that is needed	yes
20			It give me how to listening more easily and I'm also learn how to write note-taking when I'm listening	Listening test is tough but I improve my listening skills a little	Sharpen our ears and try to understand fast speakers
21	No		no	Yes Canada, Ontario 4 years	Yes Singapore Switzerland 2-3 months
22	No		no	no	no
23	No		no	Ontario Canada public school 3 years	no
24	No		no	Yes Ontario Canada 4 years	no
25	Yes		yes	yes	yes
26	All	1 4 6 television 7 radio	all	all	All
Comments				I think that the IELTS Test is good and we need this test in this college	Make IELTS more variety use the environments as subjects be more creative and focus on the techniques and skills

COLLEGE B

Question Number	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5	Student 6
1	Mandarin	BM	English and Malay	Myanmar. Sometimes English with brother	Mandarin	Chinese
2	Mandarin/English	BM	Malay and English	English	Mandarin	Chinese, English and Malay
3	English	English	English	English	English	Chinese and English
4	SAMat and ESL	None	None	Intensive English	ESL and English	Critical thinking
5	No	No	No	No	No	no
6	For my future	Because I want a good band	To improve my English in order to prepare for IELTS test	English is international language and very useful. English is my favourite language. I want to speak English skilfully and I want to write very well.	International language	To improve my W and S skills
7	To study in Australian university	To help me improve my band	Follow my husband to oversea in order to get the job in UK. It is a requirement when registering with the nursing (?) board of UK	I need to apply university entrance and then I want to more improve my English.	For o'seas study	To get a good band for IELTS
8	English for work and communicate with people	To survive in a foreign country	Communication and work	If I do international training business I need to use English language. After 10 -15 years I assume that without knowing english we cannot communicate each other	Communication	To get a job in a multinational company
9	Yes, beneficial and my friend is taking class too	Yes, because there are a lot of information I have learnt	Yes of course	Yes, because I'd to study English and I want to write very good essay.	Yes because having fun and learn a lot of things	Yes, because I learn things which I do not learn in class
10	Yes, helps me improve L and w	Yes, helped to improve all my skills	Yes, IELTS test practice helps me improve my reading grammar and understanding	Yes, IELTS focus on 4 skills	Yes because it want us to speak	Yes, I am doing better in classes
11	Yes, improve my English level	Yes, because the skills which are useful are the ones tested	Yes, English is important in countries such as UK, Aus, NZ and also	Yes	Yes because IELTS include L and S because I have problems on it	Yes, because I will need the skills to get a good job

			Malaysia. By knowing English well you can understand and converse better		COLLEGE B cont...	
12	Speaking, my speaking is very weak	L and W, because I am very weak in these skills	L and S. L is for instruction to understand the problem. S to communicate with people around.	Writing because I'm not very good at writing. If I study IELTS I have to write more so I can more improve my writing skill	L and S because it helps me got confidence to speak and also learn to listen the English words which speak by other people from different country	All because all the skills are important to understand and learn the language
13a	Yes, the time for writing is too short	A No response	No	No	no	No
13b	No	No	No	No	No	No
13c	No	No	no	No	No	Yes, grammatically
13d	No	Yes, doesn't have to be grammatically correct	Yes, the fact are important not the grammar	No	no	Yes, grammar is not important.
14	Yes, helps me write faster than before	Yes	Yes	Yes. More easy to write	Yes the other subjects no need thesis statement or topic sentence	Yes, I am more careful and apply the skills to write better.
15	No	Yes, more aware of the skills involved	Yes	Yes, IELTS reading is not easy. If I practise more later it will be easy	Yes, help me to improve my vocabulary	Yes, by applying the techniques learnt
16a	No	No	No	No	Yes, IELTS got skim and scan but other tests must read the whole articles.	Yes, question types are different.
16b	No	No	No	No	Yes, same with above	No
16c	No	No	No	No	Yes, same with above	No
16d	No	No	No	No	Yes, same with above	No
17	No	No, applying the skills	No	Yes	No	No
18	No	No	No	Yes, I have enough confidence to speak with others	Yes, more confidence to speak out	No

19	No	Yes because all parts are needed in general usage of English	No	COLLEGE B cont...	Yes	No because the reading of the IELTS different with other English classes	Yes, because the skills are all used in the usage of English
20	Helps to listen on the points only	Striving to understand the different accents better and able to understand the speed	No response	Nothing	No much impact because I cannot really get what they said	Able to listen specifically and quickly to fill answers	
21	No	No	Yes, Australia 1 week	No	No	No	
22	No	No	No	No	No	No	
23	No	No	No	Yes, Malaysia, English upper inter and advanced 6 months	No	No	
24	No	No	No	Yes, Malaysia 8 months	No	No	
25	No	No	No	yes	Yes	No	
26	No response	All sources except 'speaking with nss'	1, 3, 5	1, 2, 4, 5 books, 6 movies, 7	2, 3, 4, 5 books,	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	
Comments					I think IELTS is good enough because it include reading and writing, L and S, but different pronunciation of the people from different will make us confused		

COLLEGE C1

Question Number	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5	Student 6	Student 7
1	Malay	Cantonese and English	Malay and English	Malay language	Malay	Persian	Mandarin, english
2	Malay, English and Japanese	English and Malay	Malay and English	Malay and English	Malay and English	English	English, mandarin
3	English	Only English	Malay and English	English	English	English	English
4	MUFY English class	English classes offered by Monash university foundation year	Normal compulsory English class	MUFY English class	English	BC preparation for IELTS	No
5	No	no	No	No	No	NO	No
6	To improve my understanding, speech, communication skills and widen my vocabulary	English is the media of communication in tertiary studies. This language will be the portal to the seas of knowledge	To improve my skills in communicating effectively	Because English is an international language so I need to improve it	Because it enables me to communicate with various kind of people as English is an international language	I'm going to Australia for pursue my education in university	This is because English is the most common language in the world
7	To ensure myself a place in Australian universities	It is one of the entry requirements listed by Australian and NZ universities.	Other than because it is a requirement, it's because I want to know how well am I in this language	Because some of universities in Australia have a requirement which is IELTS	To know my ability in using the language	I need to be prepared to get high marks in IELTS	So that I can get used to the IELTS test format
8	As my daily language, my communication language, my 1 st language	I will use it as a media to communicates in international business	I want to be able to converse with anyone without any problems at all	In my workplace. Maybes when I have to work outstation the language is English.	Hopefully 90% in my daily life.	In workplace as businessman	to communicate with others, learn more knowledge
9	Yes, I love IELTS class because it is fun, lively and the teacher is nice too	Yes, I enjoy speaking IELTS provides me chances to speak my mind unlike secondary school where our syllabus in studying english are focused on textbooks.	Yes, this is the one period when I can sort of just take it easy and not really stress out my brain	Yes because I really need such a kind of English class involving all parts like L and S	Yes because the lecturer and the students is very caring, dedicated and friendly. Furthermore, it helps me to improve my English	Yes, this is useful and also comfortable classes	Yes because it encourages me to speak English more fluently

10	Yes, it trained me to better understand the proper usage of English, test my understanding of what English is all about.	Yes, it enhances my speaking and usage of grammar plus vocabulary.	Yes, I have some problems listening and talking so IELTS helps improve my skills	Yes, because IELTS teach students every single thing in the syllabus such as every word and the explanation	Yes, IELTS test practice is basically testing my language skills in my day life. It provides me with various techniques to communicate better with others.	Yes, by learning more words related to academic material, also improve S, L, and w skills	Yes, I learnt the grammar mistakes I usually done COLLEGE C1 cont...
11	Yes, I think the IELTS is one of the most effective course for improving English that I had taken/went through	Yes, refer to answer for q 6.	Yes, it is a wholes rounded course.	Yes, because I have to learn how to speak better	Yes because it totally covers up all aspects required by students	Yes	Yes because I am more exposed of a surrounding that can read, write, listen and speak in English
12	All I can freely use and practise all the skills without feeling shy and somehow this encourages me to further improve my English	speaking. I intend to venture into the marketing world. Charisma is essential.	L and S. these are the two major areas I find difficulty in mastering.	Speaking because it trains me to be more fluent when speaking as well as affects me when writing	Speaking because the pronunciation is slightly different in each words. Once my pronunciation is wrong the meaning will be wrong.	Writng. My writing is not that good so I need some help to improve it	Speaking, I learned and be more couraged to speak in the public
13a	Yes, simple yet effective	No	No	a. yes because IELTS involves all parts such as L,S, and writing	No	No	No
13b	Yes, need to write an essay with a limited time, which is for me the time is not enough to write a good essay in daily English class	No	No	Yes argumentative essay	No	No	No
13c	Yes I always write in Malay	No	No	Yes because it needs specific words	No	No	Yes, I need to translate and rearrange before I write it out.
13d	No IELTS does give writing topics which somehow connected to my other writing subjects	No	No	Yes, because grammar is one of the most important.	No	No	No

14	Yes, I can express my words more accurately and effectively and yet still in the simplest form	Yes, assimilating all elements, L,S,R,W that will be important to kick start my career	Yes, it broadens my point on certain issues		No	Yes by gain more experience in different writing style and also examine ourselves as a writer.	Yes, I can think and write more quickly and learn more vocabuluray
15	Yes, I can read together with my friends	No	Yes	No	No	Yes by trying to understand different topic articles	Yes, I can finish an article in a shorter time
16a	No	No	No	Yes, very limit time	No	No	No
16b	Yes, the reading is guided and looks easier.	No	No	No		No	No
16c	Yes, I read in Malay usually.	No	No	Yes, because I read very slowly		Not sure	No
16d	No	No	No	Yes because need grammar		No	No
17	Yes, help me to understand better.	No	No	Yes, speaking make me more brave	No	Yes because they are really similar to each other.	Yes, I can finish an article in a shorter time
18	Yes, I become more confident in public speaking and tend to do less grammar mistakes while talking.	Yes, speak more confidently in front of the crowd	Yes, it has made me more confident	Yes, can speak fluently	Yes, pronounce correctly	Yes by learning more useful words	Yes, I can speak more fluently
19	Yes, helps to improve myself wholly.	Yes, it is a perfect composition to empower my overall command in English	Yes, it covers all aspects that need to be mastered in order to master English.	No, my reading is still very slow	Yes		Yes because I found improvement in myself
20	Makes me more alert	Enhances my concentration	It helps me realise the need for me to concentrate and respond to others.	Different style of language	To listen carefully	It improve my listening skills	I can get to listen more accurately.
21	No	Yes, USA 3 weeks	No	Yes, Singapore, 1 week	No	No	Yes, Australia 2 weeks
22	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
23	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
24	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
25	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes

26	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, newspapers and books, 6, 7, music	Everything	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 newspapers, books, 6, 7 radio	1, 3, 4, 5 magazines, books, 6 movies, 7 music	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 newspapers, books, 6, 7 music	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Comments	Include interactive learning, ie usages of multimedia and computers. All in all I think IELTS is OK the way it is now	It's efficient to provide the fundamental elements of English to students	I feel that more emphasis need to be given in speaking skills as that is the major problem most people face.	The reading time is too very short, so please longer the limit time for reading thank you			COLLEGE C1 cont...

COLLEGE C2

Question Number	Student 8	Student 9	Student 10	Student 11	Student 12	Student 13
1	BM	Cantonese	Malay and English	Malay	Malay and English	Malay
2	BM and English	English	Malay and English	English	English	Malay
3	English	English	English	English	English	English
4	None	English class in the MUFY program	MUFY English	General English	General English	English subject
5	No	No	No	No	No	No
6	Because it's essential to be fluent in English if I were to further my studies overseas in Australia or NZ	It's a compulsory subject in mufy	To gain more knowledge and be more global as English is the worldwide language.	Because it's a worldwide language	To improves my communication in global	For communication, better understanding ensuring a better social status
7	So that I can study in NZ/Australia	I need IELTS to study in NZ or Australia as most universities require me to have some English qualification.	To pursue my study in Australia or NZ as it is a university requirement. Besides it helps me to improve my English skills.	As a requirement for furthering my studies in NZ	As a way to study in Australia or o'seas	The IELTS test is required if I want to study in NZ/Australia
8	As often as possible and as the main language I speak at home	I understand that English will become my medium of education in overseas and I need it especially when I step into the working world	To communicate with international people and have a better understanding with them.	In my career as a geologist English is certainly needed	In communication or meeting or maybe in writing.	Communicating with people around world, business purposes

9	Yes I enjoy it very much because the syllabus are very interesting as it revolves around my daily life. Beside, the teachers is very exciting	No, this is because I am taking IELTS classes for the sake of examination. Honestly, I prefer to learn in a relaxing manner where I can freely express myself	Yes because the teacher is so motivated that makes me feel motivated too and the syllabus that is based on our daily life makes me feel excited to learn	Yes because I can speak up and share my thought as well as improve my proficiency in this language	Yes, give me improvements in L, S and also interpretation	Yes, it gives me a rough idea on how people from other countries communicate. Besides that I love my lecturer
10	Yes, it improves my S and L skills, it teaches me the correct grammar rules and its syllabus widens my general knowledge	Yes, well I taught on how to write better essays. Besides that, I go through listening activities that improves my listening skills but most importantly is that I'm given a chance to speak in front of everyone.	Yes, in every class there will be speaking session to improve my vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation	Yes by improving my listening and writing skills plus the speaking skill. It's overall my English skill that have improved.	Yes, keep practising and learning from lecturer, give me wide view about English	Yes, in class we are often encouraged to speak up, it also sharpens my listening skills
11	No, my goal in English is to speak fluently. This can only be reached by speaking English as frequent as possible not by doing exercises in class	Yes, I will learn to communicate and listen better.	Yes my goal is to speak and write better in English so IELTS covers everything about English.	Yes, for instances speaking skill helps me to gain confidence so my English will be better when I am confident	Yes, IELTS is also in general English, then learn use information and skills to reach my goals	Yes, because speaking is given a lot of focus on
12	Speaking, because I need to be able to speak fluently if I were to express myself fluently, which is what communication is all about	Speaking, I need to be more confident when I speak, even when I know I can't speak properly.	Speaking, because I don't know how to express myself as my vocabulary is limited	Listening, I can understand others better.	Speaking, help to confront with people and improve my communicate	Speaking, my main weakness is the fear to talk fluently in public.
13a	No	Yes we need to explain diagrams.		No	Yes, IELTS needs more interpretation and needs skills to take out he details	No
13b	No	Yes, other classes require us to concentrate on other area		No	Yes English classes are using articles and need more information to takes down but IELTS needs searching and IQ skills	No

13c	Yes, IELTS focus much on general issues whereas BM focus on academic.	Yes, I'm more comfortable in my own language.	My first language is totally different from English	No	No	
13d	Yes. Writing for other subjects are all information intensive but IELTS is not.	No	No	No	No	Yes, for science subjects data is given more concern than language
14	No	No		No	No	No
15	Yes, I'm able to read faster	Yes, I learn to skim the passage		Yes by knowing the unknown words	No	No
16a	No	No	No	No	No	No
16b	No	No	No	No	No	No
16c	No	No	No	No	No	No
16d	No	No	No	No	No	Yes, other subjects are theoretical, which requires a lot of memorising
17	No	Yes, I learn to skim	Yes, I learned how to skim and summarise passages	Yes by knowing the unknown words	No	No
18	Yes, more confident	Yes, more confident	Yes, not so afraid of speaking in front of class	Yes, confident, usage of words, grammar.	Yes, my pronunciation	Yes, not to be stage fright and I learnt to speak spontaneously
19	No speaking is the most useful	Yes. We need to learn all these skills.	Yes, it covers everything.	Yes, can gives out the better me	Yes because give more improvement in all English	No, speaking skill would definitely be most useful compared to others
20	Understand what I heard better	I learn to pay attention to others when they speak	I learn how to focus		To be more careful in more certain words	Listen carefully and properly
21	No	Yes Australia, less than a week.	No	No	Yes, Australia 2 weeks	No
22	No	No	No	No	No	No
23	No	No	No	No	No	Yes, UK kindergarten to standard 3 – 3 yrs
24	No	No	Yes, England 20 days	No	No	Yes UK
25	Yes	Yes	yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
26	1,2 , 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 all	2, 4, 5, newspapers books, 7 music	all	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	1,2,3, 4, 5, newspapers, books, 6 movies, 7 radio	6, 7
Comments	Focus more on speaking please, less on writing		More speaking and writing sessions	It's fun, I love it.	Good, keep going and use more information about global! Life for IELTS!	Focus more on speaking rather than writing

COLLEGE D1

Question Number	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5	Student 6
1	English, Mandarin, Chinese	Malay	Chinese	Chinese	English and Tamil	Tamil
2	Chinese, English and Malay	Malay and English	Chinese and English	Chinese usually and English seldom	Tamil and English	English
3	English and Chinese	English	English		English	English
4	None		No	No		
5	No	No	No	No	No	No
6	It has been given by the college	Because I want further my studies.	I studying English because want to improve my English.	Because English is international language. It can easy help me communicate with people on the world	I must pass this paper in order to be able to enrol to the degree program. It is part of the requirement.	Because English is used all over the world so it is necessary to learn English.
7	To improve my skills	Improve my English because I'm weak in English.	I taking this IELTS test practice course because it can help me to get a good result.	Because I want passed it and continue my degree courses.	The same reason given above. It is compulsory.	To continue my degree program
8	Depends		I do to use English in my future when I'm working.	In English conversation	English would be very important because most probability I would be opening my own business and since the world is becoming more globalised, English would play a very important role in helping me converse with my clients from around the world.	I will improve my English more in future
9	No. Because the lecturer is too mean. She won't be very kind to us at all.	No. The lecturer give me a lot of pleasure and	No. I feel stress because have to learn more. In the other hand, that is good for me.	Yes. Learned some practice thing I never made	I enjoy it because it does not stress me out as some of the other subjects and one more reason is that I have been talking English ever since I was able to talk I guess, so it is much easier to grab information given by the teacher in English.	Yes, because it's give me a lot of benefits

10	Yes. Doing a lot of exercises.	Yes.	Yes. During my speaking and listening	Yes	Yes. It helps me gain a better understanding of the academic side of English and it helps me gain a wider range of vocabulary and help me better my sentence structure	Yes By doing listening I can cope up with other countries' accents
	COLLEGE D1 cont...					
11	Yes	Yes	Yes because I have to get a band 6.	Yes maybe reach my goals	Yes it would definitely help.	Yes
12	speaking. In the future I be able to communicate better.	Listening. Before I cannot understand british English but now I have improvement.	Reading. Because can find out the answer in the journal entry.	Reading. Because I easy know from the paragraphing	Reading. It helps me gain better words, so I will have a larger library of words to use in the future.	Speaking Because that the most important thing, because when we go out we must communicate with other
13a	yes. Because they set different questions.	No	yes	No	No	yes because IELTS using some skills
13b	No	No	No	No	No	
13c	No	No	yes because my language is different	No	yes. It is not in roman letters – it is a much more difficult language to master	
13d	No	No	No	No	No	
14	yes. Now in the world they are using English.	No	Yes, all areas	No	No	Yes. To do my assignment
15	No	No	Yes because I can do faster than before	No	Yes	Yes because I can learn a lot of vocabulary and I learn how to skim and scan long passages quickly.
16a	No	No	no	no	yes the English is much harder.	yes. Passages is too long.
16b	yes. We use simple English.	No	No	No	yes, it use to be much simpler	
16c	No	No	yes, because my language is different	No	Yes, the language is entirely different.	
16d	No	No	No	No		
17	No	No	In all areas, for example which subject I am taking	-	No	

18	Yes. I be able to speak more sophisticated.	No		Yes. Grammar, vocabulary	No	Yes. Now I've started to communicate in English with my friends.
19	Yes.	Yes		Yes. Balancing	No	
20	not sure					I can easily adapt with other country accents
21	No	No	No	No	No	No
22	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
23	No	No	No	No	No	No
24	No	No		No	No	No
25	No	No		Yes	No	Yes
26	1, 3, 4, 5, newspapers, magazines, books, 6, 7	1, 3, 4, 5 magazines and books, 6, 7		3, 4, 5 reading newspapers 6 watching movies 7 listening to music		1, 3, 4, 5- reading newspapers and books 6, 7 radio
Comments	I would like to practise more on all the skills in details instead of giving us quizzes every day that doesn't help us at all. Giving us assignments every day and don't tell us our mistakes. With this it would improve our English language at all				COLLEGE D1 cont...	

COLLEGE D2

Question Number	Student 7	Student 8	Student 9	Student 10	Student 11	Student 12
1	English	My family mother tongue	Malay	Chinese	Mandarin	English and BM
2	English of course	English and mother tongue	English	English, Chinese and Cantonese	Mandarin and English	English and BM
3	English	English	English	English and chinese	English	English
4				None	Almost all of the classes	None
5	Yes, academic. Yes. Yes.	No	No	Yes, academic. Yes. Yes.	No	No
6	Because now commonly office need us to know English language to make easier doing a business 'it is for me...'	Because English is use all of the world	Because it is compulsory to all students study English and in other hand, I can improve myself	Because for nowadays all the subject will use English and travel at overseas communication is using English.	Because nowadays most of the people communicate with English while working. Studying English can help me a lot when finding a job or doing business.	Because I can communicate with other friends from abroad and also I can easily surfing the internet because they use English most of the time.
7	For enter a good university or college we must have IELTS bandscore	To continue my degree or maybe I wanna transfer to other country	One of subjects that I have to take in this semester.		Actually I am not willing to take the course but the course is included in the diploma program, that why I am in this class, this is compulsory subject.	So that I can further my studies in any universities overseas
8	For working	If I do business to other country the language are use is English	In the way I speak and write	Speak with friends, travel for o'seas.	To communicate with others and doing business.	Perhaps in my working life undertaking
9	Yes. Because is challenging	Yes	No	No because the teacher is no kind with everybody	Yes. There is a lot of things I can learn in the class.	Yes, because I can learn and improve my English in writing and reading.
10	No	Yes because IELTS help me to improve my English and vocabulary	Yes	Yes	Yes. We can improve our R, W, L, and S in the same time.	Yes. Using interesting materials
11	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes. It has increased my knowledge in English.	Yes. Because it starts from the basic first
12	R and L. L is the easiest part and I just know the clue for the answer.	Speaking	Speaking. One of the best way I can improve my English.	Speaking. Because it is no boring.	Speaking. Because we have to speak or communicate with others every day.	R and w task. Because I am very weak in writing and some grammar mistakes and some words I have to find the meaning.

13a	no	No	yes, because it's focus on the world.	yes. It have to write thesis statement and topic sentence.	no	No COLLEGE D2 cont...
13b	No	No	No	No	yes. The requirement is a bit higher than other	No
13c	yes. Writing in IELTS we must know the question first.	yes. I'm foreigner I got some problem in my vocabulary and so on.	yes, because can improve and in other hand can learn writing in English.	No	yes. The structure for the 2 languages is totally different.	No
13d	Yes		no	No	No	No
14	No	No	no	No	Yes. I can perform well when answering the other subjects' papers.	Yes
15	Yes if we used to be reading a lot it will be helpful	Yes. In reading I find a lot of new words I learn from it.	yes	No	Yes. Can know a lot of new words	Yes
16a	No	yes	no	no	no.	No
16b	No	No	yes	No	No	No
16c	No	no	yes. 2 different languages that I can learn.	No	No	No
16d	No	no	No	No	No	No
17	Yes	No	Yes. I can learn new things in English.	No	I can read faster in others area.	Yes
18	Yes. Have a lot of vocabulary.	No	Yes, the way I'm speaking.	Yes. Speak well.	Yes. My speaking is smoother than before.	Yes
19	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes.	Yes
20						I be more alert in class.
21	No	Yes. Thailand , 2 weeks	No	No	No	No
22	No	No	No	No	No	No
23	No	Yes. Malaysia. Degree 3 years	No	No	No	No
24	No	No	No	No	No	No
25	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
26	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7music	All, except books	1, 4, 5 reading newspapers and books, 6 movies, 7 radio	1, 3, 4, 5 magazines, 6, 7	2, 3, 4, 5 newspapers, 6, 7 music	all

Comments	I would like to study in the country that use English.	IELTS is very important to try our skill		I would like to practice more on all the skills in IELTS not just always on test only. Besides, IELTS classes also should teach us how to write the writing, and should show that which part is wrong.	COLLEGE D2 cont...	
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COLLEGE D3

Question Number	Student 13	Student 14	Student 15	Student 16	Student 17	Student 18
1	I always speak chinese at home.	I would like speak English in my home town but now I always speak English in Malaysia.	Hokkien	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese
2	Chinese	Speak English with my foreigner friend	Hokkien, mandarin, English and Cantonese.	Chinese and English	Chinese/English	Chinese with friends from home town, English with other friends
3	English	English	English	English	English	English
4	Because I am college student, all chosen are taught by lecturer with English language	S, L, R, and W	None			english
5	No	Yes. Ac. No. yes.	Yes. Academic. No. yes.	Yes. GT yes. No.	No	Yes. Academic No. yes
6	English is international language. If I hope to work in a famous company, in future I should know how to speak it.	Because English is the international language in the world and I would know the different culture when I studying English.	For communication with different background of people.	For communication with other countries' citizens	Compulsory subject in college	Helpful to working in future
7	I am taking this IELTS practice course in order to obtain band 6 in the august IELTS test.	Because the IELTS test practice course could improve the level of my English.	Because the college compulsory for OBU students to get band 6 in IELTS before can enter the final year.		For IELTS test	Help me pass IELTS exam

8		Anywhere I want use English in my future.	In business environment and travelling	Speaking English is basically skills	Speak more in English/ learn more vocabulary	In working
9	Yes. Because the lecturer is very humorous. Besides, I can learn more from her because she is experienced in teaching English language.	Yes. I can study systemly (sic) from the lecturer	Yes. Because I can practice my English and furthermore it is not like we learn normal level of English which we repeated from primary school	Yes	I can learn a lot of things here but I feel very boring	Yes. It is helpfully and available class.

COLLEGE D3 cont...

10	No	Yes It'll let me know how to talk, how to write and how to use English to thinking question.	Yes. Improve my speaking pronunciation, writing skill and communication skill	No	Yes	Yes. It can help me to understand the key and main points of IELTS
11	No. I think that reaching my goals in English depends on me.	Yes	Yes. IELTS English is a high standard and we study it more detail.	Yes. I'm BM student so I need reading a lot of textbooks.	Yes. I can practise a lot in writing and listening.	No. Because IELTS T P is the only class thats teaching me how to pass IELTS
12	Listening is most useful to me. Because I ever faced listening barrier. But now, my listening skill is improved gradually.	Writing. I can speaking and listening anywhere and reading in my home but writing is not.	Speaking. Because I am major in marketing and communication is important than other part	Speaking. When I working, speaking is most usage skills	Writing. It is mostly use in other subjects.	Reading. Reading contains high number of vocabulary and new words.
13a	No		no	no	no	No
13b	No		No	yes	no	No
13c	No	yes. Because English writing is different chinese.	no. no writing in my first language	no	no	yes, write email to my friend with hometown by chinese
13d	No		yes. Other subjects do not need to check spelling and grammar and also sentence mistake	yes	yes. Normally the lecturer will request our answer in essay form.	no
14	No	Yes, such as the letter	Yes. Decrease my spelling, grammar and sentences mistake	No	Yes. Easier to express my answer.	Yes
15	Yes. At least I can read the whole article faster.	No.	Yes. I can read faster, capture the main idea and better understanding	Yes, general reading skills increase myself knowledge	No	Yes. Red more and more

16a	no.		No	no.	No	no
16b	No		yes. It is longer and more difficult.	no		no
16c	No	yes.	No	No		yes
16d	No		No	No		no
17	Yes. I will learn a lot of unfamiliar words	Yes, such as the newspaper.	Yes. I can capture the main idea fast and reduce the time in reading useless information in the exam.	COLLEGE D3 cont...		Yes, I can learn a lot of key words.
18	Yes. I dare speaking.	Yes. Pronounce	Yes. I can speak fluently and communication skill is improving.	No	Yes. Ways to express more fluently in speaking.	Yes, to improve my skill of pronunciation
19	Yes. All modules test our standard. We can know which part have to be improved.	No. I can read in my house.	Yes. We apply it in daily life.		Yes. Because all parts of the IELTS test are useful for a student.	Yes. IELTS cover almost all of areas of English.
20	I can catch and grash(sic) meaning from others	Help me how to listen clearly	I can easily understand what other people are talking about.	No	No	
21	No	No	Yes. England. 2 weeks	No	No	No
22	No	No	No	No	No	No
23	No	No	No	No	No	No
24	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
25	Yes	No	No	2, 3, 4, 5 newspapers, books, 6 movies, 7	1, 4, 6, 7	Yes
26	3, 4, 5 reading books, 6, 7	1, 3, 4, 5, 6 movies, 7	1, 3, 4, 5, 6 movies, 7	I think study English is a hardly work, no any good ways, just do more practice for all parts of IELTS		1,3,4,5,6 movies,7 music

Comments		Everything is ok but I think the lecturer is better from the foreign country.	Make learning time more longer. COLLEGE D3 cont...			I have some suggestion for IELTS exam. Firstly, listening part is most difficult part because it give us short time to consideration and analysing these question, for example, when I face some questions that I do not understand, but I don not have enough time to make it clearly. Secondly, if we fail it we have to wait 3 months; it is too long for students who are foreign.
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COLLEGE D4

Question Number	Student 19	Student 20	Student 21	Student 22	Student 23	Student 24
1	Punjabi	Malay and English	Malay and sometimes English	At home I will use 'teoh chew' when speak with my parents, I will use chinese when speak with my friends, BM in school and English in the college	Mandarin	Chinese
2	English and malay	Malay and English	Malay	BM, BI or chinese when I speak with my friends	Chinese and English	Chinese
3	English	English	English	I will mainly use English and if I have some question confusing me, I will ask my friends in chinese so I can ready understand	English	English
4		Business communication	Business communication	No	No	Business English
5	No	No	No	No	No	No
6	well, because English is used all over the world.	To improve my English skills	Because English is a worldwide language. I can use domestically and in the International business world	I studying English it is because English is like a magic key. When we start working English is compulsory need in the business world.	To improve the way I speak English, more knowledge	Because the college need IELTS band 6

7	It's for my own good and it's compulsory to take it.	To enter my degree in my college.	So that i can proceed to the next level of my course, marketing management Oxford Brooks University. IELTS is compulsory.	I plan to sit for the IELTS test. It is because I am doing OBUI program and IELTS is one of the compulsory test that we have to sit for it so that we can continue for the next semester.	Is requirement for me to continue my studies	I want to use it in my job and communicate with others people
8	If possible I would like to improve more in my English	I use English when I'm communicate with my customer because I'm taking business studies.	It will be easier to communicate in this global world. The business world is expanding from day to day. English is an important factor to be successful.	Of course, I hope that after taking this IELTS test I am able to improve my English and I want to use English in my future because it is helpful and I'm also admired those who can speak English sounds correct and fluent. I hope that I will be as good as them.	Speak more English, less chinese language	Yes. Because it can help me to improves my English language.
9	Because it's interesting I guess.	Yes. I can gain the skills to of communicate and also writing.	Yes. It covers everything about English, w, s, r and I.	I'm enjoy IELTS practice classes because after attend the classes now only I know that my level of English is terrible and sometimes I can't understand what the real meaning from the lecturer and especially doing the listening practise I can't catch the words from the speaker at all. There are many difficult words that I can't understand and my grammar and sentence structure were very poor. But I still enjoy because I want to get and improve my English.	Yes. Is interesting for speak in class. Improve my speaking, writing and listening skills	Yes COLLEGE D4 cont...
10	Yes	Yes I have more confident to communicate with people in English and gain more skills in writing and reading	Yes. It improves my writing, grammar spelling and vocabulary.	Yes. Doing IELTS test practice it encourage me to try to do more practice and I can slowly improve my level of English language skills. When we meet the difficult thing now only I know how bad I am. So it force me to try to do better in English.	Yes. Can communicate with other by using English. Is different when you communicate with other by using English and chinese language	From writing it can improve my grammar and sentence structure.
11	yes, because it teaches me a lot of interesting words each day.	Now I can write with more vocabulary and speak fluently	Yes. When I'm in the business world, I will be able to write well and speak well.	Yes. The skills that I gain from the IELTS tests practice course will help me to reach my goals in English because it cover all the 4 sections that we need now and in the future.	Yes. Know how to write an essay, can catch other people talking. Improve the listening, speaking skills	Yes. Because it help me improve my English language

12	Listening. Because I get to listen different accent.	Speaking and writing. Because I'm not good in S and W	Writing. It improves my grammar and spelling, I also learn how to summarise a graph or a chart.	All module. R. helps me to meet new words, improve my grammar and sentence structure. W helps me to write words from what I had learned. L encourages me to pay full attention when people talk. S trains me to open my mouth and try to speak.	Listening. Is challenging. Can catch the words that the people are talking about.	Speaking. It helps me improve my communication skills.
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COLLEGE D4 cont...

13a	No	no	no	Yes, it's different because it wants us to write words from the graphs and charts. IELTS encourages students to think and to give suitable and relevant ideas and become a good person.	yes. IELTS is different compared to other English tests. IELTS consists of many parts like S, L, W. Other English tests are simple compared to IELTS paper. IELTS needs some technical skills to get a high mark.	yes. IELTS needs a thesis statement but for other tests not needed.
13b	No	no	no	no	yes. Other English classes focus on grammar. Can write is enough	no
13c	No	no	yes. My first language doesn't have any past tense, future tense and present tense. The format is different.	yes, because we have to use different grammar in different situations.	no	yes. Like IELTS needs a thesis statement but writing in my first language does not need a thesis statement.
13d	No	no	yes. Writing in IELTS is more about direct to the point. It emphasizes on spelling and grammar.	no	yes. Other subjects are not important in English. W is not important for other subjects. Because other subjects are not in the English paper.	yes. For IELTS sentence structure is important but for other subjects sentence structure is not important.
14		Yes. Helping to improve my grammar and vocabulary	Yes. It helps me to be a better writer and improve my English.	Yes, IELTS tests improve my English and I'm able to try and write a complete sentence in English no matter what subject or classes I study.	Yes. Help me a lot. Improve my speaking skills. Can catch what the other people are talking about.	Yes. It helps me to have a good organization before I start writing.

15	Yes. Well I get to read new stuff every day compared to last time	Yes. I can read faster. I just looking at thesis statement and I know what it talk about.	Yes. I learn new words and understand the passage better.	yes, now I can catch the words early and I already remember many new words	Can read the words correctly.	Yes. It help me quickly understand when I was read a passage
16a	yes, it's more in detail.	no	yes. In IELTS, I need to understand the passage clearly.	no.	No.	no COLLEGE D4 cont...

16b	No	no	yes, the format of answering is different.	no	no	no
16c	No	no	no	yes. It are difficult because of the grammar.	Yes. Is different with my language because my language not focusing on grammar but IELTS different	no
16d	No	no	no	no	Yes. Other subjects are not focusing on grammar or vocabulary. IELTS different. IELTS has to read accurately.	no
17	Yes, I've improved a lot.	Yes.	Yes, I can understand the passage and learn new words.	Yes. I had slowly improve my English skills.	Yes. Can read correctly. No mistake.	Yes. To improve my reading skills
18	Yes. I get to speak better.	Yes. I can speak more fluently	Yes, I feel more confident with myself answering in English.	Yes. I try to speak in correct pronunciation and use correct grammar and sentences.	Can speak correctly. Less mistake.	Yes. I can communicate very well with others people.
19	Yes	Yes. Because they are all important in my business career.	Yes, it covers every single factor of English.	Yes. It help us in any area we stay in	Yes. Useful in practice our language. The way we speak, listen and writing skills improve.	Yes. It help students to improve their English language.
20		I can know the new accent in this world like british, US and Australia.	I have to listen clearer, with different accent.	It force me to pay full attention when listening test practice.	Can get the speaker what they say. Just sometimes can't catch their words. Different speaker, different slangs.	I can quickly understand the foreign people talk.
21		Yes. Australia. 1 week	Yes, US, UK. 2 weeks to 1 month.	No	No	No
22		No	No	No	No	No
23		No	No	No	No	No
24		No	No	No	No	No

25	Yes	yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
26	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	All	All except 2 and 'books'	All	1, 4, 5 books, 6, 7	1, 3, 4, 5 newspapers, 6 movies, 7 music

Comments		IELTS test practice is good to improve my English skills and I hope that you can make it more interesting and fun towards studying this English classes.	Should emphasise more on speaking English. Make it fun in the future.	It challenging I'm enjoy to learn and sit for the courses but the examination fee are too expensive. If let say I can't pass maybe it not encourage me to try again.	Example for me listening and speaking parts. Just hopefully it can, hire the local speaker. By this way, I can know what they are talking about. Know their songs very well.	Please do IELTS Test become more easy
			COLLEGE D4 cont...			

COLLEGE D5

Question Number	Student 25	Student 26	Student 27	Student 28	Student 29	Student 30
1	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese, English	Indonesian	Tamil and English	Chinese and other dialects
2	Chinese and English	Chinese and malay	Chinese	English	English	English
3	English	English	Chinese	English	English	English
4	No	Business English	Management, accounting	None		No
5	No	Yes. Academic. Yes. Yes.	No	No	No	Yes. Academic. Yes. Yes.
6	Because the program requires me to pass the IELTS and get 6 of my score	English is the most important language so that it may easy to communicated to other people from different countries.	I study English because I want to improve and get more vocabulary	I am studying English to improve my vocabulary and English is important because it can be used all over the world	English is a language used worldwide and it help me to communicate with people from different country and it also very helpful in my studies	It is because English is important when I went out to work because English is a man of communication.
7	Because in China I took TOEFL training and got the test but in Malaysia they need the IELTS. But I am not sure about the IELTS test system, so I take this practice course.	To understand and improve our English to be band 6 in IELTS	To get the English requirement in order to continue my degree program	Because the college need me to take the IELTS test	I doing IELTS practice course to improve my English level.	To help me to improve my English before I go for the actual IELTS test.

8	I want to use English as a tool in my future job. Because my major is in marketing, I need to contact with many different persons and some of them maybe can't speak chinese.	Easy to communicate different people	Communicate with other people outside like worker who works together with me and go oversea	Better than now	I will speak English to everyone and will make sure I improve in the language.	Speak English with my friends. COLLEGE D5 cont...
9	Yes. Because it improved my English level help me know much about IELTS, and also I can get friends in my class.	-	Yes. Because it can learn more things and encourage us to read more.	Yes. Because I can learn a lot of new things, the lecturer is friendly, make the class alive not dull	Yes. Because it is very challenging and tough. It make me put some effort in IELTS	Yes. It is because I learn a lot of thing
10	No	No	Yes Because it can encourage me to read more newspapers, listen and see more English movie so that, I can learn more things by English	Yes. The lecturer will ask us questions, by answering it, I can practise my speaking. The language in IELTS based on Nth American and british accent and it'll train me to listen to different accents of English.	Yes because it is very helpful in my studies since my subject all taught in English. IELTS is very helpful to contribute in my subjects.	Yes. Because the lecturer will give some useful tips on what can do and cannot do in IELTS test.
11	No. because IELTS practice course just show me the way, but I still need to do hard on myself	Yes, because it is everything similar in we learn in IELTS practice course.	Yes. Because I can learn to communicate with others and learn how to write formal in English	No. because the course and the time is limited. To achieve an English goal we have to use English daily and attend the class more longer time.	Yes. It's very helpful to correct my fault and study the proper way to use English.	Reading. Because I can improve my vocabulary.
12	W and S are most useful to me. Because these two parts in the IELTS practice are efficient for me, I can learn some ways to improve my English level, but the other two parts I learned from class are not enough, I should work hard after class.	S and L. because we have to use it in every class to understand and improve our skills	Speaking. Because speaking is using to communicate with people.	Listening. Even we do not understand the word we can practise to say it so as what the speaker said. I learn English through listening. Talking or interview others, it'll automatically test our listening and capability to understand.	Reading. Because I usually like to read storybooks.	

13a	yes. Because I took TOEFL test in China, in TOEFL test, I only need to write one, but in IELTS test, there are 2 tests about writing and the method is even more flexible than TOEFL.	No	yes.	Yes. IELTS is more difficult and complex.	yes. It is tough but can learn the proper order writing.	No
COLLEGE D5 cont...						
13b	No	no	yes, the topic sentences, main idea are the same.	yes. The idea that we have to use in IELTS should be deep, not a shallow idea.	no	No
13c	No	Yes, because our mother language is directly to answer but English is different to grammar so that we are suffer in transfer our own language to write in English.	no not necessary	Yes. Writing in my first language is not complicated as IELTS.	no	Yes, because the English word that I write is different from my language. Because it did not take into account the tenses
13d	No	no	yes I can know how to organise my sentence structure from sentences, organise it better.	yes, other subjects the grammar is not really necessary	no	no
14	yes, because I learn the correct way to write a graph.	No	Yes. English class, writing essay to organise all the sentences	Yes. By taking IELTS test, it does improve my writing and my English structure.	No	no
15	No	Yes, because we learn the reading skill and strategy in IELTS test practice course	Yes, I can read fast by using skimming and scanning to find out the main idea and the thesis statement that article is talking about.	Yes. By practising reading skill, it will improve our understanding, vocabulary and more faster to read	Yes. It help me to know grammar order and by reading I can improve my pronunciation	Yes. I read more and when I found out the word that I did not know, I will check the dictionary to find the meaning of the word
16a	No	No	yes, can know what the passages is talking about quickly	no	no	yes. The passages is long and will get difficult.

16b	No	no	yes, can know the purpose that a passage is	no	no	no comment
16c	No	no	no not necessary	no	no	yes. Because I don't know the meaning and have to find the meaning from dictionary
16d	No	Yes. Because other subjects is also easier for us to read for us to understand but IELTS reading is too much vocabulary and too long.	yes, find the main point as fast as possible.	no	no	yes because other subjects is one which I'm interested

COLLEGE D5 cont...

17	No	No	Yes, get the point faster	Yes. Whatever I read, I will take few words to keep in my mind and it can improve my vocabulary	No	Yes can read the passage fast and find out the important issue
18	No	No	Yes, when communicate with parents, friends, will speak more stable	Yes. I can speak with the better grammar and structure than before.	Yes. I can speak very well with clear pronunciation	I can speak the English more fluently.
19	No	Yes, because English subject is the one using in every part	Yes, because IELTS can help me to improve my English when I listen to people, talk to people, read a book and write an essay	Yes. To know the degree/level we are in, but it is actually not really necessary to use it as requirement for degree program	No	Yes. Can learn a lot of things.
20			No	I am able to catch the word pronounced by other accent of English.	It help me to concentrate a specific thing.	Try to catch up what the foreign speaker speak.
21	No	No	No	No	No	No
22	No	No	No	Yes. Singapore. Waitress 6 months	No	No
23	No	No	No	No	No	No
24	no.	No	No	No	No	No
25	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
26	All except 2	1, 3, 4, 5 newspapers, 6, 7	2, 3, 4, 5 magazines, 6 movies, 7 music	4, 5, 6 movies, 7	All except 2	1, 4, 5 newspapers, magazines, 6 movies, 7 radio

Comments				An IELTS is very difficult English that I have ever joint I have some difficulties but hope this test could improve my English better.		
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COLLEGE D6

Question Number	Student 31	Student 32
1	Chinese	Chinese
2	BM	Chinese
3	English	English
4	In school have English classes to out student	
5	No	Yes. England. Academic. No. yes.
6	I studying English to improve my social and communication	Because I want to learn different culture
7	Because my Australia programs want the English is good	Because my parents want me to take it then prove my English.
8	More speaking and reading	In my opinion, I want to become a businesswoman. So English is very useful. But in fact when we are married, it just teach our child
9	Yes because I want to improve my English	No. I want to do more practice than now and I want to speak English with teacher.
10	Yes. They can help me to improve my English and how can I do to improve myself	Yes. In my opinion, if you do, then you will learn something.
11	Yes, because English is very important to our people. And I want to go to another country to study.	No. I mean, just that not enough
12	Speaking. Because I cannot speaking more fast and good.	Writing. Because my grammar was very bad. That fact.
13a	Yes. Because there is more clearing to me to understand and have step to do or to writing	No
13b	Yes	no
13c	No	no
13d	yes. When want to do the assignment	yes. I can choose one subject that I am interest for it.
14	Yes they have step to do.	Yes. In my opinion any subject must to writing.
15	No	Yes. I think you must read more and more books and others.
16a	Yes the teacher speaks more clearly.	no
16b	yes because sometimes the teacher not care	no
16c	No	no

16d	No	no
17	Yes. Because can learn the questions more quickly	Yes. Reading always important for learner English people
18	Yes. The improvement is, I can understand what the teacher talk about	Yes. If you don't speak English, you are not learning English.
19	Yes. Because they improve my S, L, R and W in our subject.	Yes. That can practice your study things.
20		I don't know. But in my opinion the listening test is very fast. In fact, I cannot listen clearly.
21	No	No
22	No	No
23	No	Yes. Malaysia. Englsih program. 8 months.
24	No	Yes Malaysia 5 months
25	Yes	Yes
26	All	2, 5 newspapers, 7
Comments		

COLLEGE E1

Question Number	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5	Student 6
1	Malay	Malay English	Malay and English	Malay and English	Mandarin	Malay English
2	B M English	B M English	B M English	B M English	Mandarin	Malay English
3	English	English	English	English	English	English
4	ESL	ESL	ESL	ESL	ESL	ESL
5	No	No	No	No	No	No
6	Because other languages than Malay language fascinate me	English is an international language	It's my interest and English language is very useful in global field	English nowadays is very essential especially in education and work field. Moreover it is the most widely used language in the world. Other reason: further study in overseas.	English is the international language that is used to link the world together. Besides that, English is also the language of knowledge.	It is a compulsory subject and moreover it is an international language
7	To get into Australian Universities	To pursue my study in Australia/New Zealand For university entry requirement	To fulfil the Australian universities requirement	It is compulsory in order to get a place in the university where English is the official language – Australia and New Zealand	I am taking this practice course so that I can know more about IELTS and also understand the requirements of IELTS from the candidates.	In order to be fully prepared for the IELTS Test

8	Communicating with people	In my job When studying abroad COLLEGE E1 cont...	As much as I can	We frequently talking with foreign and local people (in terms of education and work)	I think English will be the most common language that I will use in the university to communicate with all the people. Besides English will be mainly used for academic.	In my daily communication with peers family friends and the society. In addition, I could relay and effective information in English.
9	Yes. Great lecturer	No, it is quite stressful especially the reading and writing. The constraint and high level of vocabulary make it harder to understand	Yes it generates me to be more focus and critical in answering every question	Gain more skills related to English. Improve proficiency of the language	Yes, the different components, reading, speaking, listening and writing of IELTS have made it very interesting sometimes it can be challenging.	The classes are something that I usually learn and I could gain new knowledge from it.
10	Yes, new bombastic vocabulary, confident in speaking in English, understanding complex passages/text	Yes, IELTS Test demand skills from major area of the language	Yes, there was stressed in the grammar and expand my vocabulary	No	Yes, Speaking practice can improve my communication skills reading and writing improve my academic English writing while listening prepare me to understand the speaking English.	Yes, increase my proficiency in the language and makes me more confident in English
11	Yes I have more confidence in speaking English	Yes, It provide topic skills for us in English	Yes it improves my speaking language and writing	Yes, comprises of 4 basic ways of using language	Yes, the practices are quite challenging and from the practices I can learn more vocabulary and also some new ideas in the passages given.	Yes, I could write better in written assignments and talk more fluently in the language
12	Reading because new vocabulary understanding English texts	Writing. Life as student require lots of assignments with the skill we gain it does make life easier.	Speaking, it enhances my pronunciation	Speaking to help to obtain confidence when using the language to talk with other people in public	I believe when we further our education especially in the university we have to write academically for the assignments. Thus, writing is the most useful in building up my English foundation	Speaking increase my confidence in speaking in the public

13a	Yes others tests of English require a lot of words and long and tedious elaboration	Yes IELTS Test for writing ask argument type of essays, yet they sometimes seems to give a hint which side we should be at the format is inconsistent.	No	a yes it asks very general q in task 2. Students will find the question difficult if they have no experience or knowledge to answer the q.	Yes, In the task 1 we have to write according to the stimulus given and should not include outside information. Contrasting to other test of English we must include our own opinion analysis and recommendation and so on.	Yes IELTS is more easier than ESL studies,
13b	Yes IELTS does not involve a high word limit	Yes, writing in IELTS needs little example and little content	Yes other English classes: writing involves format writing such as letters,	No	Yes the essays required for the candidates to write are comparatively shorter than other English classes.	Yes IELTS does provide me with more room for creativity
13c	Yes, IELTS writing is certainly easier	Yes, IELTS is more straight forward	Yes less format	Yes the question asked is specified and the format of writing essay quite different	Yes my first language is more simple and straight forward	Yes because I have acquired more skills in my writing using my first language
13d	No	No	Yes less format	Yes in other subjects science especially. For essay the answer demanded is straight to the point or contain details only.	No	Yes the answers that I wrote does not need to be accurate in grammar
14	Yes explaining a certain stimulus in precise and elaborated manner	Yes general issues require me to read more from varied issues.	Yes it generates idea and the procedure in IELTS writing is quite flexible to be used in other writing	Yes Mostly when describing about data (statistics, charts etc)	Yes practising English writing	Yes I learnt the correct skills of writing
15	Yes, helps to understand other academic passages	Yes, There are many reading skills involved in reading test. The questions indirectly ask for that different skills.	Yes it forces me to be precise and focus on the task I read.	Yes I know the technique of scanning and skimming the text. Also able to quickly obtain the part of the comprehension that needed to answer the Q.	Yes Now I can read faster and understand the passage easier	Yes I become more critical and cautious in reading
16a	No	Yes It ask for different skills and it require more critical thinking.	No	No	Yes the time given is not enough	No,
16b	No	No	No	No	No	No

16c	No	Yes more specific skills were asked	Yes it was easier and not too specific	No	No	Yes My vocabulary in English is not as vast as in my first language
16d	No	No	Yes the task given generally does not require depth thinking	No	No	Yes, other subjects use more unknown terms that are specific for the subject
17	No (helps to understand complex academic passages)	Yes, It trains me to apply skills that I need to skim and scan	Yes, develop focus and look at the task critically	Yes because since the techniques needed in answering the reading test applicable in other areas therefore it helps me much.	Yes we have to understand all types of passages including argumentative informative and so on.	Yes I could find the main ideas in the article or book. Due to it I could work faster
18	Yes, more confident in expressing ideas	Yes, speaking encourage me to think in depth for certain issues and observe event around me as it might be asking during the test.	Yes, build up courage to speak English with others	Yes, I am confident in speaking English and know how to answer accordingly	Yes, I can express myself easier now	Yes, I become more confident

COLLEGE E1 cont...

19	Yes help to improve English language skills	Yes. It ask all kind of skills require for English	Yes, develop focus precision and courage	Yes, comprises the basis of using language	Yes all the components are basic skill in mastering one language	Yes increase my proficiency in English
20	I now tend to focus on the things people say	I am able to understand spoken languages with varied accent.	Get myself used to the Australian accent	Be more selective and adept when looking for appropriate answers for the Q.	I can understand speaking English better now	I would be able to listen more carefully
21	Yes England 7 days	Yes UK one year	No	No	No	Yes Australia USA 2 weeks each
22	No		No	No	No	No
23	No	Yes UK Primary level 6 one year	No	No	No	No
24	No	Yes UK one year	No	No	No	No
25	Yes	Yes	yes	No	No	yes
26	2 , 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 all	2, 3, 5, 6 7 music	all	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	2, 5, newspapers, magazines, 6 television,	2 3 4 5 6, 7

Comments		Writing task 2. As this part of the test ask general issues couldn't the scope of area tested were given as due to the lecturer		For reading and speaking test the cocy of marking should be more lenient. For writing past the questions asked should be specified..	Ask students to do some research on certain topics before the practices. Perhaps students might have a rough idea what are the topics and can catch up faster.	Make full use of the multimedia technology
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COLLEGE E2

Question Number	Student 7	Student 8	Student 9	Student 10	Student 11	Student 12
1	English, Malay, Tamil	Malay English Bit of Arabic	Malay and Kada	Malay and English	Malay and English	English and Malay
2	B M English	B M English, Bit of Japanese, German	B M English	B M English	Malay and English	English and Malay
3	English	English	Malay	English	English	English
4	ESL	ESL	ESL	ESL	ESL	nil
5	No	No	No	No	No	No
6	Because I like the language and furthermore I need the language as it is a global language for communication	Part of the course requirement	Because it is an international language This the ability of have a grasp of this language enable me to gain knowledge from many parts of the world and also widen my communication horizon to many (?) people at international level	Because virtually everyone around speaks this language and also because English is such an awesome language!	English widened my opportunity to go further in majoring in geology as most of the research will be done outside Malaysia	Because it is part of the education syllabus besides English is pretty handy when it comes to communication with foreigners considering it is an international language and all
7	Because I need the IELTS Test results so that I will be able to study abroad	To prepare myself for the IELTS which is a requirement	To train myself to be able to have all the skills in order to score in IELTS as well as to improve my English language proficiency	It is part of the requirement in order to get a placement in majority of the universities in Australia	To be able to have a place in university in Australia	Because I have to
8	I want to use it in daily communication with others	I'm planning to take on engineering so I'll need it to do presentations and paperwork	In my daily life especially while doing my future job	I hope that I would be able to use English as frequently as possible	As my main communication language in communicating with my colleagues and in understanding and gaining more knowledge	Wholly as a communication tool

9	Yes. Because it is interesting and I get to improve my English	I can just focus on what is being asked It beats doing long essays	Yes I gain more knowledge from different types of article as well as I can learn English language in all aspects with my speaking, reading	Yes because IELTS introduces me to new things about English and improves my English language skills.	Yes, it helps in improving my English especially my grammar and writing skills	Yes makes you think aptly and quickly too And we get to argue intellectually when it comes to checking answers ... pure fun
10	Yes, it develops my communication skills so that I can interact better with others It also improves my writing skills.	Yes, I can get careless I need the practice to keep alert	Yes, practice make perfect Thus as I do a lot of practice I can be able to be familiar with the format and type of questions that might be asked in IELTS	Yes it improves my vocabulary grammar and other important aspects in the English language	Yes, the reading practice and the writings help me in recognising my weaknesses and in the same time I'd be able to learn from my fault.	Yes, it polishes my vocabulary and it has definitely contributed tremendously to my academic writing skills
11	Yes because in the country I hope to study in is English based and therefore the IELTS will help me improve my English proficiency	Yes, I'm pretty good in English. The practice keeps me polished	Yes because the practice comprises different skills that are important to have good grasp of the language	Yes,	Yes, I'll be able to write such a great research and communicate well with more people Besides, it'll be easier for me to understand what the people around me is talking about.	Yes, they just the 'thing' to have my English improved
12	Speaking it develops communication skills which is useful in the working field.	Speaking Not so much more useful just more interesting	Reading it is usually in linear form to easier to be absorbed and I gain knowledge about many things that I do not know from the interesting articles.	Listening because the IELTS speaking practice exposes me to different kinds of English accents	Writing I'm having a huge problem with my grammar and vocab writing practices help me in improving my weaknesses	Writing expands my creativity and my ability to think relevantly (point drawing and organisation etc)
13a	No	No	No	No	No	No
13b	Yes because in IELTS practice we need to write with more wider knowledge and the language must be good without any errors	No	Yes simpler but concise and precise	No	No	No
13c	No	No	Yes more straightforward and easier to understand	No	Yes the grammar is stricter	No
13d	No	No	Yes sometimes it do test my general knowledge	Other subjects tend to focus more on the points written instead of the language aspect	Yes Good writing skills are essential in writing a good piece of IELTS	No

COLLEGE E2 cont...

14	Yes in other subjects I will be able to write essay questions for my physics papers with least language errors.	No	Yes sample answers and tip notes guide me to write my essay to answer the question	No	Yes my vocab is more diverse now and my sentence structure is getting better	Yes basically it helps me organise my points better
15	Yes, I have learnt how to skim and scan the material and gain information efficiently	Yes, practice makes perfect	Yes I have to be able to identify main points and supporting details.	Yes makes me know and understand better as the main points in an article or paragraph can be identified	Yes The more I practice the more I get to know how to tackle the questions and where to find the important points	Yes not sure how but I seem to draw out main points more quickly out of texts than before
16a	No	no	Yes more challenging	No	Yes It needs more concentration and skills to detect the main point of every passage	No
16b	No	no	No	Yes IELTS tend to promote creative thinking about the topics read.	No COLLEGE	No E2 cont...
16c	No	No	No	No	No	No
16d	No	Yes other subjects tends to lean toward memorizing IELTS needs understanding interpretation	No	No	Yes In other subjects read, understand and remember is important but in IELTS reading if you understand you can answer it	Yes, other subjects such as chemistry etc have points slapped directly in your face. As for IELTS, not all of the points are direct. Therefore a little critical thinking is of great need
17	Yes I can extract information more efficiently from a reading text	Yes, practice makes perfect	no	Yes it makes it easier for me to identify main points and it increases my understanding on the topics read	Yes to pay more attention to reading between the lines because I might pass through any important points that I didn't know.	Yes helps me evaluate reading texts in a more in depth manner
18	Yes, I can speak more fluently	Yes, I've become aware of my slurry speech and lack of eye contact I try to correct it		Yes, my confidence in speaking the language	Yes, more confidence and grammatical errors is decreasing	Yes, I've learned not to speak too fast and am more confident in speaking English with my colleagues
19	Yes it can improve all parts from language usage in speech in writing and listening			Yes, because IELTS thoroughly covers every angle aspect in the English language	Yes it covers a big area which consists of communication and also writing	Yes because it smoothens skills from all perspectives (speaking, reading etc)

20	It has improved my listening as I pay more attention when listening	COLLEGE E2 cont...		It has helped me be more attentive to what's said	More familiar with Australian essence	I get to adapt to foreign accents
21	No	Yes UK 8 yrs Australia 2 wks Rep Ireland 3 days		Yes UK 1 month	Yes Singapore 2 weeks	Yes Australia 2 weeks UK 4 weeks
22	No	No	No	No	No	No
23	No	Yes UK Secondary 3 sciences 8 yrs	No	No	No	No
24	No	Yes UK 8 yrs	No	No	No	No
25	Yes	Yes	yes	Yes	yes	no
26	2 , 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 all	1,4, 5 magazines books 5, 6 television	2 4 5 6 7	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 radio	All including English novels	All especially movies and music
Comments	I would prefer if there is less format in the exam and based more on creative writing		IELTS Test practice should be made up to the standard of the real IELTS Test Some test practice books (modules) are not helpful for students to score in the real IELTS	So far learning the English language and doing IELTS test practice have proved to be an exerting and wonderful opportunity for me as I have seen much improvement in my English language skills		For reading tests some of the texts are excruciatingly long so we tend to run out of time to answer questions ... can we have moderately long ones if not brief ones?

COLLEGE E3

Question Number	Student 13	Student 14	Student 15	Student 16	Student 17	Student 18
1	Malay	Malay Taiwanese	English B M	Mandarin	Malay	English
2	M English	M English	English BM	English	English, Malay	English
3	English	English	English	English	English	English
4	ESL	ESL	ESL	ESL	ESL	ESL
5	No	No	No	No	No	No
6	To master English in various ways especially speaking and writing in order to interact better with international people	It's an international language – helps a lot in communicating with foreigners	Because I want to study abroad. Plus it is compulsory for Malaysian students to take English subject at school	Mainly because English is an international language, or the language to knowledge	I am learning in English. Most of the subjects that I take in college was in English	Because I love the language

7	One of the necessities in enrolling universities	It's a requirement to enter a college	I want to further my study in Australia	So that I can see my way to study in New Zealand	Are the entrance pass to universities in Australia	To be able to further my studies abroad
8	If possible I want to use it in daily life especially during my working hours	Talk often enjoying with the foreign people	Make English as my second language	I would like to use English as my daily language, spoken language with my friends and use it in my career as well	I want to use English for almost every day in my future	Communicate with people from around the world
9	Yes. It gives me more confidence to sit for the test although at times it might be hectic but it is useful for my own benefit	Sometimes yes sometimes no. Speaking was very fun I enjoy talking with others but the reading part was quite hard That one was not very enjoyable	Yes the classes teach me 4 different modules, which all of them are really important in my daily life	Yes it is fun especially the speaking component which requires us to talk rationally and casually, or I should say 'I simply love talking'	Yes, The lecturer that teach me is very dedicated. She teaches me everything profoundly about IELTS	Yes because with that I really get to know where I stand in the language in terms of proficiency
10	Yes, enhance my speaking ability, understanding English more by reading the passages and hearing to the cassettes as well as improving my grammar and language writing skills	Yes, It's improves writing skills the organisation of essays Give me confidence in talking with others	Yes, it improves my writing skill (which I am very bad at) and help me in improving my speaking	Yes IELTS is complete, from speaking to writing from writing to reading from reading to listening	Yes it has improves my skill in English language such as listening, speaking, reading and writing	Yes, speaking skills especially where I get to communicate in English and learn (lecturer detects) my flaws in terms of grammar
11	Yes mastering English needs you to focus on these 4 sections thus IELTS is one of the platforms to do so.	Yes, IELTS is a test that includes all things that are needed for someone who wants to understand a language	Yes	Yes, it improves my command of English generally	Yes, the speaking test in IELTS helps me to improve my speaking skills The listening test makes me become a more 'concern' individual	Yes, as a whole it has already improved my grammar
12	I'm quite weak in writing therefore by doing this I would be able to enhance my writing skills for the future	Speaking. Gives me confidence enhance my thinking about ideas.	Writing I learn new vocabulary and improve my sentence structure while I'm doing it	Speaking we need to communicate	Listening module it makes me realise that I have to understand the language that people spoke before I can undergo with speaking (communication based on listening)	Speaking improving on my grammar especially when communicating with others

COLLEGE E3 cont...

13a	No	No	No	Yes we need to analysis the stimulus given for part 1; for part 2 we need to give sensible opinions and show the wide range of general knowledge that we have	Yes, In IELTS I have to be more specific (when describing the trends in task 1) and thinking critically based on issues given (task 2)	No
13b	No	No	No	No	No	No
13c	No	Yes, of course different language will use different methods and formats	Yes In Bahasa Melayu test we are free to use literary words in our writing	No	Yes I have to consider the grammatical errors done in the IELTS. Besides, English is different from Malay language	No
13d	Yes Since IELTS is an English proficiency test it focuses more on the language but for other subjects they are more interested in the contents of other writing	No	No	No	No	Yes essays for other subjects are more scientific
14	Yes improve my grammar and language skills It also trains me how to get ideas link and put them order	Yes helps in organising my essay with topic concluding remark and etc	Yes it gives me clear view on how to give description, think critically about certain things that are presented to me such as graph	Yes I can learn to think critically and analytically	Yes writing for the IELTS Test help me in improving my grammar	Yes better grammar knowing how to express my thoughts and ideas better
15	Yes, Reading and understanding is very limited time is quite challenging therefore by practising it I would be able to enhance my skill in that area	Yes, I know how to search for the main point in the passage better than before	no	no	Yes I love to read Readers Digest. By practising the 'reading skills' for IELTS, I think that the articles that I've read is more meaningful" (I can understand the article easily in short time)	no
16a	No	Yes it's far away harder Only God knows how hard it is.	No	Yes the requirements for questions; the way to answer	No	No
16b	No	Yes quite hard	No	No	No	No

16c	No	No	Yes In my first language we need to fully understand what the article is all about and we have to write a summary regarding the article	No	Yes For me, reading in Malay language is easier than reading in English because the range of vocabulary in English makes me feel that English is difficult	No
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16d	No	No	No	No	no	Yes, other subjects have reading articles that are more scientific
17	Yes it helps me in understanding the contents in depth not just merely read the passage	Yes, improves my understanding about an article	no	Yes have a better understanding in articles that I have come across	Yes reading for the IELTS how improved and upgrade my reading skills for other subjects	Yes helps me extract main points and ideas that article is trying to show
18	Yes, my confidence to converse in English	Yes, confidence, more ideas	Yes, in providing more details and arrange all the details in right order (not mixed up)	Yes, now personally I can speak English confidently	Yes, When I communicate with my friends, I can feel that much confident than before	Yes, less grammatical errors
19	Yes reading, speaking, writing and listening are all vital in communicating with people and representing our ideas.	Yes. All of the 4 components involves in our daily work as a student it's improve us.	Yes	Yes, it is a complete set covering all the aspects	Yes in English we have to master all the skills to make sure that learning English is not difficult	Yes it covers all the areas that the language focuses in
20	I have to be more sharp in catching the words and understanding the whole conversation	More sharper. Can understand more accent from different countries.	It makes me more alert and focus on what other people say and get used to Australian accent	Can get what Australians are talking about	The listening test has taught me to be more concern on what people say	Basically none
21	No	no	no	no	no	no
22	No	no	no	no	no	no
23	No	no	no	no	no	no
24	No	Yes US 2 years	no	no	no	no
25	Yes	no	no	yes	yes	no
26	2 , 4, 5, magazines books 6, movies7 radio	all	all except radio	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	2 3 4 5 6, 7

Comments	The practice should be done on daily basis to get accustomed to the format and also in a long period or maybe sufficient period to ensure that we can grab and master the skills before sitting for the IELTS Test because frankly IELTS is not really easy.	Listening don't be too exact for the answer Ex: 1 st answer Poland 2 nd answer poland therefore difference of capital 'P' I think that should be OK.		Perhaps allocate more time for listening component and reading component		
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COLLEGE E4

Question Number	Student 19	Student 20	Student 21	Student 22	Student 23	Student 24
1	English, Malay,	Malay English	Malay English	Malay, Javanese, Banjarnese	Malay	Malay
2	English, Malay	Malay English	Malay English	English, Malay	English, Malay	Mostly Malay
3	English	English	English	English	English	English
4	ESLS	ESLS	ESLS	ESLS	ESLS	Preparation classes for the final examination
5	No	No	No	No	No	No
6	Fluency in English is an essential tool in order to be successful in my future career. Besides, it assists many things in life, being the international language that is commonly used world wide.	It is a part of the SSABSA syllabus and English is widely used in the world. Therefore, it is wise for me to obtain good command of English language	Part of the requirements for sitting for the SSABSA finals	For entering the Australian universities. To learn other languages. To get involved well in the international academic society	I study English because I badly need English in my communication as it is regarded as the international language besides the fact that it is widely used as a medium to obtain knowledge	The language is important in the world nowadays and I need to pass IELTS
7	In order to obtain a place in one of the universities in Australia, and improve my reading, writing and listening skills.	To fulfil the Australian's university requirement	Part of the requirements for university entrance in Australia	To get used with the test scheme. To be prepared	I need to get certain bands to gain entry into any university in Australia	To pass IELTS and with flying colours

8	English would be a language I would most commonly use be it at home or even at work	Daily communication, communication skills among people of English as an international language	I'd like to use it in my everyday life whether socially or professionally	To speak with my business partner, colleagues, friends, foreigners	I want to use English as my main medium in communication and also to gain as much knowledge as I can which mostly found in English	Everytime and everywhere
9	No. Because the test requires full attention and various skills in order to obtain a high mark. It is definitely beneficial but not something I would enjoy doing. Stress leads to progress I suppose.	Yes improve my English proficiency and language usage	Yes I enjoy English in general and the practice classes prepares me for the real exam where I'm hoping to get a perfect band	Yes it really helps a lot in improving my English	Yes, sincerely I like all the courses provided as they do provide me with necessary skills to master the language	Yes I enjoy the listening practice classes
10	Yes, it is especially helping in terms of my reading skills in determining the main points, concepts etc. From many reading I was also relatively able to increase my general knowledge and writing skills. The listening test helps me to get used to the native people speaking.	Yes, by sharpening and enhancing my ability to work with English and the language such as writing, speaking and listening	Yes, my English is not perfect and as they say 'practice makes perfect' so in one way or another, the IELTS does help me in overall	Yes IELTS has a variety of vital skills need in mastering a certain language – listening, writing, reading etc. It helps me a lot in these areas	Yes, the courses provide comprising almost all the needed skills to be proficient with the language	Yes, I can speak and write in English better
11	Yes because it helps to increase my efficiency in writing, reading and listening holistically.	Yes, improve my English language proficiency	Yes since my goals in English presently is to score in my IELTS the practice course certainly helps me	Yes,	Yes, they help me to become better in my communication especially in speaking	Yes, as I go through the practice my proficiency is better
12	Reading. Various skills are needed, texts are also comprehensive and it test my critical thinking to the limit	Reading I had learnt the more effective way of understanding and gain the information given from IELTS reading	Writing presently I'm more used to the local education system where the style of writing is more towards creative writing. IELTS writings helps me with the transition to academic writing	Writing it disciplined me to be concise	Listening and reading both the modules are rarely found in other English courses	Listening and Writing I learned how to focus and learned how to make less mistakes

COLLEGE E4 cont...

13a	No	a yes Require the ability to think critically and wisely, made necessary judgement and the necessity to understand the information given	Yes it tests all aspects of the language and requires more in-depth knowledge and understanding of English as compared to the other tests I've sat for.	Yes IELTS emphasis on different kinds of topic. It is more general and open	No	No
13b	No	No	Yes The syllabus is different in ESLs where it is more towards synthesising the information given	No	No	No
13c	Yes IELTS writing practice focuses on organisation, whereas writing in my first language stresses on evaluation and mastering the language itself.	Yes slightly but overall it's similar	Yes For one, the style of the language is totally different and the syllabus is also very much apart	Yes The focus of the writing. English is more straight to the point	No	Yes my first language is easier
13d	No	No	Yes English is more flexible and IELTS allows me to write my thoughts whereas other subjects have set answers and more towards writing formally	Other science subjects use more simple English	No	Grammatical mistakes are not considered
14	Yes it helps me to organise my essays systematically and link my ideas to narrow down to a conclusion	Yes I can write more clearly and meaningful piece of writing	no	Yes to be straight to the point and generate thinking process	Yes it does help but not that significant	Yes the IELTS Test made me more confident to use English
15	Yes, general issues read in the reading test covers different issues to identify main points on the environment, scientific studies and language which are of paramount importance in enhancing my general reading skills	Yes, enhance the ability to read more critically now.	Yes I'm more critical of what I'm reading	Yes the skills skimming scanning etc. Really help whenever I come across a lengthy academic piece	Yes the passages provided wholly consist of wide range of vocabulary	Yes I am now looking for content while reading

COLLEGE E4 cont...

16a	Yes format of questions set in IELTS are different and it requires more of readers skills rather than a good hold on the language itself.	No	No	No	No	No
16b	No	No	No	No	No	No
16c	Yes format of questions and ways of answering differ	No	No	No	No	No
16d	Yes format of questions and expected ways of answering differ	No	No	Yes other science subjects are more concise compared to IELTS	No	No
17	Yes I am able to detect main point, make conclusions and link ideas more effectively	Yes, made me more clear and more understanding while reading the materials	no	Yes it helps me to cut down the time spent to read and understand any academic piece	Yes it helps a bit as it provides me with some new vocabulary that rarely found in other tests	Yes I can trace the content of any text now
18	Yes, higher level of confidence	Yes, the coherence of speaking fluently apart from building self confidence	Yes I speak more fluently than I used to	Yes, pronunciation and my confidence to speak in public – in English	Yes, I feel more confident to speak in English without feeling shy	Yes, I am more confident to speak English
19	No listening skills are not as effective as reading skills as questions asked are rather basic. Speaking test practice is very rare too	Yes in general improve my English usage particularly in communication regardless of verbally, listening or writing down information	No Some are less relevant with my life	Yes, it helps anyone to really master the language in every aspect	No some of them are quite useful like speaking and listening but the rest are almost the same with other English courses	Yes I am going to Australia to study so I must be good in English
20	Learning to understand and adapt to the ways native Australians talk	To be more aware and careful when interpret the information	Not much as I've only had 2 practices	It helps me to stay focus	It improves	I am more focused while listening
21	Yes UK and Australia etc 1 month the most	Yes Australia 2 months	Yes Australia a few weeks at the most	no	no	no
22	No	no	no	no	no	no
23	No	no	no	no	no	no
24	No	yes USA 2 yrs	no	no	Yes England 2 years	no
25	Yes	yes	no	yes	no	yes
26	All	all	2 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 newspapers and magazines 6 movies 7 music	All	All

COLLEGE E4 cont...

Comments	<p>Students should be encouraged to speak in English, therefore speaking practices is of paramount importance. Writing skills should be more open to creative ideas rather than on restricted areas</p>			<p>The writing part section 2 please allow candidates to have some choices in writing essay the questions should give at least 3 topics for candidates to choose</p>	<p>I think that it is better to conduct speaking assessment in group as it would be more interesting rather than by having it personally</p>	<p>Make it something easier please</p>
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APPENDIX 5: SUMMARY OF THEMES FROM INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS

Theme	L	G	H	K	J
Languages	Tamil (English as main and to children and in school)		First is Malay Second is English	Chinese and English and BM	
Qualifications	MA TESOL in Malaysia	Dip Ed	All schooling in English in 60s and 70s. TESOL at USM. Been teaching English since 1981.	Not much. No training as an English teacher or teacher. Has studied overseas.	
Inservice		Runs 2-3 day workshops for other teachers on Australian Matric programmes. Has done research on Australian Matric text production etc			
Living overseas	Never.				
IELTS Background	No training. No other teachers trained.	No Examiner training but marker and moderator for SSABSA	Not an Examiner. Teaching test practice since 2003. Has seen only samples of the test.		Not an Examiner
Taken a test?	Never	Never	Never	Not IELTS. Only TOEFL.	Never. No teachers at the school have ever taken an IELTS test.
IELTS Teaching experience	3 years teaching. Currently teaching IELTS test practice 3 hours a week. Confident	Since 1989	Confident to explain because I do planning ahead and research the difficult cultural issues.	2 ½ years. Happy as a teacher for IELTS. Confident that it teaches students to be proficient rather just know grammar.	
Materials	Uses commercial materials. Content not appropriate. Too much emphasis on UK and Australia. (listening practice test referring to 'tube')	Uses commercial texts. No time to produce own.	No time to produce own.	Uses IDP materials and makes some own.	

Assessing Speaking and Writing	Teacher collaboration in forming assessments		Uses band descriptors		Uses band descriptors and guidelines.
Student motivation	Highly motivated. Take the test for their future.	Need to pass. Passport to university.	Paying a lot of money. Need to get it right and want to do further study.	99% not motivated to do English. Don't use it at home. (Later refutes this)	
Task 1 Writing	The most difficult.	OK Rubrics clear and limited. This is OK for Malaysians.	Task 1 is useful for other classes too.	Writing most difficult (and Listening)	Students from other countries can't interpret the graphic. (Neither can Malaysians)
Task 2 Writing	Learning to analyse is a useful skill.	Not used to giving opinion (but like debates)		Writing the most difficult	
Speaking	Similar to training to give speeches.	Some topics not suitable to be discussed. But they have to be able to do this in an English speaking country. But how far can you take that?	Gives one-to-one for the students at any time.		
Listening		Accents might be difficult.		They need to listen to native speakers but Listening and Writing most difficult.	
Reading	Reading skills overlap with other classes.				
Academic skills and preparation for university	All skills overlap with other classes. (Except writing)	Students do worst in Speaking and Writing but they like speaking the best. All skills good preparation for university.		Listening and Writing the most difficult. Cf. MUET which is too low a bench mark, the IELTS prepare better with skills. Gives them an international standard. Yes, good preparation for university.	Relevant for tertiary education.
Mix of students					Students from Sudan, China, Morocco, French New Guinea, Somalia, Nigeria, Pakistan.

Cultural issues	Not all topics culturally acceptable. Rote learning is an issue to be dealt with and this is a problem all through the test and with most students.	Part 3 speaking is an issue because not only is there a cultural problem with giving opinion but there is a personality issue (Is it age?) Critical thinking is a new idea but one student said 'You make me a more emotional person' and that it helps with reflections.	All of the material is from English-speaking countries and so there is nothing familiar.		The test focuses on the sort of things they need in Australia (knowledge and skills). Specially international students memorize because they just want to pass and they don't ask questions.
Connection to SSABSA		Yes. And we have changed our style to that of IELTS but with texts (like ABC)	SSABSA works well with IELTS but difficult for local students. But they usually pick it all up because of the similarity of skills in the tests. Helps with independent learning		
Curriculum washback					They changed their internal band rating to be closer to IELTS Modified to those needs. Students get a 6 then they can match it back to their own ratings.
Other ideas		Students don't like severe looking Examiners, nor those who stop them midway talking, because it makes them feel that they have been wrong. They get agitated when the Examiner is a native speaker.	Need practice books with more international flavour (Malaysian). Need teacher training.	IKIP teacher enthusiastic and said that many Malaysians want to learn English.	Teachers need to be trained to be able to make assessments on Speaking and Writing. This is a big issue and there was a big discussion.

Theme	D	M	MM	P
Languages	B.M English at work.	Malay 80% at home English 90% at work (Also speaks other dialects)	English	Chinese and English (Mainly English at home)
Qualifications	High School level 2. Scholarship to USA Studied International Business Economics, University of Pennsylvania, Teacher Training Certificate from KL. Confident.	Primary 1 English. Did not complete TESOL. NYU for first degree. UiTM TESOL Diploma 1992-1993. Not as confident as other teachers.	Studied in India MA English. No TESOL. Teaching English for 20 years.	All schooling and training done in English. Studied Trinity Diploma in the UK. Teaching English for 25 years. Confident. Also taught SAT
Inservice		Inservice intensive training with MARA		
Living overseas	USA	USA	India	UK and Australia (Relatives in Australia) Confident.
IELTS Background	None	None	None (Applied)	None (Applied)
Taken a test?	Never	Never (taken TOEFL)	Never	Never
IELTS Teaching experience	2 semesters teaching (Also TOEFL and SAT) 6 hrs/week	5 years	4-5 years	15 years (since 1989) 15 hrs/week
Materials	Commercially produced materials. Content no problem. General interest. Some specific. No time to prepare own. Commercial is good. 50% of content is familiar to students.	Prepares own materials. Uses <i>National Geographic</i> . Says test is not real English.	Commercially produced materials supplemented with stuff from the newspapers to get additional practice and local flavour. (Commercially prepared materials are too UK and Australia oriented.) Models own materials on commercially produced.	Mostly commercially produced.
Assessing Speaking and Writing	Confident. Uses descriptors.			New students didn't get the scores she thought so changing to BC from IDP.

Student motivation	Yes I think so.	Must get level 6 (5.5 for Latrobe) But if they have credit in SPM they don't need IELTS. Then they do IEP for Australian foundation But this does not apply to all students.	Motivation high to study in US, UK	Not highly motivated. Most have no intention to go overseas but she encourages them to take the opportunity.
Task 1 Writing	This is only IELTS Test skill not used elsewhere.			
Task 2 Writing			Task 2 writing is useful in other areas of their study. Specially the critical thinking aspect.	
Speaking		Part 3 speaking difficult because of inability to critically analyse and produce own thoughts.	Pronunciation is a problem, specially for the Chinese.	Pronunciation difficult for the Korean and Bangladeshi students.
Listening			Spelling is an issue.	Students are not used to listening specially to accents. (Korean and Bangladeshi)
Reading				Reading is not reading and comprehension. Topics not suitable. Boring and not relevant to local students (e.g musical instruments)
Academic skills and preparation for university	Useful for university life.	Must learn international English (such as debate, critical thinking etc)	Academic skills are new to them so it is an issue how to introduce them. Generally, introducing the skills is the focus of test practice.	Students from Chinese schools are usually weak in skills.
Mix of students			China, Mongolia, Korea, Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam	Korean, Bangladeshi
Cultural issues	Rote learning and critical thinking are major issues. Critical thinking is a new skill.	Students good at memorising. The whole culture memorises whole pages. Can't concentrate on analytical work. Can't produce own opinion. Part 3 Speaking is therefore difficult.	Critical thinking has to be learnt and understood. Most content is UK and Australian.	

Connection to SSABSA			They use SSABSA and Cambridge Level A	
Curriculum washback	Doesn't participate in the curriculum development. (Maybe did not understand the question)	They use/adopt/adapt the IELTS Test materials specially Listening and Part 1 Speaking. They have students with IELTS Band 2 (How do they measure that?) They hope to get them to Band 4 in 20 hrs/week.		
Other ideas	Teacher training would be useful.	Change from IDP to BC because the marking is easier.	Put some Asian names into the Listening (Street names too) More Asian flavour might help contextually.	More Asian topics and current issues. Change from IDP to BC.

APPENDIX 6: ONE TEACHER'S RESPONSE TO FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

Note. This follow-up questionnaire was emailed to all participating teachers and one response was received. The response below includes the teacher's exact typed words after each question asked.

We would like to remind you that all information will be kept strictly confidential and your names will not be used in any reporting. (We apologise if we have already asked you these questions but we are looking for more detailed responses).

1. What is your first language?

Bahasa Malaysian, the national language of Malaysia

2. How many languages do you speak?

Only 2, which is Bahasa Malaysia and English

3. What do you use each language for?

Baasa. Malaysia...mainly for communicating with families and friends. English...for my job as an English lecturer and also when I'm communicating with the business communities. I feel more comfortable communicating with English if I know that the other person is well trained in English. Otherwise, I'm worried that I'll offend the person because a non user of English normally will think that an English-speaking person is trying to show off.

4. Please describe more fully your use of English outside the workplace. (home, social, other)

At home, I normally converse in Bahasa Malaysia (BM). Some of the times I'll have discussions in English with my husband usually regarding technical, scientific or academic issues. We normally just converse in BM for everyday issues.

In social setting, most of the time I'll converse in BM although I much prefer to converse in English since I feel I can convey my thoughts more accurately with English. However, I have to consider a factor that not all Malaysians especially the Malays in my country are fluent in English and thus could be insulted.

In business setting, I much prefer to converse and discuss in English since I was trained in business (Degree in Mgmt) and familiar with the terms in English. Besides, discussing in English also makes me appear more respectable and there'll be less chances for me being cheated.

5. Can you think of something you now teach more successfully as a result of your IELTS teaching experience?

Listening

Reading – Most probably reading since IELTS highlights the necessary skills needed to approach the reading tasks – skills like scanning, guessing, skimming etc.

Writing

Speaking

6. In any of these areas, is there something specific you wish IELTS provided more information about (eg in the handbook)?

Not that I can think of now.

7. As an English-speaking Malaysian teaching English in Malaysia, a non-English speaking country, can you suggest what linguistic and cultural advantages you bring to the classroom?

Although I was born a Malay in Malaysia, I was also exposed to the Western education for 5 years in the USA. So, actually, in my role as an IELTS teacher, I could clearly see what problems or cultural factors that hinder them from understanding the questions and answering them.

To be more specific, having experienced both Western and local cultures, I could identify that the students are not trained in critical or analytical thinking which I think is crucial to answer many of the reading questions. My awareness enables me to help students to overcome this problem. I am also able to see how the Malaysians understand certain words or phrases the wrong way based only on their Malaysian viewpoints. But I could relate to the Western scenarios and explain to them the Western context to help them see the real meaning according to Western perspectives.

I probably help them most in understanding the language from the viewpoint of a native speaker as I was exposed much to it. It is also a valuable discovery for me now that I have also begun to realise – that language is cultural also and not just simply a tool of communication via translation. There are many cultural components in language that when you miss understanding the cultural components, you also miss some of the meanings in the language.

Another advantage that I could bring to the classroom is probably in pronunciation. I am able to demonstrate the correct pronunciation almost similar to a native speaker.

8. In what areas do you feel lacking?

I would like to be more exposed to thinking skills since there are some questions in IELTS that confuses me also. Perhaps I would also like to know the philosophy of IELTS as a test set by Western standard.

9. What is the nationality mix of students in your IELTS practice classes?

They're all Malaysians and all Malays.

10. Can you describe some of the issues which you face teaching mixed nationality classes?

Not applicable but I would say, the more mixed the nationalities are, the more cultural factors to be taken into account.

11. What do you think are the advantages of this kind of teaching?

Not applicable

12. What aspects of the IELTS test would you like to see included in a teacher training course (given that test materials are secure)?

Philosophy of IELTS. What factors are taken into consideration when designing the test questions?

What are the assumptions when designing the questions, if any? Do the test makers realise the cultural differences/factors that exist when designing the questions at international level?