

Developing an Innovative General Foundation Programme (GFP) and an IELTS Centre in a New Military College

Authors : Jessica Peart, Sarim Al Zubaidy

Abstract : This paper examines the main dialogic and reformative aspects that have constituted the developing implementation of an English language module in a common pre-sessional program in Oman, the General Foundation Program (GFP), at the new Military Technological College (MTC), in Oman's capital, muscat. The MTC is the first of its kind in the country to merge military with academic training and has been running programs since September 2013 over five trimesters to date, receiving external validation and accreditation from the University of Portsmouth (UoP), UK. From this starting point, We will provide context on the parameters that necessitated delivery of this common but specially tailored pre-sessional program at the MTC and outline in detail how the English module with integrated key study skills and personal tutoring support was initially conceived before operations commenced and cooperation between all stakeholders took practical shape. This enquiry traces how stakeholders from students to faculty, college boards and collaborative university partners have considered and redefined the in part static and dynamic boundaries of their larger and smaller scale stakes. With regard to the widely held recognition that pre-sessional students require training in transferable study skills in order to succeed at university, we will chart the subsequent and ongoing adjustments made to the generic, pastoral and integrated elements of that program. Driving this concerted effort has been at base the need for a GFP concerned with three criteria for incoming MTC students cadets, namely to develop candidate's rounded capacity for intellectual, technical and physical skill as both students and cadets, to generate linguistic proficiency and discerning use of appropriate language registers and to allow personal and collective time for adjustment to a multilayered, brand new environment, while also working within a regulated timeline for academic progression to the MTC diploma or degree levels. The English Department teaching staff's facilitation of the initial program's methodologies and timeframe for the GFP English module has garnered a keen and diverse sense of the holistic student cadet experience, which a range of alterations to the program demonstrate. These include alterations to the class types and overall program duration as well as greater multiplicity of exposure within learning environments. In surveying the impact of these composite maneuvers and challenges within a proactive and evolving context of teaching and learning, it is finally demonstrated how student cadet levels of productivity and self-reliance on the one hand and retention issues on the other are being gainfully steered towards progression within a framework for inclusive reciprocal dialogue, gathering thereby civilian and military backgrounds toward uniquely united ends.

Keywords : English module transferable skills, faculty dialogue, governance structure, overarching regulatory agencies

Conference Title : ICERMM 2015 : International Conference on Education Reform and Modern Management

Conference Location : Venice, Italy

Conference Dates : April 13-14, 2015