



EAP NEEDS ANALYSIS

ELI Retreat 2013

EAP Task Force:

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Rational Rationale

- The Big (CAP) Bang Theory
- Our EAP track was designed for a different population
- Concern from UD faculty/administrators
- Report card so far: good (but room for improvement)
- Goal: strengthen the EAP and maintain a healthy IEP

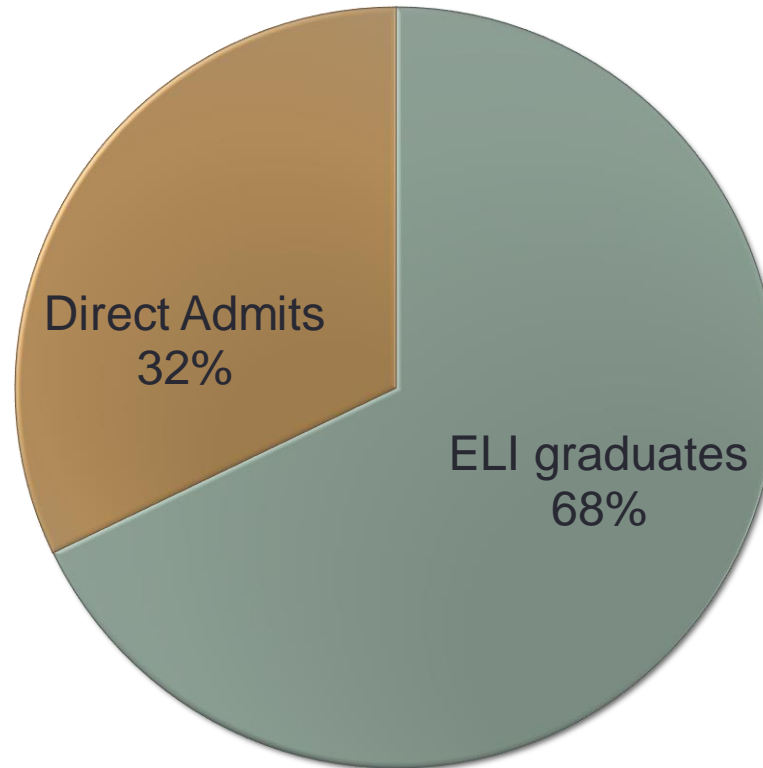
Needs Analysis

“[EAP] means grounding instruction in an understanding of the **cognitive, social, and linguistic** demands of specific academic disciplines. This takes practitioners beyond preparing learners for study in English to developing new kinds of literacy: equipping students with the **communicative skills to participate in particular academic and cultural contexts.**”

(Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002)

UD International Students

International Undergraduate Student Population

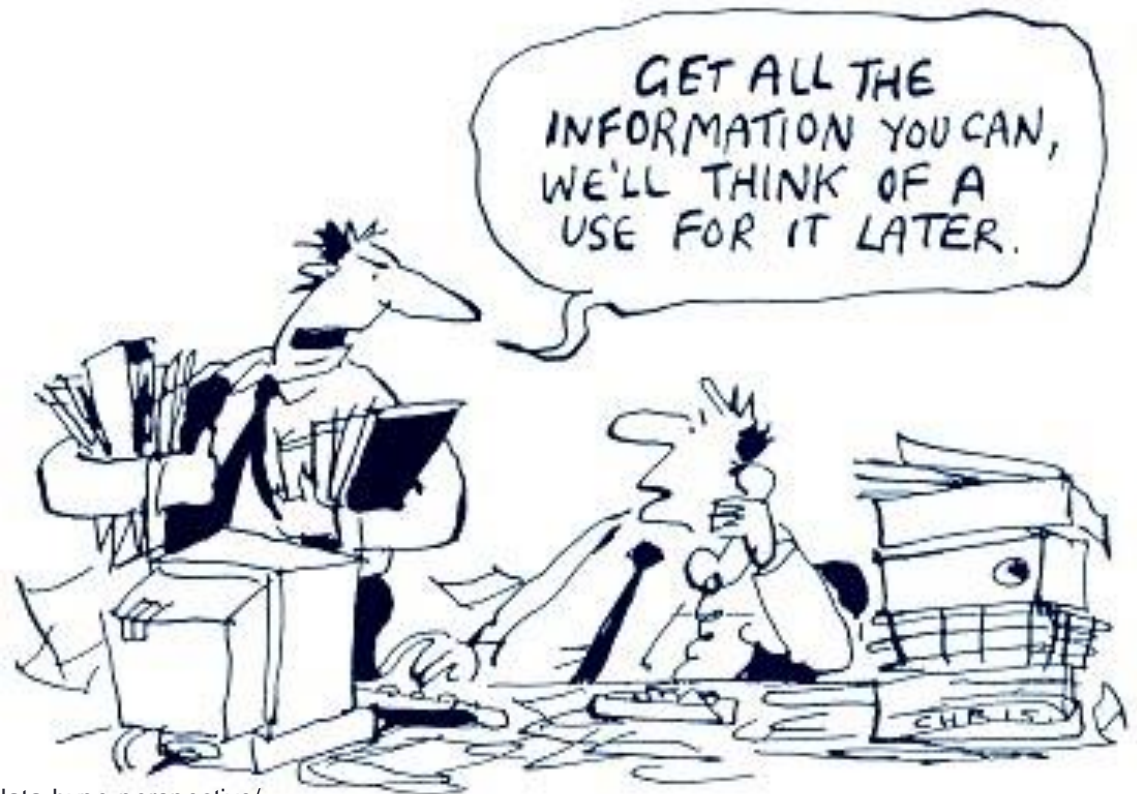


The Plan

- Survey of ELI students
- Survey of UD international undergraduates
- Survey of UD faculty
- Literature review
- Market research
- Brainstorming by ELI faculty (today)
- Interviews with former ELI students (ongoing)
- Focus groups with UD faculty (soon)

Implementation

- Identify key “ingredients” for our EAP (now)
- Propose one or more program models (soon)
- (Re-)design courses and assessments (2013-2014)
- Implement (TBD)



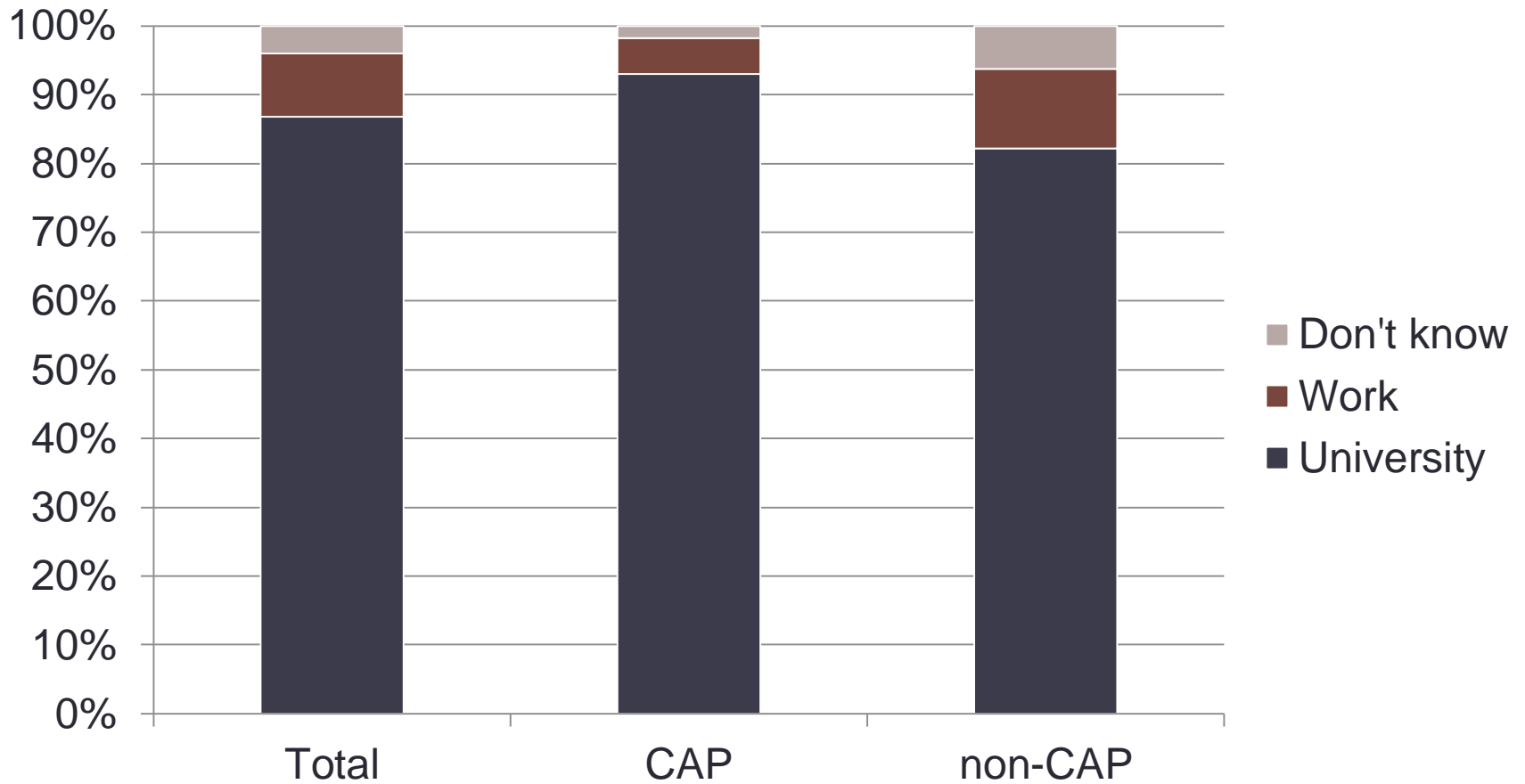
Survey Participants

ELI students (levels IV+)	n = 262	55%+ response rate (48% CAP) (balanced for Chinese, Saudi, others)
Matriculated UD International Undergraduates	n = 191	25% response rate (equal participation of former ELI and direct admits)
UD Faculty	n = 226	20% response rate (mostly from CAS, Lerner, Engineering)

Highlights of results

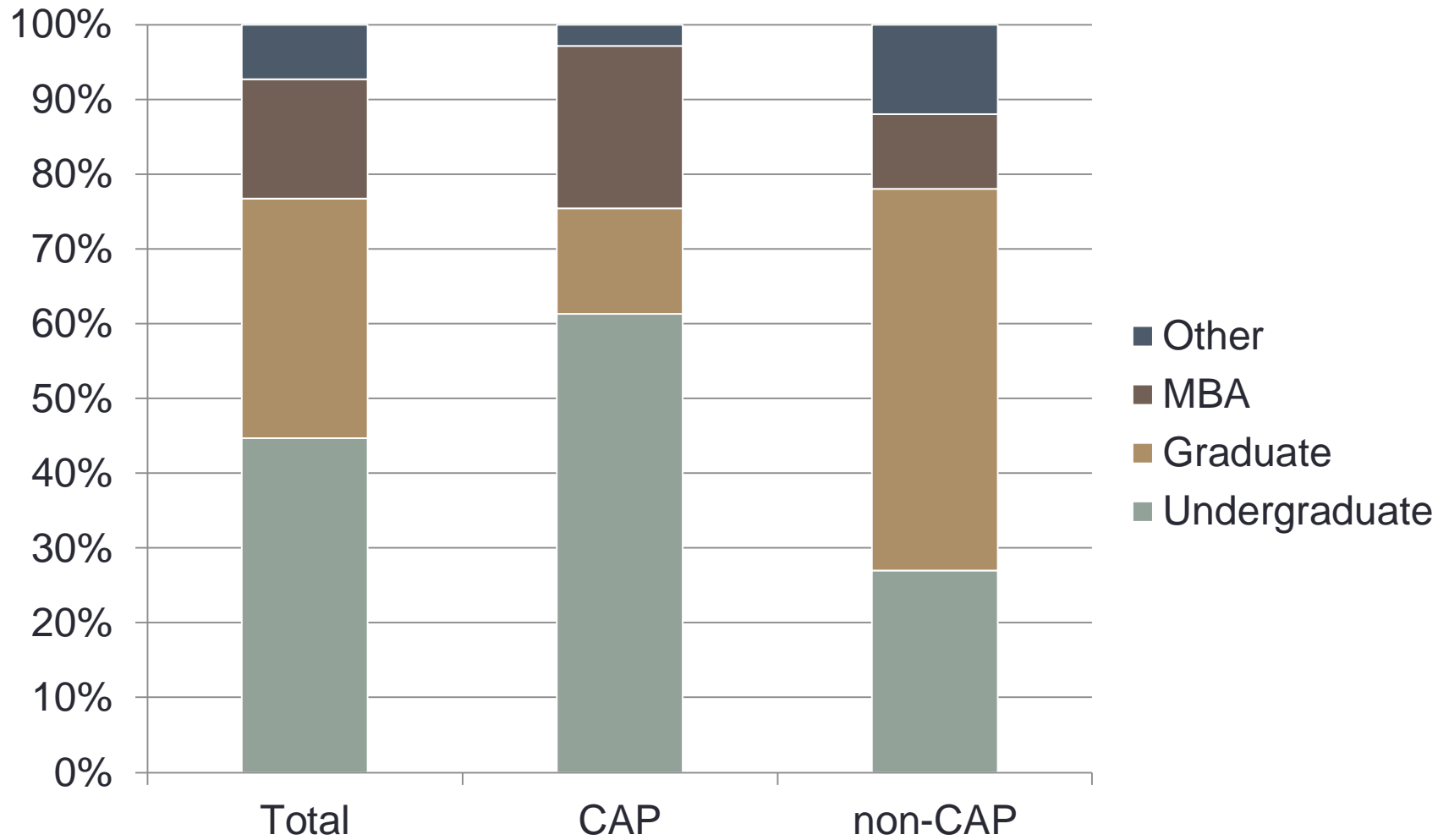
- Who are our students?
- What do they need to do as undergraduates at UD?
- What are their challenges at UD?
- How have they been successful?

Plans after leaving ELI



50% of academic track students are CAP, 50% non-CAP

Academic Aspirations



UD International Student Majors

- *Top majors:* **Finance, Chemical Engineering, Accounting, Economics, Electrical Engineering**
- *Other majors:* Mathematics, Mechanical Engineering, International Relations, Environmental Engineering, Hotel Restaurant and Institutional Management, Management, Marketing, Business Administration, Chemistry, Civil Engineering, Art, Computer Engineering, Management Information Systems , Nutrition, and 15 others (3 undeclared “university studies”)

Motivation (ELI Students)

- Primary motivations are (scale 1-4):
 - **Improve English** (CAP: 3.79 vs non-CAP 3.92)*
 - **Prepare for university studies**
(CAP: 3.59; non-CAP 3.42)
 - **Meeting the CAP requirement** (CAP: 3.3)
- A little less important:
 - **Experience American culture**
(3.15 overall; Arabic: 2.89 vs. Chinese 3.24*)
 - **Make friends with people from different cultures**
(CAP: 2.92 vs non-CAP 3.24*)

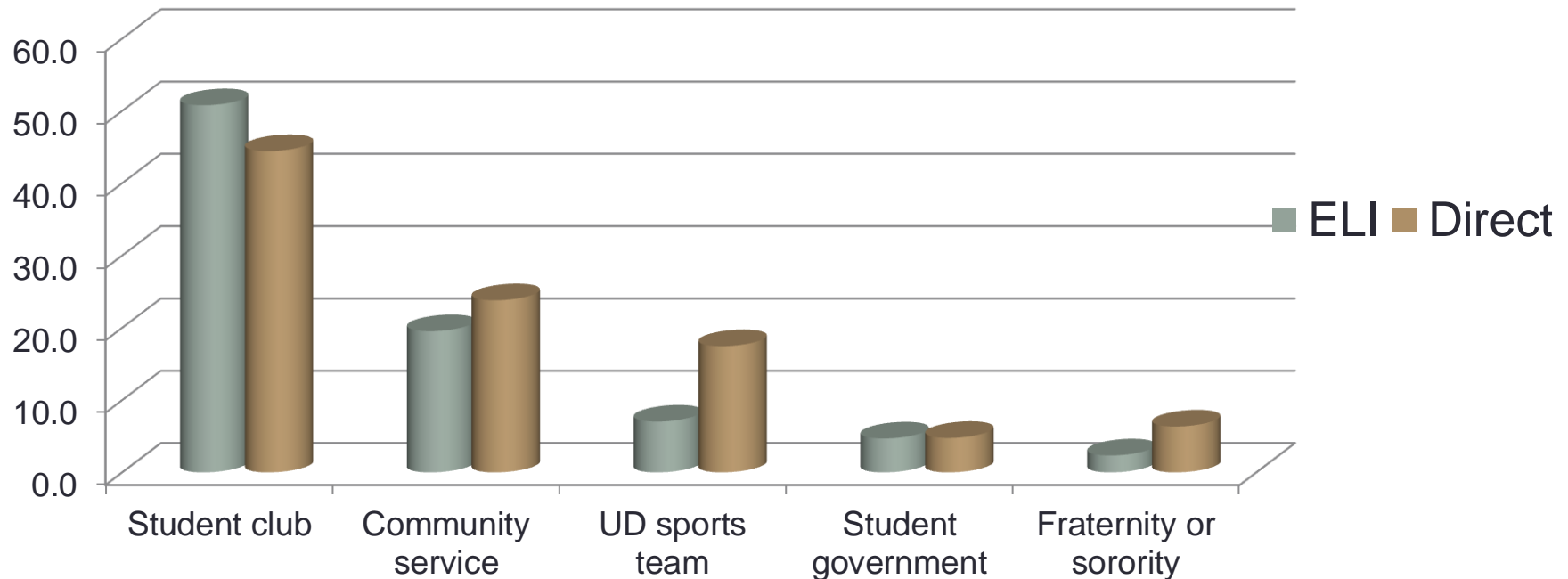
* = statistically significant difference, $p < .05$

Motivation

- 20% of students chose the ELI because their parents want them to study in the U.S. (28% of Chinese)
- 15% of academic-track students chose UD because they did not want to study in their home country (20% of Arabic speakers)
- 45% of all students chose UD/ELI because of ranking
- Students report speaking English about half the time (58% CAP, 56% non-CAP).

Engagement (UD Students)

- *Do you have a close American friend?*
 - Former ELI students 78%
 - Direct Admits 69%
- Campus activities:



Other findings

- On average, academic students at the ELI do not (yet) have a strong understanding of university culture
- Academic students complain about “general” courses
- Content/theme courses are popular with academic students
- EAP is reviewed favorably overall
- A small but vocal “please let me pass”, “I don’t care about English, I just want to graduate” strain

What do faculty want?



"Apples are fine, but I find today's teacher prefers a nice latte."

What skills do students need?

Important/Very Important (> 3.0)

- Understanding lectures
- Critical thinking
- Synthesizing information
- Reading textbooks
- Time/task management
- Taking notes
- Asking questions in/after class
- Participating in class discussions
- Speaking clearly
- Using sources
- Participating in groups
- Writing essays out of class
- Writing short answers on tests

Not always important (< 3.0)

- Reading journal articles
- Taking essay exams
- Writing about their opinions
- Writing research papers
- Giving individual presentations
- Giving group presentations
- Writing papers or reports as a group
- Taking multiple-choice tests
- Leading discussions

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Disciplinary differences

- No difference on most of the core skills (top 10)
- Different test types:
 - essays in arts & humanities
 - MCQ and short-answers in sciences/social sciences
- Research papers, writing about opinions, and individual presentations are significantly less important in science/math/engineering and social sciences (< 3.0)
- But everyone needs a bit of everything

Do students agree?

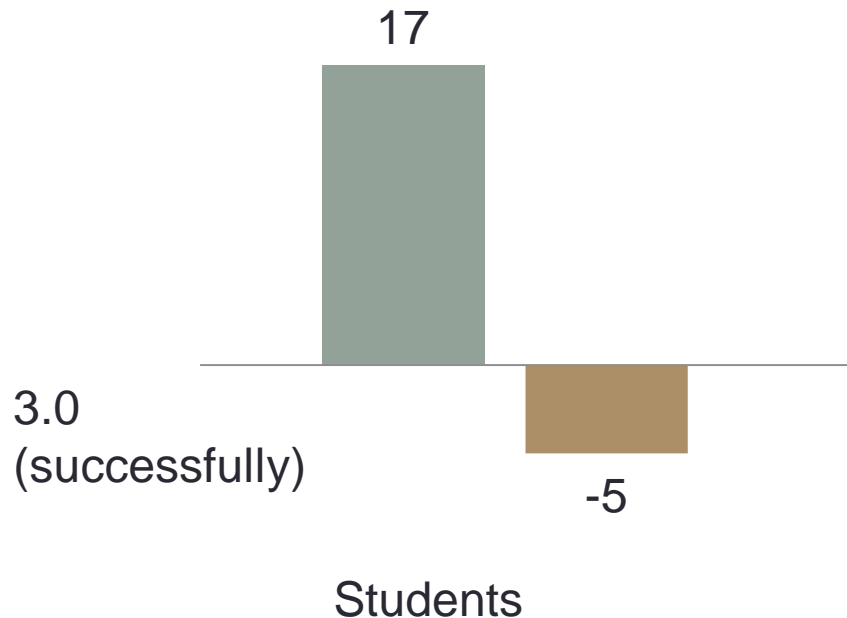
- Basically, yes.
- Faculty rated these skills as important with statistically higher frequency than did students:
 - **asking questions in/after class**
 - **participating in class discussions**
- Students rated several skills as significantly more important than faculty:

taking essay exams
multiple-choice quizzes
giving presentations
writing group papers
leading discussions

speaking clearly
using sources
writing short answers
writing research papers
writing about opinions

How are they doing?

- According to the students just great!
- Average rating of “successful” or better on 17/22 skills



Grades (self-reported):

• ELI students: 68.5% >3.0

Direct admits: 76.2%

Challenges for international students

Speaking

Speaking

Speaking

Speaking

Speaking

Speaking

Speaking

Listening

Listening

Listening

Listening

Listening

Listening

Listening

Participation (students)

- “As international students, **it is really hard to participate in the class as many as native students, which always frustrate international students.** Without participation frequently, our final grade will be lower somehow. But the participation in class and group work are typically what happen in 400 level classes, so it can be considered as the most challenge.”
- “Group work is the one of the activities I afraid because **sometimes I cannot express what I am thinking.** I think about our group project a lot, and I have good ideas, but sometimes Americans just say it out first. **It seems like I am space out, but I am not.**”

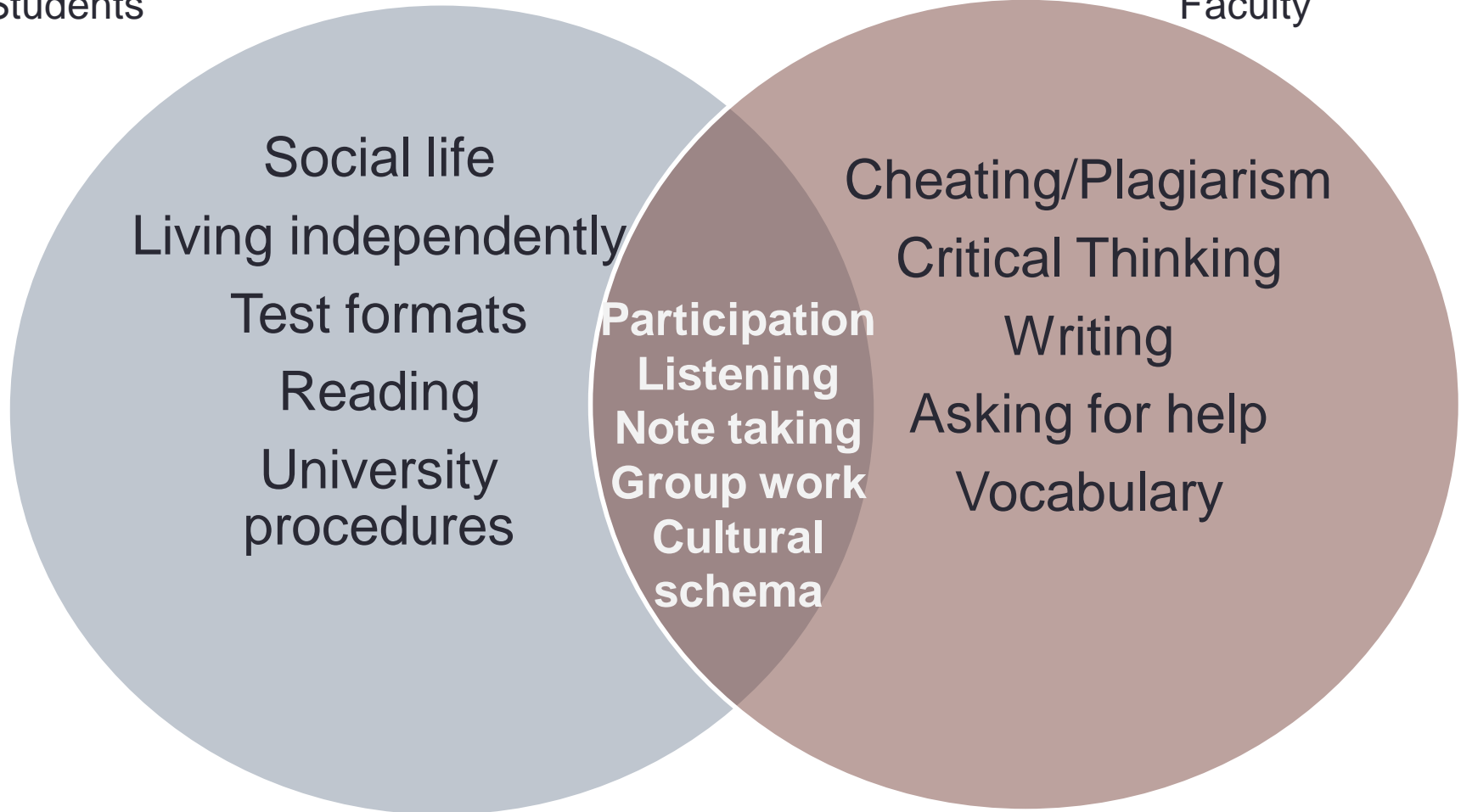
Participation (faculty)

- “One of the biggest challenges is that students from Asian countries have a very difficult time becoming a participant in the learning community. They tend to be on the outside and observe, even when welcomed by the other students.”

Other challenges

Students

Faculty



A sample of comments

- “Many have an admirable knowledge of English but I wonder if they fully comprehend the language based on the **blank stare or nodding head** in response to an explanation.”
- “The international students with whom I've worked have a very difficult time **integrating ideas from multiple areas** (class readings, discussions, examples, etc.) and thinking critically about the significance of what they read.”
- “Grammar and syntax are not as much an issue as **formulating arguments** about what they have read”
- “**They are not proactive** in regards of their success or failure in the course. They tend to address the problem issue towards the end of the course when nothing can be done”

The good news ...

- Some of the skills rated highest by faculty include the most important overall:

- reading textbooks,
- time management
- note taking
- critical thinking



- However, $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of professors still found international students' proficiency lacking in these areas
- “zone of unconscious incompetence”
(Huang, 2010)



Success!

- “Enormous contributions! They bring cultural references which are "new" and important to American students. They express political views which might be seen as critical by American students - this is VERY healthy.”
- “If they speak up, they add another perspective to class discussions; most, however, don't speak up.”
- “My classes are very interactive. The international students I have had have all been active participants.”

More success! – former ELI students

- “Most of my friends are American”
- “Mind independent. Not always asking others for decisions.”
- “I experienced seeing a question/problem from a very different perspective. I was born and raised up in China, over these college years, I gradually understand and exactly feel how, for example, China and US look differently over a issue. I learned that to better understand the world and real-life , you really need to "step out of the cycle", think differently.”
- “I like UD. Never regret I chose to come to UD and be a Blue Hen. I am proud of myself so far. Still need to keep work hard.”

And finally ...

Compared to ELI classes, how difficult do you find UD classes?

Answer		Response	%
UD classes are easier		14	14%
They are about the same		10	10%
UD classes are harder		74	76%
Total		98	100%

Why?

- Workload, reading, time management, “academic stuff”
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- No accommodations and less support from professors than at ELI
- Strong feeling that at the ELI, they “only study English”, not content
- **“ELI is like a kindergarten once you experience the life in UD”**

Now what?

A GOOD LEADER LISTENS TO HIS UNDERLINGS.



Dilbert.com DilbertCartoonist@gmail.com

FINE. I'M OVERWORKED AND UNDERPAID. I HATE MY CO-WORKERS, I DON'T HAVE THE RESOURCES TO DO MY JOB, AND WE HAVE NO CLEAR STRATEGY.



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NO WONDER LEADERS LISTEN. IT'S A LOT EASIER THAN FIXING ALL OF THAT STUFF.



- 1. What EAP model would you design, given a blank slate?
- 2. What progress do you see in academically-oriented students in the past few years? What are you doing differently now that is working (better)?
- 3. What gaps do you observe in academic students' preparation (at any level)?

Please designate a note-taker with a laptop.

Send your notes to Nigel by email or a shared Google Doc (nacaplan@udel.edu). Thank you for your input!