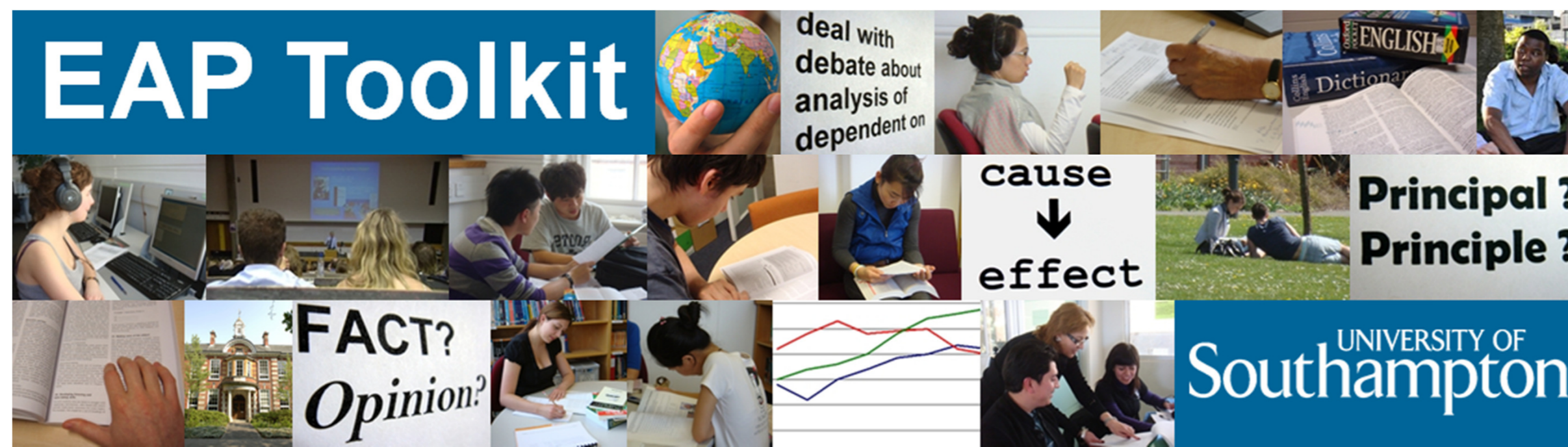# The EAP Toolkit: Student and Teacher Attitudes towards Blending Online Learning Resources with a Pre-sessional Course
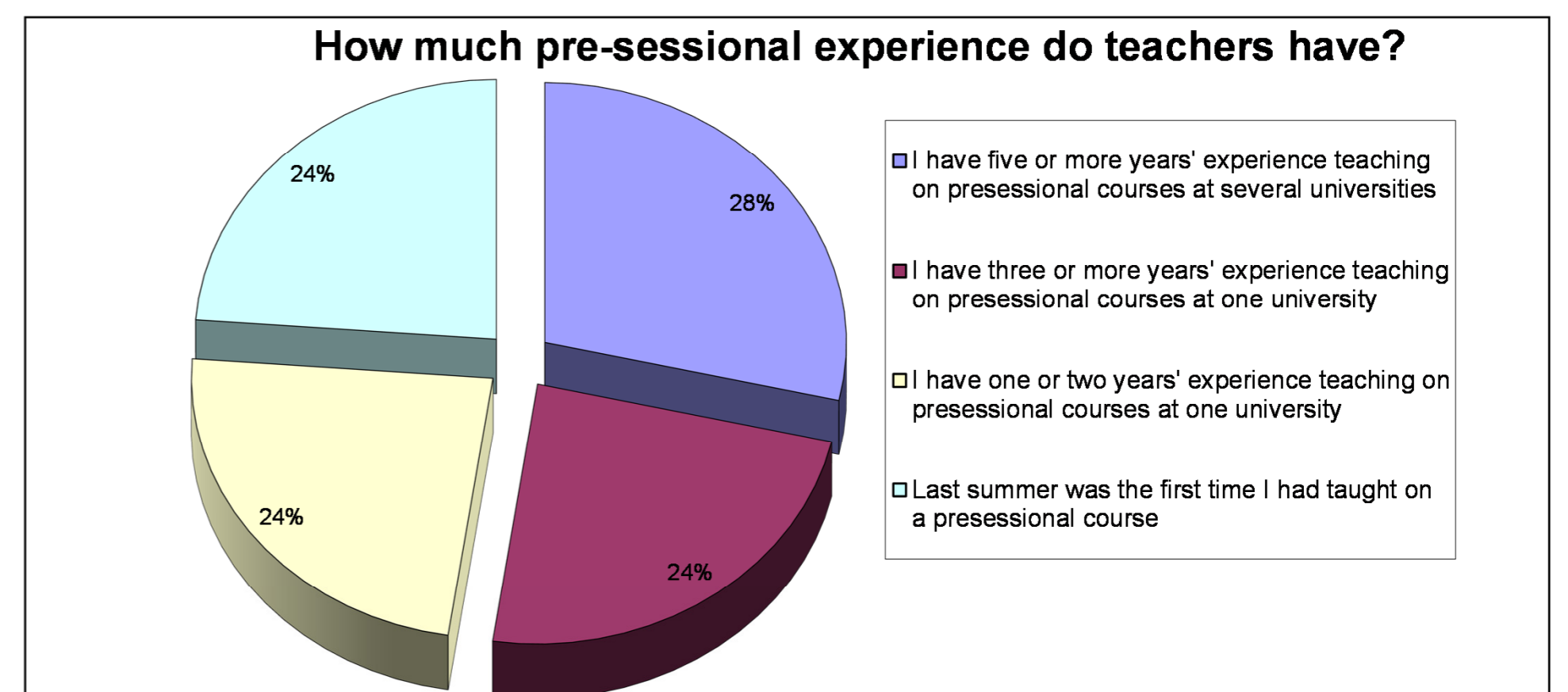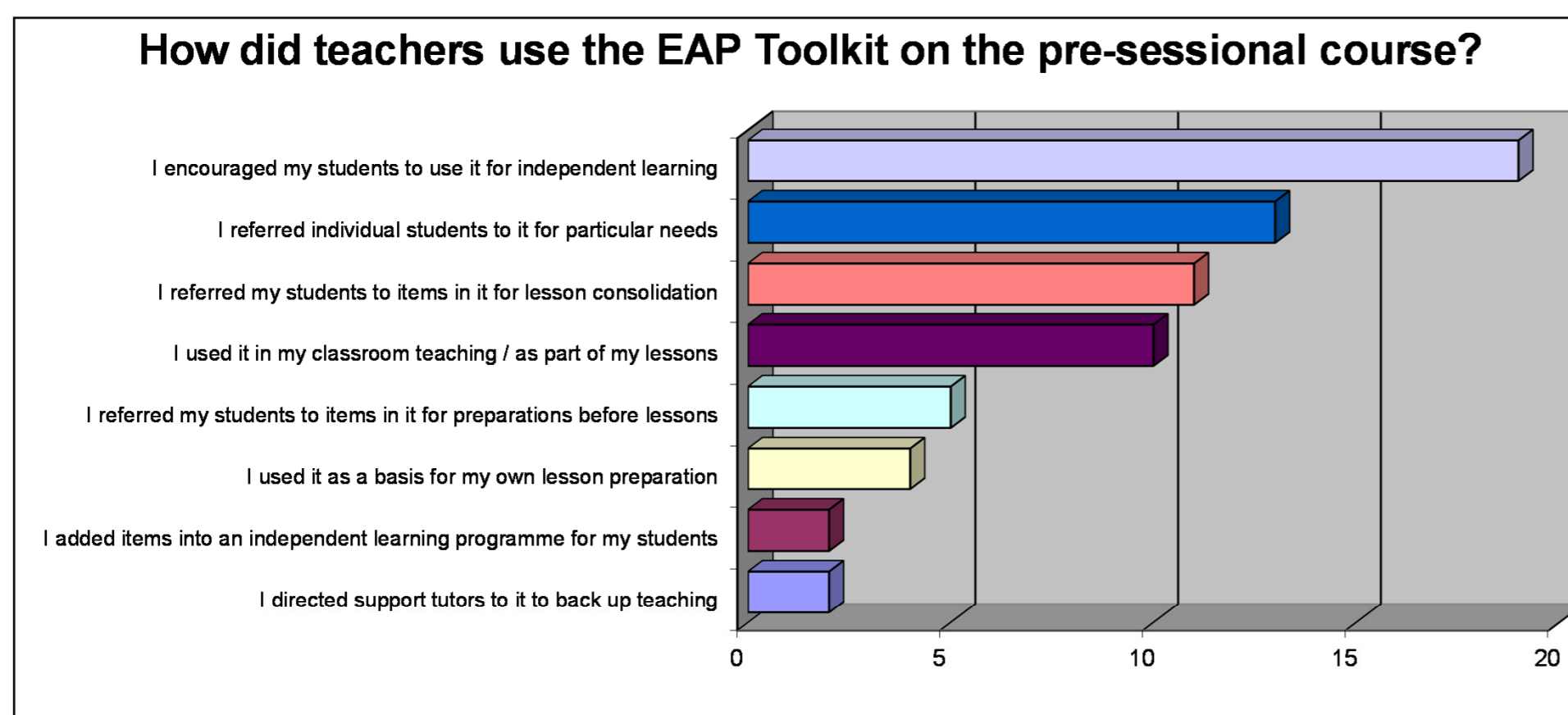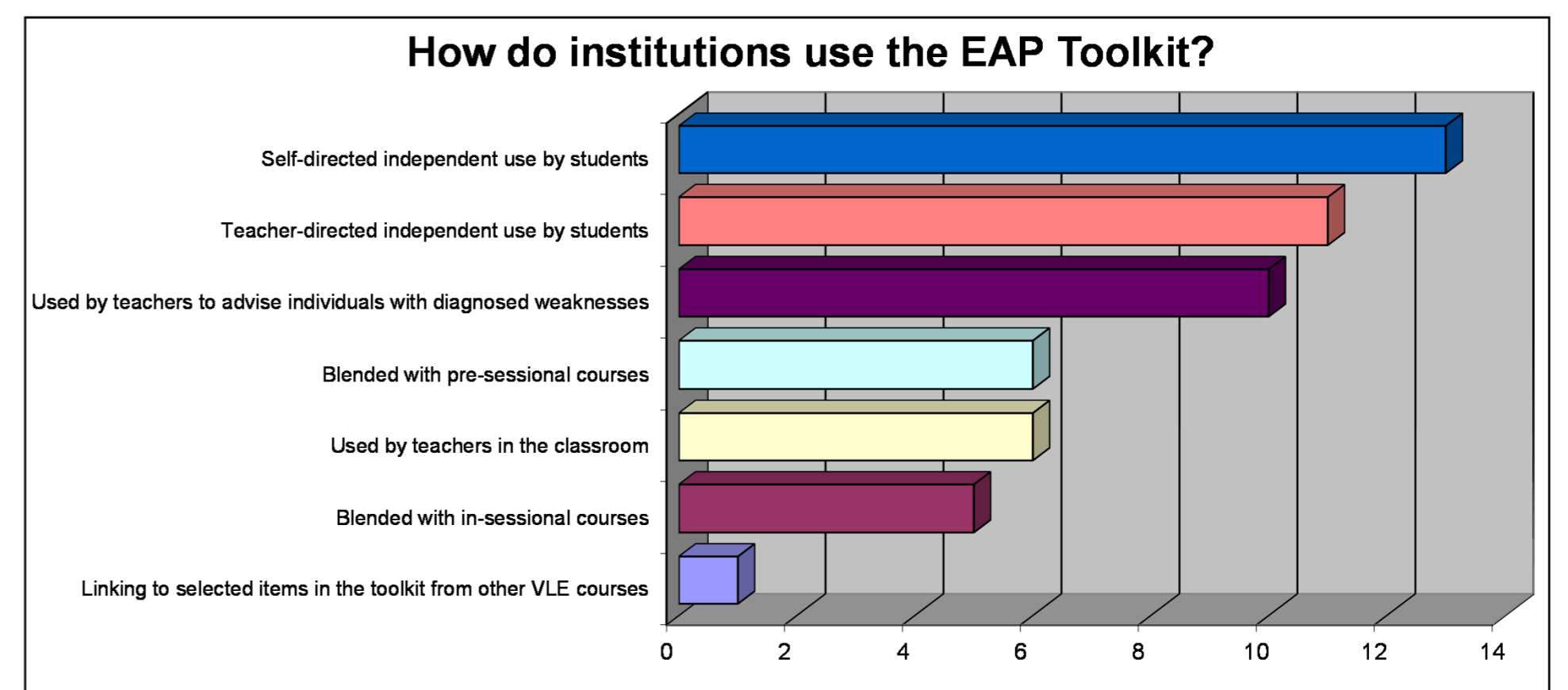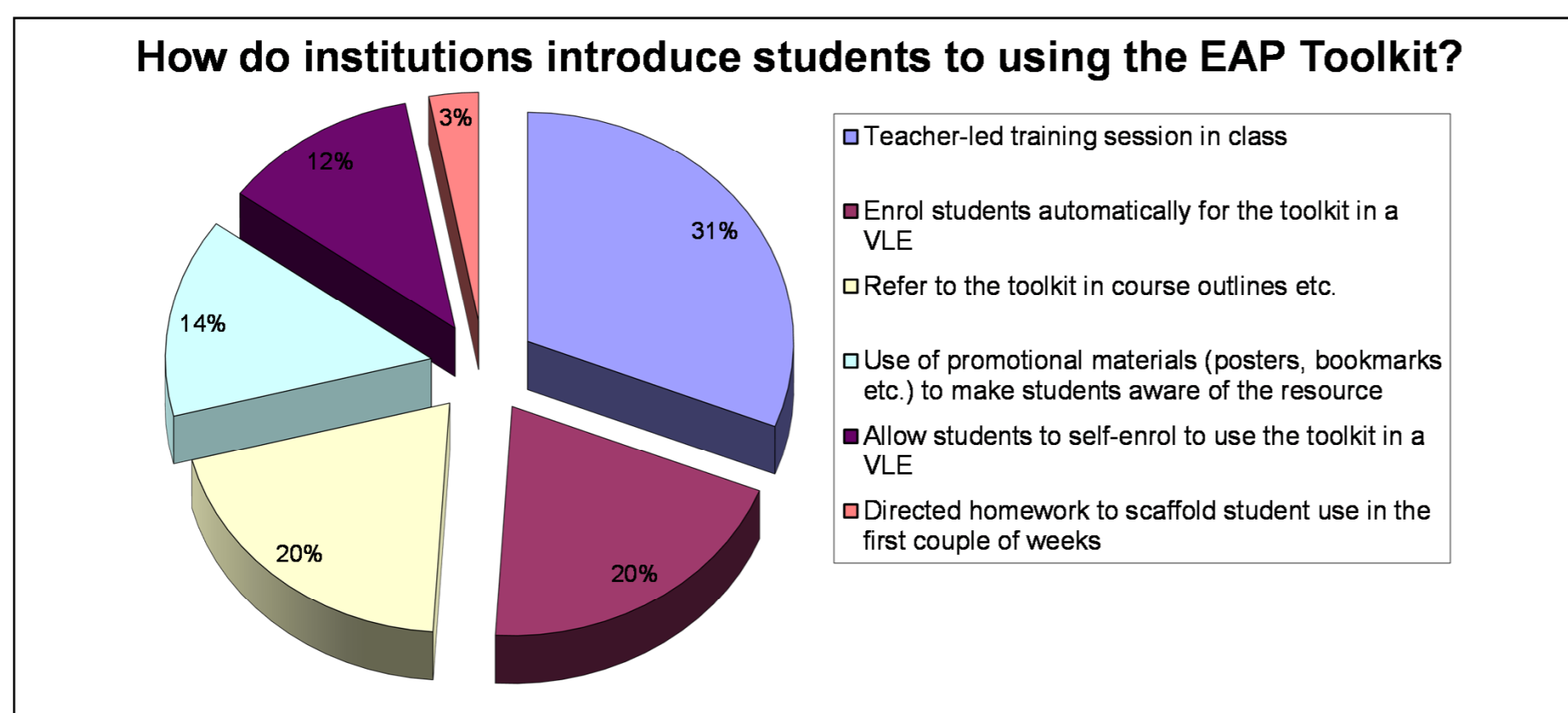

The EAP Toolkit contains over 100 learning items under 7 main topics:
- ❖ Learning skills
- ❖ Academic writing
- ❖ Reading and critical thinking
- ❖ Listening and note-taking
- ❖ Communication skills
- ❖ Grammar for academic purposes
- ❖ Vocabulary for academic purposes

The EAP Toolkit is a set of versatile online learning resources in study skills and English for Academic Purposes for international students. Licensed since 2004 and refreshed again for 2011, it contains over 100 learning resources / over 80 hours of teaching and learning activity. For use on pre-sessional and in-sessional courses or as an independent learning tool, it can be web-hosted or delivered through a platform such as Blackboard or Moodle.

In late 2010 and early 2011 we surveyed licensing institutions, pre-sessional teachers and international students to gather data about EAP Toolkit usage. Here is a snapshot of the responses:

How do institutions introduce students to using the EAP Toolkit?

- Teacher-led training session in class — 31%
- Enrol students automatically for the toolkit in a VLE — 20%
- Refer to the toolkit in course outlines etc. — 20%
- Use of promotional materials (posters, bookmarks etc.) to make students aware of the resource — 14%
- Allow students to self-enrol to use the toolkit in a VLE — 12%
- Directed homework to scaffold student use in the first couple of weeks — 3%

How do institutions use the EAP Toolkit?

- Self-directed independent use by students
- Teacher-directed independent use by students
- Used by teachers to advise individuals with diagnosed weaknesses
- Blended with pre-sessional courses
- Used by teachers in the classroom
- Blended with in-sessional courses
- Linking to selected items in the toolkit from other VLE courses

How did teachers use the EAP Toolkit on the pre-sessional course?

- I encouraged my students to use it for independent learning
- I referred individual students to it for particular needs
- I referred my students to items in it for lesson consolidation
- I used it in my classroom teaching / as part of my lessons
- I referred my students to items in it for preparations before lessons
- I used it as a basis for my own lesson preparation
- I added items into an independent learning programme for my students
- I directed support tutors to it to back up teaching

How much pre-sessional experience do teachers have?

- I have five or more years' experience teaching on presessional courses at several universities — 28%
- I have three or more years' experience teaching on presessional courses at one university — 24%
- I have one or two years' experience teaching on presessional courses at one university — 24%
- Last summer was the first time I had taught on a presessional course — 24%

What do students say?

> Great activities. Definitely helpful.

> It is a huge source that especially international students can profit a lot. I am happy to study with it.

> It is simple and organised very easy to follow. Categories are well-ordered so it's easy to find what I am looking for.

> The feedback parts are up to the point explaining the details and I also liked the variety of activities including different materials like audios or graphs.

> The topics and activities are good and useful. Everything is covered.

> The visual elements in activities like charts, graphs and the feedback parts were really practical and useful.

What do teachers say?

> I found them to be very effective and useful for me as a teacher as well as for my students.

> It worked well as a whole class activity where the students work collaboratively.

> The degree of scaffolding is about right to allow them to do the exercises independently.

> I think it is a great resource. It was helpful for me, as a new tutor on the pre-sessional, to see what and how I should be teaching, as well as being a useful resource for students.

> Many of my students used the EAP Toolkit outside of class and I saw an improvement in their essays.

> I think it is an excellent resource. It was so gratifying to find back-up and practice exercises for almost everything we covered during the course.

What do licensing institutions say?

> Excellent materials. The content has stood the test of time.

> It has been an invaluable resource for us over the years and long may it continue to be so.

> Dedicated EAP self-study materials; connects well with EAP curriculum; fits well into the assessed independent learning focus of our Pre-sessional Courses.

> A very useful complement to the other sources of language and skills support we offer our students.

> Bite-sized chunks so not overwhelming; clearly structured; covers a lot of useful ground.

> An excellent resource for guided Pre-sessional Courses.

eLanguages
Modern Languages
School of Humanities
Avenue Campus
University of Southampton
SO17 1BJ

Email: elang1@soton.ac.uk
Website: http://www.elanguages.ac.uk/
Twitter: http://twitter.com/e_languages
Telephone: 023 8059 9604
Fax: 023 8059 3849

UNIVERSITY OF Southampton — Modern Languages