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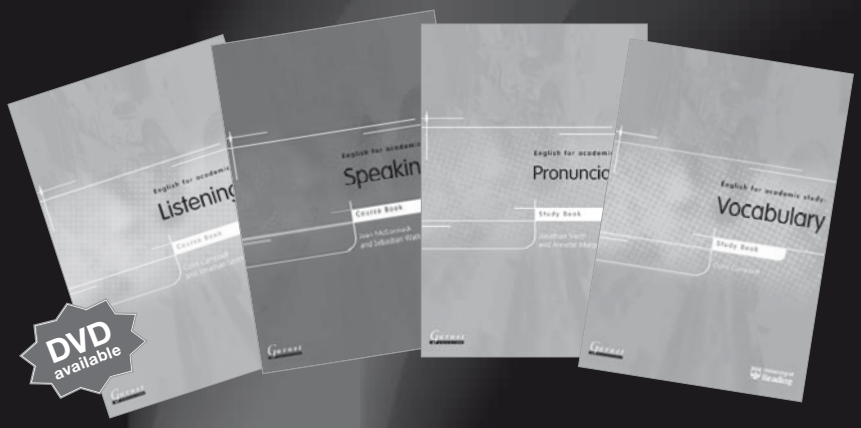

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Inside *InForm* ...

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From the Editorial Board ...

The Editorial Board takes great pleasure in introducing readers to this first issue of *InForm*, the new journal for international foundation programme professionals.

Although there is no single programme structure common to the many IFPs delivered through UK Higher Education institutions, one feature which is shared is the goal to prepare international students for university study. As a result, there is now a growing group of teaching professionals from a wide range of academic disciplines, who have key expertise in teaching international students at foundation level.

This journal has been launched with a view to providing a forum for the discussion of IFP-related teaching and learning issues which recognises the breadth of the IFP curriculum and extends beyond the boundaries of English Language Teaching.

The content of this first issue reflects the ethos on which the journal is grounded. The articles featured have been selected on the basis of their cross-curricular relevance and application to the wider IFP professional community. Issues which are discussed include approaches to teaching and assessment in different areas of the IFP curriculum; a framework for experiential learning; the results of an post-IFP tracking project and differing, and in places controversial, approaches to plagiarism avoidance.

It is hoped that readers of the journal will be able to relate to and apply some of what is included in these pages to their own teaching contexts. It is also hoped that readers from the full breadth of the IFP curriculum will be inspired to write for subsequent editions.

Anthony Manning
Chair of the *InForm* Editorial Board

Globalisation Project: an integrated content-based approach to academic skills development

About the author

Paul Stocks
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This paper outlines the 'Globalisation Project', a practical example of how the International Foundation Certificate at Goldsmiths attempts to develop English language and academic skills through the use of subject-specific teaching content. After describing the rationale and structure of the project, I consider how such a content-based approach might provide both a meaningful learning experience for foundation students, and valuable training for their future studies.

Rationale: why set a task based on globalisation?

The faculty base at Goldsmiths is relatively narrow, with most degree titles coming under the banners of Art and Design, Humanities or Social Science. Thus, subjects which emphasise the study of culture predominate, and students on the International Foundation Certificate (IFC) typically move on to take degrees in Media, Art, or Sociology/Cultural Studies. For better or worse, the processes of globalisation are having profound impacts on world cultures including the students' own, and it therefore seems highly relevant to ask them to explore theories of how globalisation functions, and how it is affecting their specific area of interest:

'For globalisation is not incidental to our lives today. It is a shift in our very life circumstances. It is the way we now live.' (Giddens, 2002 p.19)

The task

Bearing the relevance of globalisation in mind, and considering many of our students will go on to study it in greater detail on future courses, they are set the following 1500–2000 word project to be submitted at the end of the Spring term of the IFC:

> To what extent has globalisation influenced one or more aspects of the culture in your country? **Illustrate your answer with specific examples.**

Two 90-minute classes per week are dedicated to the globalisation project over the last five weeks of term, making a total of fifteen contact hours. Students are also expected to do a significant amount of research and writing in their own time, especially as they work towards the submission of the final version of the project, which represents a major part of their course assessment.

In a footnote to the task, students are told that they may choose to focus their discussion on their specific field of study. In this way the project becomes more motivating, relevant and meaningful to the individual. Thus one IFC student hoping to study BA Media and Communications wrote a well-argued project contrasting what he saw as the success of Korean films in creating a thriving domestic industry in the face of global competition, with the perceived failure of the Korean music industry to do the same.

Alternatively, if students are not able to focus on a specific academic subject area, they can still write good projects by discussing the impacts of globalisation on culture in general. For example, one student examined the recent widespread adoption by Chinese youth of traditional Western festivals such as Christmas or Valentine's Day. Using the academic course content, she was able to discuss this phenomenon within the framework of globalisation theory, arguing that while seemingly an example of cultural homogenisation, there are in fact strong elements of cultural

'... if students are not able to focus on a specific academic subject area, they can still write good projects by discussing the impacts of globalisation on culture in general.'

hybridity (Chinese youth apparently celebrate Christmas in a very different way – not as a domestic family gathering, but as an occasion to go out with friends, or on a romantic date!)

While the cultural focus of the globalisation project task is appropriate on the Goldsmiths IFC given the nature of the students' future studies, there is no need for the task to be so narrowly defined. On foundation courses at universities with a wider faculty base, the rubric could be broadened to include other aspects of globalisation, for example the economic, business, legal or environmental issues.

Course content: conducting analysis through theory

Garner and Borg (2005 p.127) argue that 'The theme of globalisation and its consequences allows us to link content issues with language and discourse'. This is true when attempting to raise students' awareness of what is required in a UK university-level essay.

Degree courses at Goldsmiths tend to be theory-led. A typical undergraduate essay will require students to show firstly that they have researched and understood a particular literary/cultural/artistic theory, and secondly that they are able to apply that theory to analyse the particular work/cultural phenomenon they are focussing on. Writing tasks with no explicit theoretical basis are rare, and so developing students' ability to engage with critical theory is an important part of the skills training on our foundation course. Doing the Globalisation Project therefore helps students to understand that while they may have flexibility regarding the examples they choose to analyse in their essays, they must first demonstrate a sound understanding of theory.

The theoretical content provided represents a large proportion of the materials for the twice-weekly classes mentioned above. Students are given texts outlining contrasting theoretical notions of how cultural globalisation works, and are encouraged to debate and engage with the ideas in class discussions. The materials previously used include texts by leading theorists such as Steger (2003) and Appadurai (1996). These cover contrasting concepts such as cultural homogenisation and cultural hybridity, which can then be used to inform the students' analysis of the situation in their own country. A further source of authentic content is Anthony Giddens' 1999 BBC series of Reith Lectures Runaway World: How Globalisation is Shaping Our Lives, which is available from the BBC website, and provides skills development opportunities in listening to lectures and note-taking.

The source materials are not written especially for non-native speakers, or foundation students, but are the direct words of some of the leading thinkers in the field, and I believe the students appreciate this authenticity. They certainly appear to take satisfaction from understanding and being able to paraphrase and quote from these texts.

Not all the source materials needed to complete the globalisation project are provided by the course tutor however. Another aspect of the skills training is that students explore the library's resources, and find their own support. The task rubric specifies that students must provide a correctly presented bibliography with at least two sources found by themselves, thus developing students' skills in finding material to support their arguments.

Conclusion: developing skills through content?

The Globalisation Project is a motivating and authentic academic task that offers students the flexibility to focus on their own areas of interest, while providing valuable experience of engaging with and applying theory.

The familiar 'four skills' of language are practised extensively in authentic academic settings: reading and discussing academic texts, alongside listening to lectures (Giddens) and taking notes. All of these 'inputs' are recycled to provide the 'output' when written up as the theoretical foundation for the final project.

Other areas developed include fundamental university skills such as understanding a complex task rubric, and negotiating an agreed focus for a research piece with a 'supervisor' i.e. the foundation lecturer. Library and research skills are also required, as well as the crucial ability to synthesise material from a range of sources into a final product which manages to answer the question in a full and coherent way.

While this version of the project focuses specifically on culture, the processes of globalisation are so far-reaching that the project could be used with foundation students going on to study a much wider range of academic disciplines.

'The Globalisation Project is a motivating and authentic academic task that offers students the flexibility to focus on their own areas of interest, while providing valuable experience of engaging with and applying theory.'

Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press

Garner, M. & Borg, E. (2005). An Ecological Perspective on Content-based Instruction. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 4*(2), pp. 119–134

Giddens, A. (1999). *Runaway World: How Globalisation is Shaping Our Lives*. BBC Reith Lectures, 1999. www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/reith1999

Giddens, A. (2002). *Runaway World: How Globalisation is Shaping Our Lives*. London: Profile Books

McCormack, J. (2007). An Integrated Approach to Teaching Extended Writing and Research Skills. *New Approaches to Materials Development for Language Learning*. O. Alexander (ed). Oxford: Peter Lang pp. 195–208

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Flexible learning packages: how to work with students with differing needs

About the author

Averil Macdonald
Professor of Science Communication, University of Reading

Flexible learning packages are an effective way to provide the individualised learning programmes required by students from a wide range of backgrounds, as are often found in foundation programme classes. They have been shown to engage learners through involving them in determining their own learning schedule and providing clear evidence of progress. The experience also prepares students for undergraduate study through developing the self-reliant study skills they will need.

Introduction

Physics, like the majority of the traditional sciences, is a very linear subject: much of what is taught post-16 relies upon a firm grounding in what is learnt pre-16, both in terms of the underlying concepts and the mathematical capabilities. Consequently, the constructivist approach (Fensham et al, 1994) is well established as an appropriate pedagogical stance in these cases. However constructivism relies strongly on being able to identify what the student already knows in order to build effectively upon it.

How best, then, to provide a satisfactory and effective learning experience for a class of foundation programme students with widely differing prior learning experiences and competences?

'… setting a series of tasks individualised to each learner, while potentially effective, risks alienating and discouraging some of the young adults …'

A traditional didactic approach based upon step-wise progress through specified learning objectives risks boring those who are already familiar with the concepts while confusing those whose background knowledge or mathematical skills have yet to reach the levels required. Conversely, setting a series of tasks individualised to each learner, while potentially effective, risks alienating and discouraging some of the young adults who see themselves as being singled out for low level work and, therefore, perceived as having lower potential.

A more effective approach is that of self-paced learning (or flexible learning): a system which allows students to identify their own strengths and weaknesses in the subject and to build upon them through a series of exercises suited to their prior learning and their personally required learning outcomes. Not only does this deliver to each student an individualised learning experience, it also engages the student in devising their own study programme, thus motivating them through increased ownership while building the important self reliant study skills required for success at university level.

Flexible learning in physics

The Flexible Learning Approach to Physics (FLAP) is one such scheme. Published originally by the Open University (1995) and the University of Reading Department of Physics, the scheme is now used in the majority of university Physics departments (and some Engineering departments) throughout the UK, often as a self-study programme to bring students to the required level in a particular topic where their prior learning has been ineffective.

The FLAP scheme draws upon the Open University's acknowledged expertise in distance learning and the need to provide students with a self-contained, self-explanatory scheme to be used by individuals with limited access to personal supervision.

The FLAP scheme comprises a series of mathematics modules and a series of physics modules. Each module is entirely self-contained though with clear cross-referencing to other modules where appropriate. The prerequisites for the module are clearly stated at the beginning of each module so that students are able to identify whether they are suitably prepared for study.

A series of 'Ready to Study' questions allows students to test themselves against these prerequisites and, if not ready to study, they are recommended to complete a particular module as preparation.

However, some students consider themselves already competent and are not convinced of the need to study the module at all. In order to verify this, they are invited to try the 'Fast Track' questions that test skills and knowledge that will be found in the module. A student able to answer the Fast Track questions can realistically claim to have studied this module content to a satisfactory standard already and may, therefore, elect not to study in such depth, though they are still recommended to work through the questions in order to revise the material.

The majority will be ready to study and will begin to work through the module.

Each module introduces the topic, places it in context and, periodically throughout the text, invites students to test their progress through short questions within the text related to the new concepts that have just been introduced. In all cases the full solution to each question is provided against which the students compare their own attempts in order to evaluate their own progress.

A student working at a typical rate will expect to take some 5–6 hours in total of private study time to complete the module. Having completed the module, the students check their knowledge against a list of Module Outcomes before completing the 'Exit Test' that verifies that they have been successful.

Of course there are occasions when the student confronts ideas that simply do not make sense. It is at this point that lecturer input is invaluable. Students are encouraged to bring to the lectures specific queries that have arisen from their studies rather than waiting, passively, to receive what the lecturer has prepared. Lectures now become opportunities for discussing the more complex and challenging ideas rather than a mechanism for transmitting basic facts. This engages students more actively in the learning process as they have already identified for themselves their need for the explanation rather than having it provided with no sense of its importance or significance.

The lecturer's input is also valuable as feedback on students' answers to the Exit Tests undertaken at the end of the module. The solutions to these are not provided to the students in advance, enabling lecturers to analyse the effectiveness of their students' study and feedback accordingly as an effective means of formative assessment.

As a final test, the students are given Module Tests under exam conditions at regular intervals so that they can begin to see the value of the effort they have put into their studies, or the consequence of the lack of effort at an early enough point to allow them to modify their study programme.

Evaluation

Although students are often initially hostile to this unfamiliar way of learning, preferring a system whereby the notes are provided through lectures and they are told precisely what to do for homework, those who progress to undergraduate degrees report that this experience provides them with a much better preparation for their subsequent studies, having provided them with the self-reliance that is required of them at this level.

Conclusion

A self-paced or flexible learning package will do more than simply provide the information that students require for their courses. A well-constructed scheme engages learners, enables them to progress at an appropriate pace and develops self-reliant study skills that are crucial for a student's future success.

'As a final test, the students are given Module Tests under exam conditions at regular intervals so that they can begin to see the value of the effort they have put into their studies …'

Fensham, P. J., White, R. T., & Gunstone, R. (1994). *The content of science: A constructivist approach to its teaching and learning.* London: Falmer

The Open University. (1995). *FLAP: Flexible Learning Approach to Physics.* Milton Keynes: Walton Hall

Experiential learning within a foundation framework

About the author

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This article describes the ways in which experiential learning has been employed to help meet the various and varied needs and expectations of students on the International Foundation Diploma programme at Oxford Brookes University.

I hear ... I forget
I see ... and I remember
I do ... and I understand
Ancient Chinese Proverb

Experiential learning is a familiar concept to modern educators at all levels and in all disciplines, with roots reaching back to Dewey's seminal 'Experience and Education', first published in 1938. While its application in the teaching of subjects such as technology is obvious, the challenge for those involved in preparing international foundation students for tertiary education in other disciplines is to provide a healthy balance of the theoretical and the practical, enabling students to derive the maximum benefit from their experiences both in and outside the lecture theatre, seminar group and classroom.

'... the challenge for those involved in preparing international foundation students for tertiary education in other disciplines is to provide a healthy balance of the theoretical and the practical ...'

The International Foundation Diploma Programme at Oxford Brookes University, which has been in existence in various incarnations for nearly 20 years, caters for a wide range of backgrounds, nationalities and educational experiences. The programme offers a combination of academic and study skills and content modules, with students choosing individual pathways according to their needs and aspirations.

The foundation programme must therefore provide a structured course which can engage these students in a process of active learning drawing on their previous educational base while inculcating the necessary transferable skills which will enable them not only to survive but also to thrive in a new educational, cultural and social environment. As explained above, a number of pathways are offered to students, and below are described ways in which tutors have sought to make the experience of studying on these modules as meaningful as possible while maintaining high academic standards.

Organized visits off campus are just one way in which students' interests are whetted, and generally prove to be some of the most memorable experiences within a module. Interacting with experts outside the context of the university, and listening to and taking notes on talks and lectures, provides a very valuable learning experience. Since these visits form a compulsory element it is essential that learning is assessed, either in the form of coursework, learning journals or tests. Successful outings have included visits to the local football stadium and to Cadbury World as part of the Business studies module, where marketing and the world of premiership football have featured on the syllabus.

Visits to the Law Courts, the local Police Station, and the Houses of Parliament have provided great stimulus for discussion, both about the way things are done in this country and in the students' country of origin, encouraging them to re-evaluate previous assumptions. All such visits are documented in the assessed Learning Journals, which also give students scope for reflective comment.

The module in Intercultural Communication offers students the opportunity to work in project groups to reflect on their own and other cultures. In this module students make use of camcorders to record their impressions of the social environment in which they are living, and it is clear that this is always an extremely significant, and sometimes life-changing, experience. The ensuing group presentation of findings forms part of the assessed work for this module. Students on the Tourism module also make full use of the city in which they are living, with one assignment being a SWOT analysis of tourism in the local area; similarly students on all core modules work in groups for project assignments to monitor and evaluate their environment, for example town planning or local amenities.

The Student Union at Oxford Brookes offers students a wide range of opportunities to participate in voluntary work within the community, ranging from reporting for a

local newspaper, through environmental initiatives, to manning the local carnival. It is now proving possible for students to draw on their voluntary experience as a contribution to the core Foundation Project module, a 3,000 word individually researched essay supported by a Learning Journal. For this they can use a case study based on their own interests and experience to complement secondary research in their chosen field. For example, a Japanese student with a family background in providing care homes for the elderly could gain first hand experience of the parallel provision in this country, while a Slovakian student who had previously done volunteer work with sports for the disabled at home was able to continue this in the UK. Additional to the academic gains students may expect to derive, these placements have a notable effect on the confidence and interpersonal skills of the participants, as well as adding a significant boost to their CVs.

Finally, and again outwith the strictly academic sphere of the university, a new initiative has enabled the establishment of a cultural programme for international students whereby weekly events including walks, talks, visits etc are offered free of charge. The nature of these events provides students, particularly the less confident, with a secure and enjoyable way of interacting with their immediate environment.

The aim of this, as of every foundation programme, is to provide fledgling learners with an appropriate educational experience which will allow them to spread their wings with confidence in the demanding world of undergraduate study. It is hoped that, by providing students with a judicious mix of the practical and the theoretical, and helping them take the necessary first few steps towards taking responsibility for their own learning, we can help our students be better prepared for the challenges that lie ahead of them.

Carroll, J. and Ryan, J. (eds.) (2005). 'Teaching International Students: Improving Learning for All' London: Routledge

Dewey, J. (1997). *Experience and Education* London: Pocket Books

Fried-Booth, D. (2002). *Project Work (Resource Books for Teachers)* Oxford: OUP

'... these placements have a notable effect on the confidence and interpersonal skills of the participants ...'

The development of a dedicated English language entry test for foundation programme students: the case of WELT

About the author

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This article outlines the development of a foundation programme variant of the Warwick English Language Test (WELT). This new test has been designed to address a gap in the language testing market, by providing both candidates and receiving institutions with a test that discriminates well between stronger and weaker students within the band of attainment normally attained by foundation applicants. The article outlines how the needs of the test-taker were taken into consideration when designing, piloting and validating the test, and suggests ways in which the test fulfils the requirements for context validity. Areas for possible test evaluation are also suggested.

The need for a new test

The availability of a reliable and valid English language entry test is of crucial importance both to language teachers and subject lecturers working on foundation programmes. Although this journal is not primarily centred around language issues, language testing continues to be important to a wide range of stakeholders across the curriculum (including subject lecturers) because they require reassurance that the students they are teaching are equipped with an adequate starting level of English which will (allowing for further training) enable them to complete their subject-based assignments to an adequate standard.

This article outlines the development of the foundation programme variant of the

Warwick English Language Test (WELT). Until recently, foundation programme applicants, often no more than 18 years old, had little choice but to take a standard English language proficiency test, such as IELTS or TOEFL, alongside their undergraduate and graduate student counterparts. However, this was not always successful. Firstly, candidates were frequently tested by using texts and stimulus materials that were too difficult, or unfamiliar to them. Secondly, the test results showed weak discrimination between stronger or weaker levels of attainment clustered within the tail end of the marking scale. It was this gap in the testing market that the WELT foundation programme variant sought to fill.

Test structure

WELT consists of three test papers: a 100-item multiple choice grammar and English usage test (FP1); a two-item writing test (FP2); and a 30-item multiple choice reading test (FP3). It is a simple test to administer and interpret, and makes efficient use of test-takers' and invigilators' time. In this new version of the test, the three test papers were designed to prioritise context validity: in other words, input materials (texts, items, stimulus material, surrounding language) needed to reflect the candidate's current experience, as well as to mirror as closely as possible the sort of language that foundation candidates were likely to meet in their future learning situations.

'Most test organisations claim to take the test-taker into consideration.'

There is no pass grade, but in practice, a student would be admitted to a foundation programme at the University of Warwick if they reached at least a Grade C in each of the three papers (a grade C can be achieved on the objective papers by answering a minimum of 50% of the questions correctly).

The following sample questions, drawn from Paper 1 and Paper 3, demonstrate more clearly the kind of specifications that were drawn up for each item:

English usage items (50 items, Paper 1)

Instructions: In each of the following questions, one or more words is missing. Choose the word or phrase which best completes each sentence. Mark your choice (A, B, C or D) on the answer sheet, by putting a cross (x) in one of the spaces.

Sample item:

1. In scientific research, it seems that no sooner has one discovery been made ...

A. than it becomes superseded by another.
B. than scientists make quick discoveries.
C. than it becomes a matter of concern.
D. than it becomes less popular in the tabloid papers.

Rationale: Students need to know how discourse hangs together.

Grammatical knowledge tested: Form and meaning-based understanding of phrases of the type 'No sooner ... than' to indicate close proximity between two events in terms of time.

Skills: awareness of the relationship between sentences or parts of sentences (such as the relationship between cause and effect); understanding of the way in which words and grammar interact.

Marking: Objective. One mark deducted for each incorrect answer.

Reading items (30 items, Paper 3)

Sample Text:

Ministers have a radical new policy – to make languages optional at 14, but teach them to primary children instead. This will, so the theory goes, lead to a bit of a slump in the number of over-14s taking languages for a while. But after that, it will pick up fast again because the primary children who have been speaking Spanish or French or German for years will actively want to carry on. And, to help with the continuity – and to get away from traditional exams – levels of competence will be graded like music exams. But can this strategy actually bring about fundamental changes in such a stubbornly resistant area?

Sample item:

1. According to the new policy, language learning will

A. be completely optional
B. start earlier.
C. result in fewer language learners.
D. become easier

Overall rationale: Students need to demonstrate understanding of relevant and motivating journalistic texts which discuss current affairs.

Item skills: Reading to select/make an appropriate summary based on several choices.

Marking: Objective: One mark deducted for each incorrect answer.

Both the samples show the level of detail included in the specifications for each test item.

Taking account of test-taker needs

Most test organisations claim to take the test-taker into consideration. In the new version of WELT, 'affect' (that is, interest and motivation) was considered as a primary influencing factor in success, across all the papers. Other ways of ensuring that candidates produced their best work were: ensuring that the level of academic specialisation was not too high; using test formats which candidates were sufficiently familiar with and avoiding undue cultural bias.

In the writing paper (Paper 2), it was assumed that the reliability of the writing test was likely to be skewed by any over-reliance on specialised content-based questions. Two questions were set, for added reliability: an initial question to assess candidates' ability to write personally, and a second, to assess candidates on their argumentative writing. Sample questions are given below:

Writing paper (2 items, Paper 2)

Sample items:

1. What are the common leisure activities in your country? Describe some activities you are familiar with for someone from another country.

2. Some people say that zoos should be abolished because animals are taken away from their natural habitats and live in artificial environments. Give your own opinion about the advantages and disadvantages of zoos.

It was found that these writing questions often elicited large samples of good writing.

Another important issue was to evaluate the role of multiple-choice testing in WELT. Multiple choice tests presented strong potential for reliability, and had a high level of familiarity with test-takers. However, they were also thought to embody strong power structures. In objective tests, Shohamy (2001 p.24) argues, 'truth is absolute and determined in advance by the test writer'. Care was thus needed to ensure that the power structures inbuilt into this mode of assessment did not disadvantage the students, and that the items were fair and unambiguous.

In the development of the test as a whole, it was considered important that the test should centre on the following reflective question, which took the learner as a centre/starting point:

- What will test-takers at this level be likely to know? (theory-based validity)
- What will they need to know? (context validity)
- How will test design draw a link between the above two questions? (Connection between theory-based validity and context validity).

Test validation procedures

Closely associated with understanding and meeting the needs of the test-taker was the requirement for the new test to be adequately trialled, prior to release. Here, an 'evidence-based' approach was used to validate the test (Weir, 2005). This necessitated the provision of a relevant context and appropriate scoring systems, and due attention was also given to how grades on this test related to other tests. The validation procedure did not apply spectrum surveys about tests, as suggested by Weir (2005 p. 220), but focussed on achieving a better awareness of the type of text, or genre of discourse required by foundation candidates. This knowledge was gained through discussion with subject lecturers.

Care was taken when piloting the test to ensure that the test-takers were not 'dehumanised', as can often happen with standardised tests, which are 'a primarily white, middle class domain of classifying, labelling and segregating, and of wielding power, and of remaining closed rather than open to other cultures' (Sharpling, 2004).

Evidence-based validation

The three separate trialling stages provided ample evidence for validating the test. Amongst other processes, the level of difficulty of each item was adjusted up or down to fall within acceptable limits. A correct response rate (facility index value) of 0.33 to 0.66 was sought for most items, but items above 0.66 or below 0.33 were permitted either at the beginning or end of an objective test. Moreover, where possible, the order of questions was also revised to take into account a gradual increase in the level of difficulty of each item. Test-takers' responses were analysed to determine the ability of questions (in particular those with either high or low level of difficulty) to discriminate between stronger and weaker candidates in each sample. The scores for objective tests were correlated with the writing test scores, with a maximum of one band difference between the writing and the objective tests being permissible. Items were frequently re-worded. Such approaches were designed to ensure that the needs of the test-taker were fully met.

Test evaluation

Evaluation is not so much an end point in the test development cycle as a trigger to initiate further development work. Evaluation can cover areas as diverse as the effect of testing on teaching (washback) and the benchmarking of one test to another. With regard to the new test, ongoing work is constantly being carried out to analyse responses, so as to ensure that the papers continue to be a statistically valid prognostic indicator of students' performance, actual and potential. Responses from test candidates are also correlated with writing scores, so as to measure and report on overall profiles. WELT does not currently have a speaking test, so information about candidates' performance on their target courses needs to be sought from colleges, to ensure that any weaknesses in speaking are effectively predicted (within obvious limitations) from the test papers that the candidates have undertaken.

'... ongoing work is constantly being carried out to analyse responses ...'

Sharpling, G.P. (2004). Intercultural Issues in Testing Chinese Students' Writing. *ELTED*, vol. 8, pp. 66–82

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Student tracking – enhancing the transition to Higher Education

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This article reports on how the challenges faced by international students in their transition from foundation to undergraduate level studies at the University of Reading were identified through a student tracking project and subsequently addressed. A three-year study undertaken by the International Foundation Programme (IFP) tracked the progress of three consecutive IFP cohorts following undergraduate programmes across the University. The study provided constructive feedback leading to important enhancements being made to the Programme, ultimately facilitating its graduates' adjustment to the demands of undergraduate study. The tracking project methodology and its role in addressing transition issues are briefly outlined and examples of Programme enhancements are given.

The International Foundation Programme (IFP)

The University of Reading International Foundation Programme is a one-year full-time course which guarantees a place on a degree programme at the University for those who qualify. During the Programme, students study three 40 credit modules at A level standard and a 20 credit module in Academic Skills. The module syllabuses are set and taught by the relevant University schools or departments. Students whose English level is below the undergraduate entry requirement (generally comprising around 50% of the annual intake) are required to take the English module. Other IFP module options are selected based on requirements of the student's intended degree programme.

The tracking project

'… all overseas students confront the challenge of assimilating new knowledge while at the same time adapting to unfamiliar teaching and assessment methods …'

The rationale for this student-centred project lay in a desire to fulfil student and faculty expectations by aligning the International Foundation Programme as closely as possible to the specific requirements of key destination degree programmes, making for a smooth transition to UK academic culture and ultimately, it might be hoped, stronger results at completion.

Its aim was twofold: to evaluate the Programme's effectiveness in providing its students with the skills and academic foundation required for undergraduate study, and to track the academic progress of selected IFP student groups as they progressed to graduation. The focus of this paper is on the former; it discusses the project's outcomes as they relate to students' academic adjustment to the demands of first-year study.

Each year, feedback gathered through questionnaires and interviews with former IFP students and academic staff in key receiving departments was analysed to identify areas in which the Programme was successful and highlight areas for improvement. Focus group discussions with students provided additional data for a comparative analysis of former IFP students' transition experience compared with that of direct-entry students following a wide range of degree programmes. From the information gathered, a profile emerged of the typical IFP undergraduate in terms of adjustment, preparedness and skills competence as well as academic performance.

The role of tracking in addressing transition issues

The particular challenges faced by international students and the academic adjustments required in their transition to higher education have been well documented (Carroll and Ryan, 2005; Wisker, 2000; McNamara and Harris, 1997) While those whose first language is not English are more likely to experience linguistic problems, all overseas students confront the challenge of assimilating new knowledge while at the same time adapting to unfamiliar teaching and assessment methods, and bewildering new attitudes to knowledge and learning. An effective foundation programme for overseas students will therefore aspire to provide a realistic understanding of the demands of undergraduate study and attempt to bridge the gap between the needs and expectations of both students and lecturers.

The tracking study helped address IFP students' transition to higher education in several ways. It played an important role in

ensuring that module content and skills development on the Programme was directly relevant to students' degree programmes, thus providing students with a clear head-start in terms of subject-knowledge and familiarity with university teaching and assessment methods. The project also developed important links between staff on the Programme and staff in the receiving schools, at the same time raising awareness of the Programme and its graduates across the University. Finally, its findings provided a means of gauging the extent to which our students are prepared and able to cope with demands of undergraduate study as they embark on their first year and as they progress through to graduation.

Specific adjustment issues raised by the study were reported annually and addressed, where possible, through modifications made to the Programme, and new initiatives implemented accordingly. Examples of two such initiatives are outlined below; the impact of these changes is currently under evaluation but indications are that in the short term, they have a positive effect on students' transition and on their academic progress; in the longer term the implications for student retention and completion might also be considered.

Part 1 lecture experience

Feedback gathered from the first year of the project indicated that while the teaching methods on the programme (lectures and small group tutorials) allowed students to build confidence, develop appropriate study methods and become independent learners, it also highlighted the fact that many were unprepared for the realities of formal undergraduate lectures. The first undergraduate year provides a much less tolerant environment for our students in that no concessions are made for non-native speakers. Students are challenged by the delivery of fast-paced, non-participative lectures covering new concepts. Although language skills are frequently a contributing factor, the problems reported extended across the sample, and included English native speakers.

One of the measures implemented to address this issue was the 'Part 1 Lecture Experience'. All students on the Programme are now invited by the relevant faculty to attend a first -year undergraduate lecture in one module of their intended degree programme. This is intended as a deep-end experience and students are not expected to be familiar with the lecture content. Now an annual event, it has proved a successful venture for both students and receiving departments.

Individual Support System (ISS)

As a result of the tracking project findings, a cross-programme academic and language support facility was established and a full-time Academic Support Tutor appointed. This initiative addresses a wide range of issues raised by students and staff as challenging in terms of English language and study-skills development. For the native speakers of English it addresses individual weaknesses in academic writing and presentation/seminar skills; for those non-native speakers who experience difficulties expressing ideas in written English, using appropriate academic vocabulary and understanding subject specific terminology, it offers one-to-one or small group support crucial for a successful crossover to their undergraduate studies. Individual support is now available to all students throughout the IFP year, regardless of language background, and in its first year over 90% of the IFP students made use of the services available to them. Currently under evaluation, the ISS has clearly been instrumental in helping our students make the crossover from a descriptive to an analytic approach to learning.

A UK foundation programme for overseas students is by its very nature transitional, providing a bridge to the new academic culture and familiarisation with the new learning environment prior to integrating the wider student body. A foundation programme that tracks the progress of its former students as a means of continually updating itself based on the real needs of its graduates provides added value in fulfilling the expectations of both students and receiving faculty staff.

'Students are challenged by the delivery of fast-paced, non-participative lectures covering new concepts.'

Carroll, J. and Ryan, A. (Eds.) (2005). *Teaching international students: Improving learning for all.* London: Routledge

McNamara, D. and Harris R. (Eds.) (1997). *Overseas students in higher education: issues in teaching and learning.* London: Routledge

Wisker, G. (Ed) (2000). *Good Practice working with international students.* SEDA: Birmingham

The shifting nature of plagiarism and the challenge to international foundation courses

About the author

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Cross-cultural studies have highlighted the complex nature of academic plagiarism, a challenge to foundation teachers. Traditional concepts of plagiarism are shifting owing to cut-and-paste technology, the world wide web, proofreading services and the adapting tolerances of university faculties. Foundation courses have tools to spot plagiarism, but this is becoming increasingly difficult. Foundation teachers encourage important paraphrasing and summarising skills, but should emphasise the cultural rationale for rules on plagiarism. The demands of the academic writing genre are noted as possibly contributing to the problem. To compete globally, UK higher education institutions will have to significantly modify their teaching and assessment.

1 Plagiarism as a cross-cultural issue

In Britain, plagiarism among the professional community may attract a law suit, and on degree courses it can result in disqualification, a circumstance which stems essentially from the prevailing capitalist economic ideology (Russikoff et al., 2003). While Park (2003) points out that UK academic institutions need to develop consistently applied detection and penalty policies for dealing with student plagiarism, trying to prevent it from occurring represents one of the biggest challenges to foundation course tutors (Lake, 2004).

In China, authoritative texts are often memorised and recited verbatim. Knowledge seems to be regarded as wisdom at large in the collective public domain rather than an individual's private property, and moreover, to paraphrase it would signal disrespect to the author (Wang et al., 2000). Chinese students on foundation courses in the UK, an important presence over the last ten years, are not the only ones likely to encounter plagiarism problems. Some students from former Eastern Bloc states may be apt to view intellectual property as an adjunct to private property, a concept long ideologically and culturally proscribed by their former Soviet masters (Russikoff et al., op. cit.). The relatively recent introduction of these nationalities into UK higher education has drawn attention to the cross-cultural roots of the issue, and would seem to belie any possible charge that plagiarism necessarily represents conscious cheating.

'A further complication is introduced by the increasing use of internet sources as reference material.'

2 Difficulties surrounding plagiarism

The nature of plagiarism is a shifting one. Definitions, methods and motivations change with the advance of technology and the pulling back of the academic ramparts. While quoting or paraphrasing without citation and using ideas without acknowledgement seem to be universally agreed upon as infringements, verbatim copying of phrases, clauses or short sentences may be noticeable but hard to prove, or even, in today's instant cut-and-paste environment, impossible to unravel. Furthermore, a certain amount of 'creative plagiarism', if properly cited, may be becoming acceptable. In a survey of lecturers on a foundation course at SOAS, while all agreed that a student's mark should be lowered if an essay is partly plagiarised, one remarked that it would have to be more than just a paragraph (Sayer & Weakley, 1999).

A further complication is introduced by the increasing use of internet sources as reference material. The very name 'world wide web' can apparently encourage students to regard its contents as public knowledge, as attested by 40% of the US students in a survey by Russikoff et al. (op. cit.). Sections of text cut and pasted from websites may be traceable through search engines, a task which has become another part of the foundation tutor's job. Instances of plagiarism are frequently obvious because of a change in style, especially so with the writing of international students. But here another problem arises, that of 'third party interventions', otherwise known as proofreaders. According to research carried out by Austin and Macaulay (2008),

most proofreaders try to work only on language, not content, in an effort to 'create a level playing field' for international students. This may apply in the faculties, but on foundation courses where all the students are international, it seems likely to have the opposite effect by favouring those who take the opportunity to use proofreaders over those who do not. If submitting a proofread essay is then seen to be rewarded, it raises the question of whether results are based on something more than academic achievement. Nevertheless, proofreading and correction before handing in are recommended by some university departments, and as the modification of the standard spreads, it is bound to affect foundation courses.

3 Strategies for avoiding and responding to plagiarism

In terms of spotting plagiarism, foundation courses have such tools at their disposal as timed essays, presentations and vivas on the same topic as an assignment. The foundation tutor's problem would seem to be how to untie students from their reliance on the wording of the source text. Exercises in providing synonyms and altering grammar and word order may help, but close paraphrasing of a handily discovered quote is rarely a satisfying solution. More often summary is what is needed, but that involves digesting and pondering longer sections of reading, something over-worked students may not have time or ability to do in a second language. Frequent practice on short texts might be a way of stimulating this capacity. There are even some online plagiarism-avoiding exercises. One to one tuition seems the best course for a pedagogical approach, but time and funding are not always available, and never limitless.

The strict conventions of the academic genre may themselves have a hand in the problem. The increasing emphasis on a 'product-oriented' approach (White in Robinson, 1988), where texts are written according to standard discourse patterns that fit the demands of a cultural and commercial hegemony, may discourage students from 'self-expression', while technology allows them easy and instant access to templates for these required discourses. There would appear to be a need for teachers to engage students with an explanation of the cultural rationale for why what we call plagiarism is unacceptable despite the aforementioned strictures and freedoms.

As already noted, the response of institutions may be, in the long run, to modify their standards. University foundation courses are already under threat from the private sector, and in order to survive in the liberalised marketplace, a certain degree of reputation for academic rigour may have to be sacrificed to the realities of an information- and text-rich global academic community. As linguists, those tutoring on foundation courses have to accommodate language change, whether they like it or not. In a similar way, the academic community may have to come to terms with significant paradigm shifts in the coming years in how course work is facilitated, supervised and assessed in view of the cultural and technological assaults on the status quo. If such be the case, then surely laws relating to plagiarism will have to be adapted to these changes too.

'... the response of institutions may be, in the long run, to modify their standards.'

Austin, L. & Macaulay, R. (2008). (Essex University). Presentation of Proofreading Debate at IFCELS, *SOAS*, University of London. [Presented February 2008]

Lake, J. (2004). EAP Writing: the Chinese Challenge; new ideas on plagiarism. *Humanising Language Teaching 6(1)*

Park, C. (2003). 'In Other (People's) Words: plagiarism by university students – literature and lessons.' *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*

Russikoff, K. et al. (2003). Plagiarism as a Cross-Cultural Phenomenon. *The CAL Poly Pomona Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies 16*

Sayer, D. & Weakley, S. (1999). *Assessors' expectations of students' essays*. (Unpublished)

Wang, M. et al. (2000). *Turning Bricks into Jade: critical incidents for mutual misunderstanding among Chinese and Americans*. Maine: Intercultural Press

Robinson, P. C. & British Council. (1988). *Academic Writing: process and product*. Basingstoke: Modern English Publications in association with the British Council

Making referencing interesting: is it possible to integrate the teaching of referencing skills with the teaching of other academic skills and content?

About the author

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With the problem of plagiarism growing ever more prevalent at both foundation and university level, IFP practitioners need to find strategies not only to combat it, but more importantly to teach students how to avoid plagiarism and enhance their written work by using and referencing source material effectively. Ideally, this goal should be achieved while integrating referencing skills seamlessly into lessons teaching other academic skills and subject-related topics. This article presents a practical suggestion as to how referencing skills can be taught effectively (and in a way that stimulates students' interest) within the context of IFP lessons.

Introduction: the problem

In recent years, concern among lecturers and teachers at the rapid increase in the amount of plagiarism by students has been growing. The Guardian ('Schools sign up for software to tackle internet plagiarism', January 20th 2008) for instance reports that more than half of the members of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers in the UK 'thought internet plagiarism was a big problem' (Lipsett 2008). In addition, the ongoing debate about the value of internet research (see for example The Times, 'White bread for young minds, says university professor', January 14th 2008) suggests that sensitising students to the need for good referencing skills is essential if accusations that researching from the internet represents 'white bread for the mind' and the 'University of Google' are to be avoided (Frean 2008).

'... many students may be unfamiliar with the very concept of plagiarism ...'

It therefore appears to be vital for IFP practitioners, and EAP teachers in particular, to stem the tide of internet-derived plagiarism as early and effectively as possible but doing this without rapidly losing students' interest can be difficult. Another problem is that many students may be unfamiliar with the very concept of plagiarism, let alone academic referencing norms in further and higher education. It can therefore seem a daunting task to make the teaching of referencing skills interesting, while integrating students' burgeoning understanding of the urgent need to avoid plagiarism into EAP and other IFP lessons.

Integrating language, critical skills and subject-related content is clearly essential in IFP classrooms. Additionally, as McDonough and Shaw (2003 p. 174) suggest, if EAP practitioners can integrate the learning of language and skills into task-based activities, learners 'will gain a deeper understanding of how communication works in the foreign language as well as becoming more motivated when they see the value of performing meaningful tasks and activities in the classroom.' Zwiers (2006) also points out the need to integrate academic language, critical thinking and subject-related content in lessons for non-native speakers. This is particularly relevant in the case of IFP students, who urgently need all these skills for their university studies.

The challenge for teachers is to achieve the goal of developing integrated task-based lessons in order to 'create a real purpose for language use and provide a natural context' (Willis, 1996 p. 1). Fortunately, however, there may be some effective ways to develop interesting and integrated referencing lessons. The following is a practical suggestion of a teaching strategy designed to put across the need

to acquire referencing skills while engaging students' interest.

Solution: make the problem itself the focus of learning

IFP students are usually young and tech-savvy, and therefore often proficient users of IT technology and the internet, particularly since many of them come from relatively well-to-do backgrounds and will therefore have had access to computers for much of their lives. They are therefore likely, out of ingrained habit, to see the internet as unquestionably a useful research tool. The important point is therefore to introduce them to the (in many cases novel) idea that not every item of information they find on the web will necessarily be accurate, and additionally to drive home the point that it is necessary to find more reliable, academically-suitable sources of information, and to cite these in support of their arguments.

One way to work towards achieving this aim would be initially to work on EAP reading skills (such as skimming, scanning, and guessing unknown words from context), using articles on the topic of plagiarism and internet research such as the two cited above (Lipsett 2008 and Frean 2008). This serves the dual purpose of practising valuable reading skills while introducing the subject matter of the topic at hand.

A stimulating follow-up discussion about the value of internet research could then be introduced by printing out and cutting up selected quotations from an internet forum-style discussion on the topic, such as that which follows Frean's (2008) article ('Have your say', URL in bibliography), or by simply having students access it online (if classroom computers are available). By reading through a range of opinions, and attempting as groups to categorise them into 'agree', 'disagree' and 'balanced' groupings, three IFP classes at City College Manchester, initially not particularly interested, gradually became engaged with – and, importantly, more critical about – the topic of internet research.

Subsequent discussion with other groups within the class, and ultimately the full class, revealed that students had become, within two lessons, more sensitised to the issues surrounding the legitimacy of internet research than they had been previously. In addition, they became actively interested in the subject. Again, this speaking activity served the dual purpose of thinking about internet research while developing academic discussion and critical-thinking skills, thus integrating skills work with a target topic.

As a final step in this process of sensitisation and skills-integration, students were asked to write an essay discussing the arguments for and against the 'University of Google' thesis. Again, this served the dual purpose of reinforcing the newly-gained sensitivity concerning the topic and developing writing skills, the latter obviously including referencing: the Lipsett and Frean articles were recommended as texts that students could cite in their essays although it was indicated that they remained free to look for other supporting material if they wished.

Overall, then, apart from sensitising learners to issues surrounding internet research and plagiarism, this series of connected activities also worked on critical thinking, as well as academic reading, speaking and writing skills. Students' essays subsequently tended to demonstrate a considerable degree of new-found awareness of the problems of researching on the internet, while understandably arguing that in the modern world the internet cannot be discarded as a research tool.

'… an approach to the teaching of referencing skills that is integrated with other academic skills, critical thinking, and subject-related content is essential.'

Conclusion

In a globalising world of rapidly-developing technology, where use of computers and the internet is only going to become more and more prevalent, an urgent task for IFP teachers and lecturers is to sensitise their students to the need to develop a critical approach to internet content while learning to reference conscientiously. In EAP in particular, this means that an approach to the teaching of referencing skills that is integrated with other academic skills, critical thinking, and subject-related content is essential. By integrating these elements via teaching strategies such as the one outlined above, in time students can therefore be guided towards a more engaged approach to their work, one which uses internet sources constructively and thoughtfully rather than falling into forms of plagiarism such as cut-and-pasting from the internet.

Frean, A. (2008). 'White bread for young minds, says university professor'. *The Times*, January 14th 2008. Available (including post-article discussion 'Have your say') from: http://technology.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/tech_and_web/the_web/ article3182091.ece

Lipsett, A. (2008). 'Schools sign up for software to tackle internet plagiarism'. *The Guardian*, January 19th 2008. Available from: www.guardian.co.uk/ uk/2008/jan/19/ schools.1419education

McDonough, J. and C. Shaw. (2003). *Materials and Methods in ELT (Second Edition).* Oxford: Blackwell

Willis, J. (1996). *A Framework for Task-Based Learning.* Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education (Addison Wesley Longman)

Zwiers, J. (2006). Integrating academic language, thinking, and content: Learning scaffolds for non-native speakers in the middle grades. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 5 (4), October*

Practical tips for plagiarism avoidance

About the author

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This paper puts forward various ways in which international foundation programmes can help students and teachers overcome some of the problems involved in plagiarism. An annotated bibliography is included for those who want to read more about the academic background to the subject.

So what can actually be done to make avoiding plagiarism a learning experience? Not just in language classes but in all aspects of work, students can be encouraged to cite properly. What is important is that teachers of all subjects discuss plagiarism together and decide how they are going to deal with it. Here are some suggestions to assist language and subject specialists to work together in order to help students learn about using sources and avoiding plagiarism:

- Departments take a consistent view on which citation system will be used institution wide, e.g. the Harvard System.
- Provide students with a Style Manual which is user-friendly and sets out in detail the citation system and how to use sources.
- Time is set aside in language classes to teach students how to cite sources, paraphrase, summarise and synthesize information, not just quote ad infinitum.
- Several books and academic journals are brought into the classroom and groups of students asked to place them in bibliographical order. A bibliography can be written based on the books in front of them.
- Teachers write short practical courses of their own that give students 'hands on' practical experience of how to avoid plagiarism.
- Students need help to understand the process of academic writing – they must read extensively about a topic, digest the information/ideas, form their own views about the topic, and then use the sources they have read to underline or support their ideas.
- To help with critical analysis teachers supply materials and ask students to give their own opinion on what they have read based on evidence that can be supported from sources.
- Concepts like authority and date of publication might be important in finding useful sources. Students need to understand that not everything that is written is reliable. Web sites like Wikipedia can be edited by anyone. Reading books and academic journals rather than just finding everything on the Internet should be encouraged.
- Departments should have clear rules on when punishment becomes an appropriate way of dealing with plagiarism, and what type of penalties should be imposed.

'What is important is that teachers of all subjects discuss plagiarism together and decide how they are going to deal with it. .'

If the above ideas are instigated, then through consistent and professional collaboration on international foundation programmes, ways can be found to help students learn how to become more independent and critical learners.

Carroll, J., and Appleton, J. (2001). *Plagiarism: A Good Practice Guide.* Joint Information Systems Committee, and Oxford Brookes University. Available from: www.jisc.ac.uk/uploaded_documents/brookes.pdf [Accessed December 12 2007]

This is probably the seminal paper on plagiarism. If you do not read anything else this paper is worth taking time and effort over and digesting. Its suggestions should be helpful to everyone who deals with academic writing.

Gardner, D. (date unknown). [Internet] Plagiarism and How to Avoid it, The English Centre, the University of Hong Kong. Available from: http://ec.hku.hk/plagiarism [Accessed July 2002]

This site has self study practical exercises to help students understand what is considered to be plagiarism.

Harvey, J., and Robson, S. (2006). The Accidental Plagiarist: An institutional approach to distinguishing between a deliberate attempt to deceive and poor academic practice, paper from *Educating for the Future 5, the 5th Northumbria Conference at the University of Northumbria, September 2006*

This paper takes an interesting stance on trying not to define what plagiarism is or is not, and then dealing with it, but rather accepting that some students misunderstand what plagiarism is and are not deliberate cheats, but 'accidental plagiarists', These students should be supported and helped, and if they continue to plagiarise then they become 'committed plagiarists' and should be aware of the consequences of their cheating.

Introna, L., and Hayes, N. (2004). *Plagiarism, Detection and Intentionality: On the (un)construction of plagiarists*, University of Lancaster and JISC IPAS (The Internet Plagiarism Advisory Service)

The writers here take an innovative approach, arguing against using electronic means such as Turnitin to detect plagiarism, but that these electronic systems should be used as a learning rather than a punitive tool. They take a linguistic approach to looking at the problem, focusing on language learning rather than on the issue of plagiarism itself.

JISC IPAS Joint Information Systems Committee, *Internet Plagiarism Advisory Service*, University of Northumbria, [Internet] Available from: www.submit.ac.uk/static_jisc/ac_uk_index.html [Accessed May 2003]

Turnitin UK is a website that allows educators to check student work against other material already on the web. University Libraries often have a site licence for teachers to access this web tool.

Sutherland-Smith, W. (2005). Pandora's Box: Academic Perceptions of Student Plagiarism in Writing, *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, Vol.4, Issue 1, pp. 83–95

This Australian study looks at plagiarism through a cross-disciplinary approach, as a legal perception, and as an English as a Second Language (ESL) perception.

Tribe, D., and Rendell, C. (2003). Meeting the Plagiarism Challenge, [Internet] University of Hertfordshire, from a paper given in 2003 at the *5th Annual Conference of the Learning in Law Initiative* at the University of Warwick. Available from: www.ukcle.ac.uk/interact/lili/2003/papers/tribe.html [Accessed 25 February 2008]

Tribe and Rendell argue that universities taking the view that plagiarism should be punished do not consider cases where the student does not understand that they have plagiarised.

Call for papers

InForm is a newly launched journal of teaching and learning-related issues for members of the academic community associated with International Foundation Programmes.

The submission of papers is now invited for the second edition of *InForm*, from tutors who represent a variety of academic disciplines commonly found within International Foundation Programmes. The second edition will be published in October 2008.

Full instructions for writers can be downloaded from the *InForm* website at the following address: **www.reading.ac.uk/ifp/newsevents/ifp-inform.asp**

Writers are reminded that *InForm* is not predominantly an English language teaching journal.

The second issue of *InForm* will also include a letters page with readers' responses to the articles included in the first edition. Letters should be no more than 200 words in length.

Articles and letters should be sent by email to **inform@reading.ac.uk** by 12 noon on 31 July 2008.

In the interest of ongoing objectivity and impartiality the editorial board is pleased to announce that a member of the board, external to the University of Reading, will be appointed to review articles for the second edition.

Writers whose articles are published in *InForm* will receive a fee of £100.

For further information, please contact:
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