

Issue 19 December 2019

# InForm

A journal for international foundation programme professionals

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Situating language  
learning in the art and  
design studio

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Academic skills in  
Russian university  
students: raising  
standards and building  
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an IFP

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An intervention to  
adapt the lecture  
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learning

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Does online  
translation have a  
place in foundation  
EAP modules?

This issue:

**Evolution of international foundation  
programmes - recognising a new  
environment and adapting to change**



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# InForm Conference 2020



## Subject matters: supporting content teaching and learning on International Foundation Programmes

We are pleased to announce that the eleventh annual InForm conference will take place at Queen Mary University of London.

The event will include presentations and posters on themes related to international foundation and pathway programmes (IFP) and provide an opportunity for interaction and sharing of practice with colleagues from the IFP community.

**Saturday 4 July 2020**

Arts Two, Mile End Campus, Queen Mary University of London

**Conference fee: £70**

**Registration and Speaker Proposals:**

Please check our website for details:

[www.reading.ac.uk/inform](http://www.reading.ac.uk/inform)

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**Speaker Proposals:**

Speaker proposals are invited from professionals involved in the delivery of international foundation and pathway programmes. As usual, the focus should be on issues associated with teaching, learning and programme management in this sector and address the conference theme. Sessions need to appeal to tutors and course managers across the curriculum.

The deadline for speaker proposals is **30 April 2020**.



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**Mark Peace**  
Chair of the InForm Editorial Board

## From the Editorial Board...

Issue 19 of InForm follows on from the summer's InForm Conference held on the 29th of June by the University of Reading and themed **Evolution of international foundation programmes – recognising a new environment and adapting to change**. We were delighted that colleagues at the University of Reading Malaysia campus were also able to run a parallel event and join the Reading event for our opening plenary. Being the 10th InForm conference it was fitting to have Dr Anthony Manning from the University of Kent giving the keynote talk after lunch. Anthony started InForm and organised the first conference back in 2008. You can hear more about the origins of InForm in Anthony's letter on page 30.

We start this issue with Joanna Norton and Dan Bernstein sharing how embedding language support within subject classes can positively impact students' learning. Nicholas Hyder from MGIMO University in Russia then shares the academic challenges that Russian students face and how these are being addressed through the teaching of academic skills. In the next article Miriam Schwiening and Anna Tranter present a novel approach to facilitating student understanding in lectures where English language abilities are diverse. The complex and topical issue of online translation is then discussed by Mike Groves. This is followed by Mary Whitsell reporting on a project which enables students to practise speaking English with each other in different countries. The next three articles have a focus on student engagement. Firstly Natalie Drake and Dr Noor Mat Nayan present a study investigating views of IFP students where types of classroom activities and modes of communication are found to be important to student engagement. Next Dr Paul Breen considers the importance of incorporating real world experiences into teaching and the positive effect this can have on student engagement and learning. Then Saleha Abdul Rahman reports on the benefits of bringing mindfulness into the classroom. In the penultimate article Jinying Ma and Peng Ding share a project which uses graded readers to encourage students to read more and thereby benefit from the associated gains in English proficiency. Lastly Tom Cosh and Dr Caroline Walker-Gleaves discuss the changing demands of foundation business and management programmes and how the teaching of entrepreneurship can be incorporated through studying its associated language.

Summer 2020 sees InForm being hosted by colleagues at Queen Mary University of London and we greatly look forward to the day exploring the theme of **Subject matters: supporting content teaching and learning on international foundation programmes** on the 4th July. We encourage you to please send in your proposals.

### InForm

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Further details on p31.

WELCOME

# Situating language learning in the art and design studio

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*Responding to a specific set of challenges on two art and design Foundation programmes, a teaching intervention has been implemented in which language tutors visit studios during students' allocated studio time and teach language in situ. This paper outlines the thinking behind the project, provides examples of the language teaching in practice, and explores ideas drawn out by the experiment.*

## Introduction

Language support at University of the Arts London is tailored to the requirements of the disciplines and courses, but traditionally has consisted largely of stand-alone classes. A pilot scheme exploring the potential of a deeper integration has been introduced, initially with the University's Foundation in Art and Design programmes.

The programmes are significant in number (between 500 and 600 students on each) and have high proportions of students who speak English as an additional language.

Students undertake a varied and challenging range of tasks, interacting with up to 43 different subject tutors. Students are expected to:

- Talk about their work with their peers and tutors
- Construct an art and design led narrative pertaining to their sketchbook
- Engage with core texts on the reading list
- Write a daily reflective statement outlining what they learnt, the decisions they made and actions for future development

Some studios are large and can have up to 80 students working in them at any one time; at other times and in other studios there may just be one or two students at work. Activities are hugely varied and quite often there are many different things happening simultaneously. The studio therefore has its own challenges as a site for language teaching and learning but also affords a wide variety of opportunities for different learning activities.

However, informal observation suggests students tend to speak in L1 (first language) in the studios rather than in English. Existing language development provision consists of stand-alone classes which, while tailored to the needs of students on these courses, are not compulsory and are not always well-attended. Consensus from course leaders indicated language learning in the studio to complement language development classes could provide a level of support not previously offered.

## Language learning, art, design, and academia

Our intervention was designed in response to the above issues and was informed by various strands of thinking in teaching and learning, including specifically from language teaching and art and design pedagogy.

Task-based language learning emphasises "learning to communicate through interaction" (Nunan, 2004, p1). Community Language Learning (e.g. Stevick, 1980) prioritises helping the student to say what they are trying to say in the given moment. Lave and Wenger present a model of learning as "increasing participation in communities of practice [which] concerns the whole person acting in the world." (1991, pp50-51) This suggests that putting language teachers and language work physically into the space where students are doing their creative work could be very powerful in helping students to make real and deeply-felt connections between creativity, communication, and participation in the community. Current thinking within EAP at art

and design institutions is that key elements for relevant and useful language teaching are: engagement with the art and design subject matter; collaboration with course teams and embedding language development work in the courses (Thomas et al, 2019).

Ryan (2005) highlights three levels of shock that impact international students: cultural, language and academic. She argues that academic shock, which refers to different approaches used in teaching and learning, differing teacher and student relationships, alternative forms of assessment and so on, is the most challenging and persistent of the three.

In the context of assessment, art and design teachers are often instinctively resistant to the constraints of assessment criteria deployed to measure work as 'good', 'appropriate' or 'desirable' (Rayment, 2007, p7). In addition, while international students are anxious to achieve, they are often unclear or distrustful of the grading system (Sovic, 2008).

The widespread use of verbal feedback in art and design contexts further disadvantages non-native speakers. Such disadvantage is compounded by dominant cultural literacies that drive assessment practices (MacKinnon & Manathunga, 2003). Higher education institutions assume that a certain grade in tests such as IELTS indicates preparedness in English, but students are often unprepared for the lengthy process of deconstructing English within subject context (Pilcher & Richards, 2017).

## Teaching interventions

One intervention took place in an illustration studio. Group feedback tutorials were taking place. Students had submitted a draft project proposal and five or six students sat around a table with the illustration tutor. Each student presented their proposal verbally and answered questions from the tutor. The language tutor was invited to give feedback as an addition to the subject tutor's feedback. The language tutor gave each student in turn (i) a gloss of one or two points from the illustration tutor's feedback that they may not have clearly understood (ii) one or two suggestions for how the student might communicate their ideas better, e.g. a piece of vocabulary or pronunciation, an idea for structuring/ordering their presentation, or some other language feature.

The language tutor's feedback was within the usual parameters for tutor feedback in this context in its overall design-discourse-centredness, but outside those usual parameters in its targeted focus on spoken language/communication.

In a second instance, in a fine art painting studio, students had previously been given a project brief. The painting tutor called over ten students. They stepped into the corridor where the project brief was displayed and the tutor gave a short (re)presentation of the brief. The language tutor then gave instructions for a pair speaking exercise in which students told each other (in English) their plans (definite or tentative) for the project.

A third intervention explored placing the project brief at the centre of the design process. The language tutor rotated around small groups in the studio, working with students to deconstruct briefs, isolate target language and identify opportunities for ongoing usage. Students were specifically asked to generate or identify technical vocabulary, appropriate lexical sets and so on. Those who needed additional language support prepared a written record of their process with the help of the language tutor. These records served as prompts during whole class 'crits' or for their daily writing task.

## Observations

Students often showed less anxiety talking to the language tutor than they did talking to the subject tutor. This has been evidenced in pieces of reflective writing submitted to Workflow and read by subject tutors. They also demonstrated fewer nerves talking to the language tutor in the studio (where the language tutor is a visitor) than they might talking to them in the language classroom (where the language tutor is the principal representative of the institution).

More than once, subject tutors have remarked on how much students were talking during in-studio language sessions and the kinds of things they were saying. Teaching techniques which an experienced language teacher might consider to be second nature, e.g. asking students to discuss in pairs before reporting back to the whole group, therefore had a powerful effect in increasing quality and quantity of communication in the studio.

The authentic setting of the studio, surrounded by art and design materials, provided students with a context to engage with relevant critical, evaluative and reflective language. Strategies to support reading and using core texts in their studio work allowed students to keep greater pace with the workload. Language tutors having access to course tutors was useful and productive. Effective working relationships with subject tutors helped to present a consistent voice regarding theory underpinning art and design. Hence, most students understood and accepted the rationale for activities carried out in-situ.

These responses from a small student survey indicate that students ascribed purpose and value to the visits: "you go inside and ask our ideas and you give me some sentence, teach me how to explain our ideas"; "I have to select one of [two projects] and I couldn't understand much about it so I asked about it to you and you helped me."

However, there was some continued and ongoing push-back from some students, who expressed a preference for language exam preparation work and an aversion to more general art and design language learning activities such as watching topic-related videos or speaking with other students. Within the limited window available for language work, preparation for the university's language progress test therefore took time and attention away from a deeper engagement with language and the art/design discourse.

## Conclusion

Overall, this intervention, while experimental in nature, was exceptionally well received by course tutors and students. With large class sizes, a language tutor's presence in the studios provided more opportunities for students to discuss their work and prepare for assessments. Initial reports suggest that higher numbers of students passed their internal progress test than in previous years, with 67 out of 69 students from one of the Foundations achieving the grade required to continue to BA. Developing relationships in the studio helped to remove linguistic and cultural barriers between international students and teachers. As in-situ language teaching continues, there will be opportunities for further research. A pilot has already been run of an ethnographic study which will include the use of creative methods – e.g. the "cultural probe" (Gaver, Dunne and Pacenti, 1999) – to explore students' attitudes to language, learning and art and design. An action research project, which will robustly test and evaluate the effectiveness of this approach, and a further study to measure the impact in-situ language teaching has on IELTS scores, are also planned.

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# Academic skills in Russian university students: raising standards and building confidence through an IFP

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*In Russia, academic skills are poorly implemented across schools and universities, so to prepare Double-Degree students due to study in Reading, MGIMO began teaching its first IFP course in 2018. Due to both scepticism and misunderstanding about academic skills in Russian culture, as well as outdated teaching methods for general English, implementing this has required diagnosing the root of several key problems, and overcoming learnt mistakes. This article will detail why these mistakes have occurred in Russian students, and how to overcome both earlier English teaching and the specifics of academic skills.*

## Introduction

Across Russia, from esteemed professors to students beginning their first formal essay, academic writing presents different problems at different levels. At the highest end, it has been hypothesised that Russia's relative absence in the Western academic canon is due not to the standard of research, which is high, but the standard of writing skills, which is not high enough (Safonova, 2018); at the lowest end, schoolchildren are often taught a script for formulating formal essays, which is where this problem begins (Korotkina, 2014). A rather blunt American assessment of PhD essays as "idiotic" (Korotkina, 2014) highlights this journey: traditionally in Russia, it is not until late in academic progress that academic skills are needed, but at this late stage students naturally struggle to adapt to academic style.

For this reason, in 2018, MGIMO University implemented its first IFP course. As part of a Double-Degree programme in conjunction with the University of Reading, students will be spending two years in Russia and two years in the UK. The difference between academic styles being so pronounced, it was essential to prepare these students for this change. The IFP has been effective at MGIMO, especially at introducing Academic Skills into students' curriculum; however, with this culture, problems have inevitably arisen. This article will detail why some of the issues have arisen, and recount the solutions found.

## Challenges faced

Language teaching in Russia is going through a cultural transition. It is easy to forget that Russia is a young country and, in education, is both reusing old Soviet methods and appropriating new ones (Korotkina, 2018).

Rarely encouraging comfort and creativity in communication, old methods tend to be out-of-date learning-by-rote (Korotkina, 2018), whilst new methods prioritise exam success through following formulae (Abramova et al., 2013). This is one reason why the "teacher-textbook-student" paradigm – unnatural language environments with limited opportunities for original practice – has often been followed (Abramova et al., 2013); for both old and new methods it ticks the right boxes, despite its limitations. Whilst standards of teaching vary hugely in Moscow let alone Russia, such formulae do, depressingly, therefore, remain a norm.

Russian academia is harder to define. Until the mid-90s the term "academic" only referred to the most prestigious academic work, and today in schools or universities the term is still hesitantly used (Korotkina, 2014). Common aspects of academic voice – maintaining an authoritative tone, avoiding informal vocabulary, avoiding personal pronouns or digressions (Soles, 2005) – are not rules Russian writers readily apply.

As taught nowadays in Russia, Academic Skills are, thus, similarly formulaic. According to many Russian curricula, stock phrases and scripts are a key component of academic lessons, to the extent that students are sometimes required to write "dozens" of essays following steps like beginning with "nowadays, more and more people..." (Korotkina, 2014). At MGIMO, these stock phrases reoccur with alarming regularity; most introductions begin with the exact phrase "Nowadays [essay title] is an important issue..." and end with the sentence "Let's look at some of those issues now".

If focused on the repetitive and unnatural “teacher–textbook–student” paradigm, both language and academic classes thus lead to the same limited outcome. The highest of Bloom’s taxonomies of cognition (Anderson & Kathwohl, 2001), analysis of materials, evaluation of the situation, and the creation of a new argument are skills students lack in academia; analysis, evaluation and creativity are skills often lacking in everyday situations too. Understanding how interrelated these are is important for academic development.

### Solutions found

In diagnosing the roots of these changing challenges, it has been possible to tackle them. This has predominantly involved putting academic English in a ‘real-world’ context, and challenging students’ arguments to boost their debating skills and confidence in their own ideas.

Following curricula and formulae, teaching academic skills can be as scripted as school was – students are taught skill-by-skill, not via practical application thereof. Therefore, to instil the importance of academic skills in Russian students, finding ‘real world’ situations is vital. Reading is as good as writing; by reading strong, convincing, relevant and even entertaining academic articles, and then analysing how their academic voices improve them, students see that academic skills are not a burdensome script to be applied, but a powerful way of bolstering their own arguments. Of course, practice makes perfect, and thus writing finalises this process. This prevents the skills from remaining theoretical.

Another solution mooted has been to encourage students to write with an academic voice across all their disciplines; this, however, has had its own problems. New intellectual ideas, especially in a second language, can be hard to understand; trying to convey them in a new style can distract in these disciplines. Similarly, if other teachers feel academic voice is not vital for their curricula, enforcing this can be cumbersome for them.

However, using other disciplines within Academic Skills lessons, whether through reading academic texts on external topics or writing about new materials, encourages students and shows why academic skills matter – thus our practice writing is based on their research. This does risk students playing it too safe for fear of getting the new discipline wrong, so the content should be based on more foundational or easier topics

from their other modules. The ease of topics allows for creativity, originality, and hopefully comfort in expressing themselves, whilst Academic Skills are then seen as relevant in ‘real-world’ situations.

Of course, students who struggle with creating in general English are liable to struggle with creating academically. In striving to overcome what Murray and Moore call the “originality versus convention paradox” (Murray and Moore, 2006), students have to creatively critique as well as evaluate and analyse. Students are often taught to repeat their teachers’ lessons verbatim, and this achieves exam success, but lacks creativity; asking students to write wholly original arguments risks them ignoring their teachers’ lessons or displaying research. It is vital that students learn to supplement their well-taught research skills with original critical thinking.

Pushing for creativity in academic English, therefore, begins with pushing for creativity outside of academic English. Introducing ideas in class via natural, conversational, informal set-ups – for example, using a casual in-class debate to set up a debate essay – has been a good Trojan Horse. One key example of this is the phrase “Nowadays...” – this is clearly employed to suggest contemporary importance, but it is too vague and tedious to use repeatedly. Asking students to evaluate why an essay topic might be important nowadays requires them to create their own original approach to this topic, then asking them to reword these ideas originally promotes conventional academic style alongside original writing, hopefully overcoming this paradox. If creativity is stifled by unnatural settings, natural settings need to be implemented in-class instigating discussion and debate.

It can be disheartening, subsequently, to read an essay in which a student is creative and original, but informal and non-academic. Marking these, thus, requires delicate differentiation, praising what is said whilst gently critiquing how it is said and contextualising why. Often at MGIMO, homework tasks will be two short essays: the first a short piece of academic writing (for which their academic voice is graded) and the second a deliberately free question (for which their language, analysis and originality are graded). In pushing students like this, students are shown why Academic Skills matter, and develop not just their own academic voice, but their own voice overall.

### Conclusion

Implementing an IFP was essential for MGIMO’s Double-Degree students. Without it, their academic writing would not be of a high enough standard to compare to their future UK counterparts. After this first year, there is still work to be done, and whether these students thrive in a British academic setting or not remains to be seen. They will continue to learn academic skills, building on what the IFP year began. These problems have been tackled, but instilling the confidence and comfort, and overcoming learnt bad habits, remains an ongoing process. However, implementing an IFP year has been an excellent way to introduce students to the essentials of Academic Skills, and challenge them to advance not just their language but their confidence.

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# An intervention to adapt the lecture format using technology-enhanced learning

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*This article reports on a classroom-based collaborative research project to adapt the lecture format on IFPs by providing additional support and differentiated mobile-based quizzes to increase student understanding of lecture input. Prior to the lecture, students were provided with pre-lecture language input. Delivery of the IFP business lecture is in small manageable sections, interspersed with QR codes, presenting the students with timely language and content support in the form of mobile-based quizzes. The research may be useful in providing IFPs with a lecture framework which improves student engagement and supports students in developing strategies which they will go on to apply in their undergraduate study.*

## Context

### Internationalisation

There is tension between a desire to increase student numbers on IFPs and the implications of accepting students with lower levels of English language proficiency. Ethically, we need to ensure that if we accept students with limited English language competencies, we also provide them with the pedagogical tools to allow them to understand the input provided. Notwithstanding this, the course content needs to be challenging for all students, irrespective of their language skills.

### Should content be tailored?

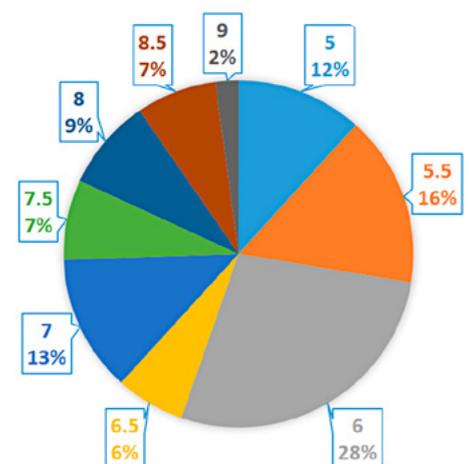
Drummond and Croxford (2018) suggest that IFPs should tailor written content in order to meet the educational needs of students with lower English language proficiencies. This is more problematic for lectures where students of varying levels of English language are taught in the same lecture theatre. Insisting that lecturers grade their language does not seem to be a viable or desirable proposition. Whilst some practitioners, with more experience of working with NESB (Non English Speaking Background) students, will probably grade their language in some way, others may use idiomatic phrases which increase the cognitive load on students who struggle to distinguish between essential and non-essential lexis. Besides, in grading lecture content, we may be denying students an opportunity to develop study skills which they can take forward into their further studies. Our lecture framework offers students support in navigating lectures by providing targeted and timely language support for the students with lower language proficiency and consolidation of content for students with higher English language levels.

## Introduction

### Knowing our students

The Warwick IFP for Business consists of approximately 100 students. All students attend two lectures and three seminars per week. Lectures are attended by all students, whereas, for seminars, the students are divided into smaller groups of 15, streamed according to their IELTS scores. Hereby lies the problem in that material for the seminars can be graded; however, for the lectures this is not possible.

IFP students' English IELTS levels, on entry, provide an indication of English proficiency levels of the students attending the lectures. Although 56% of students had IELTS listening scores of 5-6, there were significant numbers with higher IELTS scores (see Fig.1).



**Fig. 1** IELTS Listening scores of students attending the lecture

Students' vocabulary sizes were also measured on entry to the IFP using Nation and Belgar's (2007) Vocabulary Size Test (VST). These results provide an indication of the ability of students to cope with lexically dense lecture content. Nation (2006) suggests that a vocabulary size of approximately 9,000 word families is required to achieve 98% comprehensibility. Nurmukhamedov's (2017) studies suggest that to achieve 98% lexical coverage for TED talks, 8,000 word families are required. VST results on the Warwick IFP revealed that students, at the start of the IFP, had vocabulary sizes of between approximately 2,800 and 8,000 word families. With such a broad range of scores, illustrated in both the IELTS and VST results, differentiation in terms of the support became an important consideration.

### Outline of the intervention

#### Lecture preparation

Key academic lexis was identified and definitions were embedded in the business lecture slides. Students were sent all the lecture slides, several days prior to the lecture itself. Clear instructions were articulated, ensuring that students made themselves familiar with the academic content of the lecture and understood the meanings of the key words. Content and vocabulary quizzes, accessed through QR codes, were created and inserted into the lecture.

#### Lecture structure

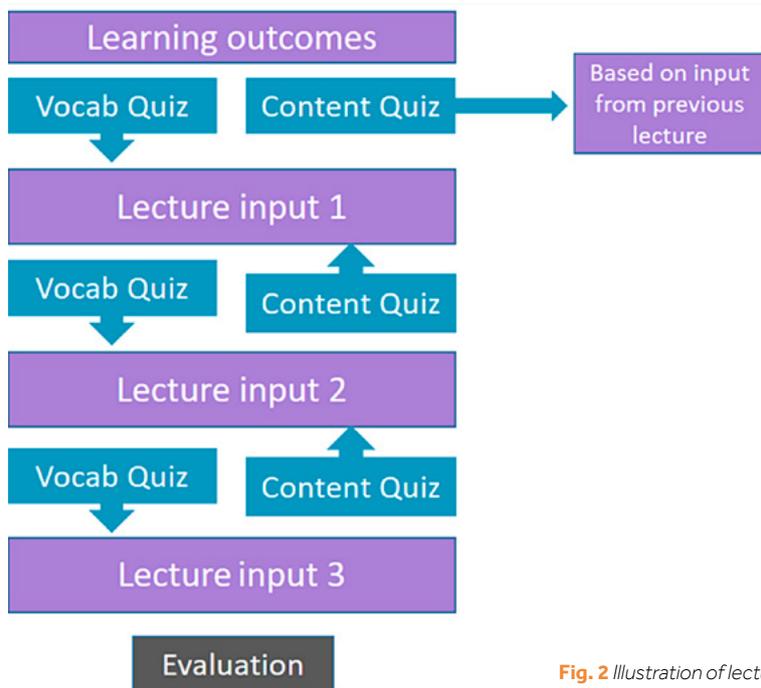
Hard copies of the vocabulary slides were printed and distributed around the lecture theatre. The lecture was delivered in short sections, typically lasting no longer than 15 minutes. Interspersed between these sections were the two types of quizzes. The vocabulary quizzes pre-taught the lexis to come and the content quizzes focused on cementing the theory already delivered (see Fig.2). The content-based quizzes took the form of multiple-choice questions and the vocabulary quizzes presented students with gapped context-relevant sentences. Students were able to self-select which quiz they accessed, although they were encouraged to complete both quizzes. Students were able to answer the questions individually and receive instant individual feedback on whether they were answering correctly or not.

### Evaluation

#### Student Evaluation

Students completed evaluation at the end of each lecture. The majority of students were actively engaged with participation rates ranging from 56% to 80% across the six different lectures. Data demonstrated that 62% of students were answering both the vocabulary and content quizzes. The time taken to complete the quizzes ranged from 1 to 3 minutes, with all students scoring more than 60% on each of the quizzes. 74% of students reported they would like the framework applied to their other lectures.

Two student focus groups were held to ascertain students' views on the intervention. Students were overwhelmingly positive about the intervention. They stated that they felt that they learnt more in these lectures both in terms of business academic content but also



**Fig. 2** Illustration of lecture structure

additional vocabulary. They liked the change of pace and activity within the lecture which they felt gave them time to reflect and refocus. They liked the fact that the slides were sent to them prior to the lecture and felt that this type of intervention would be beneficial in their other academic subjects. They liked the fact that the quizzes were personal to them, non-competitive and that basic formative feedback was provided.

#### Lecturer observations

Students were observed referring to the printed handout of definitions as they completed the gapped sentences on their phones. Arguably this supports the students' language and skills development since exposure to definitions provided students with valuable examples of paraphrasing; a key academic skill which NESB students often struggle to acquire (Liao & Tseng, 2010).

The researchers hoped that the QR codes would create a sense of intrigue and that they would evoke a degree of "fear of missing out" (Alt, 2015). Some students reported completing the quizzes but not submitting them. The need for private safe space for students was identified by Chuah (2010) and Kay and LeSage (2009) also identified one of the biggest challenges of using technology was students' negative reactions to being monitored.

The mobile-based quizzes were completed quickly without any disruption to the studious atmosphere of the lecture. Classroom management was not an issue and the lecturer was quickly able to move on to the next section of lecture input.

Students seemed comfortable using the technology and enjoyed the opportunity of using their mobile phones during the lecture.

#### Limitations

This is a small study, focusing on business lectures and it is not clear if the framework could be applied to different types of lectures. The success of the project and the application relied on the working relationship between the EAP specialist and the Business lecturer. In this case the momentum was sustained; however, the workload was initially substantial. Further research will establish if this method can usefully be adopted on other IFPs or indeed be incorporated into undergraduate study programmes. Implementation of alternative methods which support our NESB students may well involve a significant mind-set change for some lecturers in regard to the pedagogy to support internationalisation. In order for this to be taken up, universities will need to ensure that lecturers are given sufficient resources and opportunities to collaborate with EAP specialists. Internationalisation will need to go beyond policies and strategies and become the responsibility of departments.

#### Conclusion

This collaborative intervention captured and formalised existing strategies used by IFP students, making the lectures more exciting and dynamic for both students and lecturer. Students engaged more enthusiastically and had greater opportunity for reflection, irrespective of their language ability.

This alternative lecture structure may be added to the repertoire of tools which can help tailor IFP delivery to meet the needs of students with differing levels of language proficiency. The intervention may also provide students with a working example of how they can prepare for lectures in their undergraduate studies. The practitioners would recommend investing in collaborative classroom-based research between EAP and content lecturers to continue to develop strategies to improve the learning experience for our NESB students.

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# Does online translation have a place in foundation EAP modules?

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*Freely accessible online translation is a technological innovation which is already having an effect on EAP modules in international foundation programmes. This article questions whether this is a form of "creative destruction", leading to the field becoming obsolete, and suggests reasons why this is not the case. It goes on to argue, however, that the EAP community does need to react in the face of this development, which includes adjusting assessment practices and also communication with the wider academic community.*

Although it is hard to generalize about a field as diverse as language instruction, it is clear that it has a long history of embedding new technologies into its pedagogy. This has included cheap audio recording with language labs, innovative uses of Overhead Projectors all the way up to today's Virtual Learning Environments and mobile polling apps. However, one technology has recently come to the fore without a large amount of attention from the language teaching profession.

When Google Translate was first launched in 2006, the quality of its output was, at best, questionable (Bowker & Buitrago-Ciro, 2019). However, there was a process of improvement, and in 2014, a colleague and I analysed the output from foundation students writing in their first language (Chinese or Malay) and translated by Google. We concluded that, from a grammatical accuracy point of view, the system was able to output language at a level equivalent to 6.0-6.5 in IELTS (Groves & Mundt, 2015). It is important to note that we did not examine organization, argumentation or any other aspect beyond sentence level lexis and grammar. In late 2016, Google reported that it had implemented a neural network and claimed that its quality had significantly improved (Turovsky, 2016). We decided to use the original data to repeat our research in the light of this.

Essentially, the methodology broke down, since there were not enough errors to categorise. Google's claim of increased quality looked highly credible, and this led us to work with some higher level writing. We analysed academic abstracts from articles written in languages such as Indonesian and Korean, and typically found 3-4 minor errors per abstract (Mundt & Groves, 2019)

## Creative destruction

Creative destruction is an economic concept developed by Joseph Schumpeter in the 1930s (Schneider, 2017). In essence, it posits that, in a capitalist society, new technologies replace old ones. The process of creation and destruction is constant and inevitable. This can be seen in the way that the introduction of the car led to a decline in the use of horses, and therefore a dramatic reduction in employment in related industries such as saddlery and blacksmithing. A more recent example is the way in which the introduction of online video services has led to the decline of video rental services.

However, it would be an overreaction to assume that Google Translate will cause EAP to become obsolete. It must be remembered that Google Translate works at the level of the sentence only, and has no ability to (and makes no claim to) address any feature of language use beyond this level. Therefore, it is unable to reflect different uses of metadiscourse features such as the use of caution or the use of linking devices in writing, which may be taught very differently to students in different education systems. It is unable to help students meet the norms and expectations of the academic discourse community of which they aspire to become members, or at a deeper level, adapt to differing conventions of argument underpinning these.

## Academic integrity

One of the key issues surrounding the use of Google Translate in Higher Education is the concept of academic integrity. If a student uses this type of technological assistance when writing, does it mean that they cannot claim full authorship of their work? The argument that this is a form of academic offense falls down on two counts. Firstly, any writer who uses a modern word processor is relying on some form of technological

assistance in the form of spell check and auto-correct. Google Translate is another form of technological assistance, and it would be unjust to ban its use simply because it is only of use to those whose first language is not the lingua franca. Even luminaries such as Hyland see a place for translation of some form in the academy (Luo & Hyland, 2019). Secondly, from an EAP perspective, the task should surely be to prepare students to thrive in the academic environment, and this environment now contains this tool, free of charge and increasingly embedded.

### The need for English language proficiency

However, this does not negate the need for English language proficiency. Many students will still need to write exams, especially since this minimises the risk of contract cheating. Students also need to be able to take part in discussions with academics and peers, and a reliance on Google Translate would also exclude them from incidental learning- the small and frequent learning opportunities that are unplanned, informal often serendipitous and happen in between the planned teaching and learning activities. (Hyams & Sadique, 2014).

### Dealing with the issue

Although it is clear that Machine Translation will not inevitably force EAP into technological oblivion, it is clearly having an impact on EAP and will continue to do so. Therefore, the community needs to adapt strategies to ensure that it continues to act in the best interests of students and the wider academic community.

### Assessment

Assessment needs to reflect the changing landscape. For this reason, it would seem that credit needs to be awarded for features of student performance that cannot be performed by technological assistance. Therefore, a re-emphasis in marking descriptors for coursework away from grammar and vocabulary and towards discourse level features such as metadiscourse and style seems sensible. At the same time, assessment also needs to include controlled writing, where the students are unable to rely on technological assistance, such as traditional writing exams. Descriptors for these should be focused on sentence level features. A more innovative approach

suggested by Lacore-Martin (2019) would be to ask students to write commentaries on their own writing, explaining why they made the choices they did. In terms of speaking there needs to be a similar balance in tasks which can be rehearsed such as presentations and those that require spontaneous use of language such as discussions and vivas.

### Communication

It is vital for the EAP community to communicate about these issues. Students need to understand that Google Translate is not something that they can use in place of developing their English Language skills, but that it is something that they should see as an assistant to learning. Academic staff need to understand that this is changing the experience for International students, but is also limited in its effectiveness. Policy makers need to understand how EAP assists students to transition into their new academic environment, and that sentence language ability is only one part of this. There also needs to be clear policy on the use of free automated translation services written into university level academic integrity legislation.

### Conclusion

Reactions to the development of Google Translation can be affected by how practitioners see the overriding goal of the sector. For me, this goal is to enable students to take their place at the centre of the academic community. It is clear that this is not something that can be done by Google Translate alone, and students still need to develop communication skills that allow them to function in an English Language academic environment without reliance on technology. However, it would be extremely misguided for the profession to refuse to adapt in the light of this new technology. This is, not least, because it would be to waste the opportunity to develop strategies whereby the students can use the tool to make their transition faster and more effectively. A dialogue needs to be opened with our academic colleagues about how their expectations of students' performance, teaching and learning and assessment is changing, if at all. This needs to be a robust, pragmatic and student centred discussion within the EAP community and with our academic colleagues to ensure that this technology leads to long-term positive outcomes for our students.

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# Digital age pen pals: the Zoom project

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*The Zoom project was developed in order to offer preliminary year students at Ningbo Nottingham University, China more English-speaking opportunities outside of class time, and to encourage them to use English as a lingua franca to help them learn about unfamiliar cultures. The project paired UNNC students with other English medium university students from South Korea and Kazakhstan. Students used digital platforms such as WeChat and Zoom to communicate with each other through video and audio calls, and text messaging. The project enjoyed modest success; participants reported increased interest in foreign cultures and greater confidence in speaking.*

## Background

Students at Ningbo Nottingham University, China (UNNC) attend university with students from foreign countries, a rare privilege in Chinese tertiary education. Both domestic and international students give this as one reason for choosing UNNC, often citing the competitive edge they can gain at an international university: "Nottingham's international education makes you more competitive in the global job market, setting you up for an excellent future career" (Wei, cited in UNNC website, no date). However, when 90% of the students are monolingual Chinese speakers, opportunities for real communication in English are less common than students anticipate. All UNNC preliminary year students attend classes to develop speaking and listening skills; however, there is a wide range in levels of ability, and although students are encouraged to speak English outside class, this is far more challenging for less fluent students. It is also difficult for lower level students to interact with non-Chinese-speaking classmates in English. A survey conducted of domestic (mainland Chinese) students revealed that 21% claimed never to speak English outside the classroom, while 37% stated they spoke English less than one hour per week, and only 29% reported that they spoke English more than 1.1 hours per week outside the classroom (Rooke, 2010). A needs analysis conducted of 2nd through 4th year students also identified lack of English speaking opportunities as an area of concern

(UNNC CELE Pilot Study, 2017, p. 24). Weak speaking skills and lack of opportunity to speak English are among the main concerns cited by students at the university's Counseling and Support (CAS) advising unit, provided for first year UNNC students. Moreover, students' cross-cultural interactions become fewer and their attitudes toward speaking English tend to become less positive as they progress through university (Nesdale and Todd, 1993, cited in Rooke, 2010). Students are encouraged to socialize through sports activities and clubs, but shyer students generally do not take advantage of these opportunities, and it is difficult for them to find speaking opportunities outside classes. Finally, students who attempt to integrate have reported that they have difficulty following the more idiomatic and fluent native speakers' English. All these factors contribute to a less stimulating international experience for many mainland Chinese students.

## Running the project

Given the above, CAS began to seek ways to increase student opportunities to speak English. Pairing less fluent students with each other was one option, and one which CAS initially pursued by providing a 'learning English accelerated program' (LEAP) which provided students identified as having poor speaking skills with two-hour classes every week in which they were offered extra speaking practice. However, LEAP classes were neither popular nor well attended, with feedback from

students indicating that speaking English with Chinese classmates felt unnatural. As a result, CAS decided to introduce a project that would pair first-year UNNC students with non-native counterparts at foreign universities. It was felt that the English of their non-native peers would be easier for Chinese students to understand, and both Chinese and foreign students might, as non-native students at English medium universities, find common interests and learn about each other's cultures. Accordingly, in 2018, we launched 'Zoom', a project that would link mainland Chinese students with non-native English-speaking students at foreign universities, allowing students to communicate on Zoom, a media platform which allows text, video, and audio messaging. We hoped that in addition to giving students more English-speaking opportunities, we would encourage them to see English as a lingua franca which would enable them to communicate with both native and non-native speakers. We prepared pre- and post-project questionnaires to elicit student attitudes toward language learning: specifically, learning English via conversations with native speakers or using the language as a lingua franca with non-native learners. It was decided to run the project as a pilot first, to gauge the level of interest, increasing the number of participants and scope of the project if it were successful.

After clearing the project with the university's legal and ethics departments, we approached two universities, Ulsan University in South Korea and Nazarbayev University, in

Kazakhstan, to gauge their interest. (We chose these institutions mainly because they are English language medium universities with students unlikely to speak Mandarin, but also because we had contacts there.) After they agreed to recruit participants, a Zoom Moodle page was created, with bilingual instructions on how to use the Zoom platform. We then recruited 30 preliminary-year UNNC students. Participants uploaded completed questionnaires and proof-of-age or parental consent forms to the CAS Moodle, after which they attended an initial meeting in which project aims were explained. Students were given suggested general interest topics, strategies for initiating, sustaining, and ending conversations, and topics to avoid: sex/drugs/religion/politics. (Students were also reminded that, although we would not monitor their conversations, the government might.) Participants were introduced to a student from Kazakhstan and allowed to ask him questions. A Zoom website was set up for all participating students to upload profiles giving contact details, majors, and interests. Initially, students wanted to upload photographs, but after consultation with our partner universities, this was rejected, in order to encourage students to base conversations on shared interests rather than physical appeal. A designated Zoom advisor was provided in order to encourage participants and help them with difficulties encountered during conversations.

## Reflections

Initially, there were several problems. The first concerned discrepancy in ability, with Koreans and Kazakhs at a significantly higher level than their Chinese counterparts. Although we had been warned that the Kazakh and Korean students were likely to be better English speakers, even several of our most fluent students were humbled by the discrepancy. As a result, our less fluent students felt at a distinct disadvantage, and the students who reported having regular conversations tended to be those whose spoken English was strong. The Kazakh students had hoped to engage their Chinese partners in debates, which most UNNC preliminary year students would find challenging. Time zones and term times also clashed, creating problems in scheduling conversations. There was one problem which was completely unanticipated: some Chinese students expected more supervision (in addition to the Zoom advisor); several voiced concerns that no tutors were present during conversations. Finally, owing to the small number of participants, there was not a large enough sample to compare pre- and post-project questionnaires. Despite these issues, however, the project was judged a modest success, mainly because the students who reported the highest number of conversations stated that they both enjoyed and profited from it. Four students even asked if they could participate in Zoom again in the second semester. While the majority of students did not manage more than 2-3 conversations over

the course of the semester, several students reported having weekly or, in some cases, daily contact with their Kazakh partner or partners. At least one student reported arranging an actual meeting with his Kazakh partners over the summer. Three students stated that not being able to resort to Chinese increased their speaking confidence, and several students expressed their satisfaction at being able to make themselves understood in English. Others commented that having regular English conversations improved their vocabulary, as they were inclined to look up relevant words before and after conversations. Students also expressed surprise at the work ethic and generally higher level of English of their Kazakh partners and were pleased to find that they shared similar interests.

### Future plans

The CAS has launched Zoom again this semester, with a cohort of sixty-five students, in hopes of obtaining a better research sample. (The project managed to recruit these applicants in less than an hour after the sign-up sheet link was distributed, which may be seen as a measure of student interest.) We have spent more time explaining to students that they need to be proactive and independent, and we have also recruited four foreign postgraduate interns to help as trouble-shooters. As we initially had trouble finding enough foreign participants, we also recruited eight non-Mandarin-speaking international students from UNNC. Our previous Zoom leader and one active participant from last semester have agreed to work with new Zoom participants to help them with technical, cultural, or logistic problems. We have distributed guidelines and conversational tactics handouts to students, advising them on potentially sensitive issues, and the need to use discretion in conversations. Overall, we believe that the Zoom project offers students not only the chance to use English for real communication and gain a better appreciation of its value as a lingua franca, but also opportunities to learn about different cultures.

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# Are changes necessary? Enhancing student engagement on an international foundation programme

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*A small-scale study is presented that investigates attitudes of International Foundation Programme (IFP) students at the University of Reading towards engagement with certain aspects of the programme. Student responses highlighted classroom activities and modes of communication as particular areas where changes should be considered. The article finishes with recommendations for enhancing engagement.*

## Background and rationale

The impetus to examine student engagement on the IFP emerged from the teaching experiences of IFP tutors across several modules who noticed the numbers of disengaged IFP students have been increasing in recent years. This lack of engagement has been manifested through poor attendance, lack of focus, lack of participation in classroom activities as well as a higher frequency of incomplete homework and assignments. As a result, this raised concerns for IFP tutors and staff at the University of Reading.

## Aims of the study

The aims of this study were to identify the extent to which IFP students were engaged; factors that affected IFP student engagement; possible reasons for lower engagement and most importantly, to make some recommendations to enhance engagement amongst IFP students.

As such, the main research questions were:

1. To what extent are students engaged in the IFP?
2. What are the factors that affect student engagement on the IFP?

## Definition and conceptual framework

Trowler (2010) defines student engagement as the time and effort used by both students and institutions to ensure student progress and the reputation of institutions are optimised to the fullest, while Bryson, Cooper and Hardy (2010) view student engagement as both a process and an outcome. For this study, which focused on providing a snapshot of IFP student engagement at the University of Reading, Kahu's (2013) definition was used, as it suggests that essentially student engagement can be examined from three main constructs:

- i. behavioural (student behaviour and teaching practices)
- ii. psychological (cognitive and affective factors)
- iii. socio-cultural (the impact of broader social factors and context)

Kahu's (2013) conceptual framework of engagement was chosen for the theoretical background as it places the student at its centre while encompassing the psychological perspective to include the three dimensions of engagement: affective, cognitive and behavioural. A wider socio-cultural context is also considered in this framework.

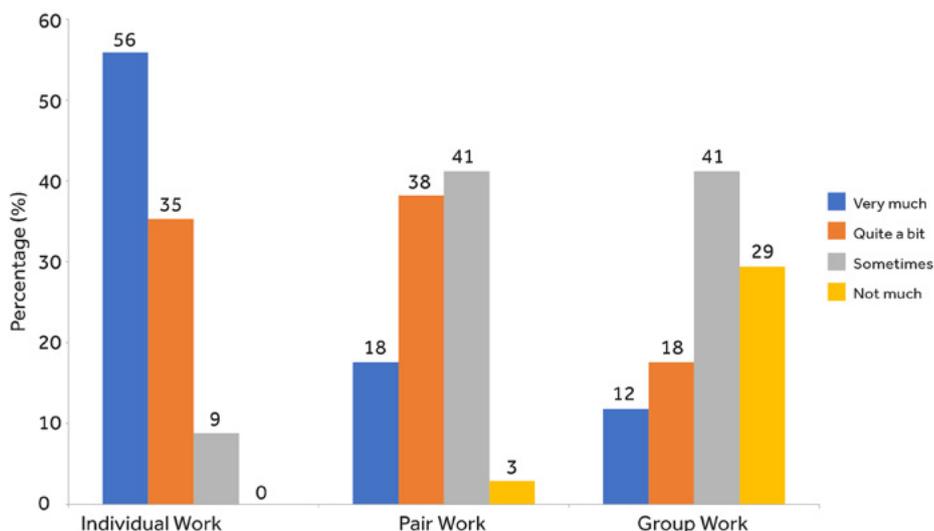
## Methodology

The study used both quantitative (online questionnaire) and qualitative (focus group) methods to collect data. The questionnaire comprised 23 questions taking into consideration the main constructs in Kahu's (2013) conceptual framework. Students were emailed the questionnaire and 34 out of 80 participated. The quantitative data was analysed, and these findings were used as a basis for further discussion in the focus group, in which six students participated. The aim of the focus group was to explore and extend the main findings from the questionnaire.

## Results

The data from the questionnaire and focus group were analysed and the most interesting findings related to classroom activities, and the mode of communication used by tutors and students to communicate with each other. Given the limited resources for this short study, the focus was narrowed down to these two aspects since both communication and classroom activities are key aspects to student engagement and support Kahu's (2013) behavioural and affective constructs.

**Table 1** How much do you enjoy doing the following activities?



The first main finding from the online questionnaire emerged from the following question "How much do you enjoy doing the following activities?"

The results in Table 1 show that individual work seems to be the most enjoyable or preferred activity amongst IFP students with the second most enjoyable activity being pair work; the majority of participants either stating they enjoyed it 'very much' (18%), 'quite a bit' (38%) or 'sometimes' (41%). In contrast, group work was the least enjoyable activity with the highest percentages falling under the 'sometimes' (41%) and 'not much' (29%) category.

Similarly, the focus group findings revealed group work is the least preferred activity even though students acknowledged that group work is necessary for university life and their future career. Participants commented that group work is more complicated compared to pair work and individual work. The reasons given were, it is time consuming, especially in making decisions, difficult to organise group

meetings outside class hours and that mixed ability groups are problematic. One student in the focus group stated she preferred individual work because "I think the most reliable person is myself", while another student described pair work as the perfect 'in-between'. These findings suggest there seems to be a discrepancy between the activities used in classrooms and the activities that students prefer to do.

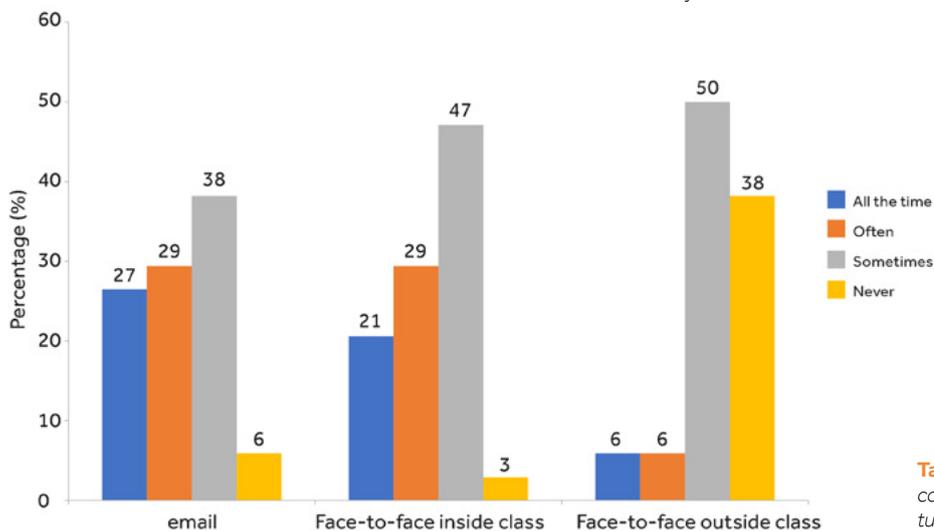
The second main finding from the online questionnaire relates to communication. Students were asked the following two questions:

1. How often do you communicate with your module tutors in the following way?
2. How often do you use the following medium to discuss or complete an assignment with your classmates?

Table 2 presents the findings of the first question. The results indicate that face to face in class communication seems to be the most frequent mode of communication used by students, followed by email.

Additionally, the results of the focus group suggest similar responses. For example, one student commented that if it was a 'quick' question, it was more convenient to ask in class but for more complex questions the preference would be to ask the tutor after class or arrange a meeting to avoid disrupting the class and wasting time.

For the second question, "How often do you use the following medium to discuss or complete an assignment with your classmates?", the results showed (see Table 3) the most frequently used mode of communication between students and other students was one to one messaging with 'all the time' (18%), 'often' (35%) and 'sometimes' (41%) being the most popular responses. The second most frequently used mode of communication was group messaging with 'often' (32%) and 'sometimes' (26%) respectively. For both email and phone call, 56% of the students stated they never communicated via email or called other students.



**Table 2** How often do you communicate with your module tutors in the following way?

Similarly, the results from the focus group session echoed those from the questionnaire. Most students communicate via instant messaging either using one to one or group messaging. Depending on the urgency, formality and context, most students prefer group chats due to their convenience, accessibility and speed. They seldom use email as highlighted in statements such as, "I never use email to contact my classmates... it's not useful" or "if I email people, they barely check their emails at times, so I would prefer to call them or meet face to face". The results suggest that overall there seems to be a mismatch between how IFP tutors communicate with students and how students prefer to communicate with each other.

### Conclusion

While this study was a small-scale research project, it does to a certain extent provide a snapshot of student engagement on the IFP at the University of Reading. From the online questionnaire and focus group, the two main findings suggest there seems to be:

- A mismatch in terms of the classroom activities that are used to enhance student engagement with what students prefer (similar to studies such as Ulbrich et.al, 2011).
- A mismatch between how tutors communicate with students and how students prefer to communicate with each other (similar to studies such as Selwyn, 2009 and Downes, 2010).

### Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, two main aspects could be reconsidered: classroom activities and communication with students.

### Reconsidering classroom activities

One aspect of classroom activities is perhaps to make students more aware of the value and rationale for doing activities such as group work. There is often an underlying assumption that students know what they need to do; however, this is not necessarily the case. Teaching strategies about participation in such activities as well as providing the time or a task for students to reflect on the value and rationale may make these classroom activities more appealing for students to engage in. Another recommendation based on a suggestion made during the focus group, is to provide more choice and freedom for students to decide on the kind of activities that they prefer in order to achieve the task. Providing students with a choice promotes student empowerment, thus potentially leading to increased engagement.

### Reconsidering modes of communication

This study has highlighted the way in which tutors communicate with students is clearly not the mode of communication this generation of students prefer. More effort is possibly needed from tutors and universities in general to re-evaluate and re-think the way communication is conducted with students. If email is outdated in the eyes of our students, then more effective ways to engage with them need to be sought.

As Ulbrich et al (2011) aptly highlight, students from the net generation learn, network and communicate differently compared to the conventional mode, thus their values are compromised upon entering the university system. Therefore, the IFP needs to change with the times, embrace social media and become more social media savvy in order to stay relevant and engaged with students.

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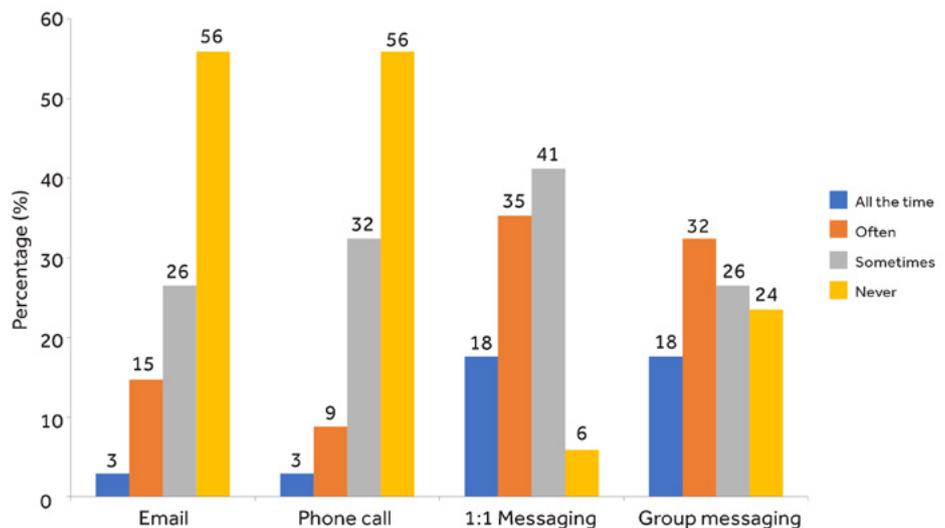
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**Table 3** How often do you use the following medium to discuss or complete an assignment with your classmates?

# Bursting the bubble and bringing the real world into our classrooms to increase student engagement

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*This article examines ways in which pathway students on Foundation courses can be supported in a manner that will help them to engage more with their studies. Based on research carried out in a post-92 university with both domestic and international students, the paper argues for more of a real world focus to our teaching. In support of this, ideas are offered on the basis of responses from students themselves. The purpose of this is to give a stronger voice to students in the shaping of pedagogic approaches on pathway courses, hopefully leading to better engagement with studies.*

## Introduction

During a recent study involving interviews of teachers of English for Academic Purposes (Breen, 2018), one of the participants made a succinct observation about the role of technology in the classroom. He asserted that "unless the classroom is a bubble which doesn't really reflect life" then there has to be interaction with "the real world outside of the classroom." Increasingly, that is not just a demand on the part of teachers but something coming from the student voice too. Although there are different ways of interpreting 'real world' learning, this is essentially an experiential form of learning and teaching taking place outside of a traditional classroom or lecture theatre. This could involve something as simple as a day trip to an art gallery for students of Museum Studies. Alternatively, it could entail a group of Events Management students planning, designing and delivering actual events in collaboration with hotels or catering companies. In both situations there is an emphasis on knowledge being co-created, not just between students and teachers or students and professional practitioners. New knowledge in such cases is being generated as a consequence of blending together education and the outside world.

The University of Westminster has had a Students As Co-Creators project in place for the past couple of years. This has meant that in some disciplines students have helped design the curriculum in collaboration with their lecturers or co-created codes of etiquette for

their classrooms and lecture halls. Inspired by this a decision was taken to investigate ways of improving the overall experience for students on a new suite of Pathway programmes introduced that academic year. This was because within the core subject of Introduction to Academic Practice, there had been issues with satisfaction, engagement and retention.

## Method

To address the issues in Introduction to Academic Practice, a mixed methods research study was carried out by asking a group of 237 Foundation Pathway students about their preferences as regards teaching and learning. This was designed as a set of ten questions given to students in printed form in their lectures and seminars, with a focus on finding out about their attitudes to real world interaction and real world learning. For the purposes of helping them to do this, a definition of real world learning was also provided in advance of completing the survey and a clear focus was outlined on the cover sheet. Around one third of the cohort completed the forms.

Actual questions started out with those such as "On a scale of 1-5, how much do you feel a part of your disciplinary community within the everyday world?" or "Is it important for your studies to have greater relevance to the everyday world outside of university?" Gradually these progressed to facilitating creation of ideas for the future by asking such questions as "What real world examples or issues would you like to see taught or

discussed in the classroom or what sort of visits and activities would you like to do outside of class time?" or "What three things can universities do to make you feel a greater connection to the practices of your discipline and the everyday world outside of your studies?" The goal of this was to find out what students see as effective ways of collaboration and engagement with the real world, as well as seeing how they interpreted that real world outside of the classroom.

## **Results and analysis**

Once analysed, the responses within this study provided further support for the argument that real world learning strengthens students' awareness of their disciplinary contexts and social practices within that. Firstly, the study supports the long held view within EAP and Academic Literacies that there is a need to have a disciplinary emphasis set against the teaching of academic skills and academic socialisation (Lea & Street, 1998). This though has to be more than just an integration of content with language or study skills. In order to integrate students with the social practices of their disciplines, there is a need for a real world emphasis because in their responses the students themselves showed a greater awareness of linkage to areas such as employability and networking. In practical terms, this involved a greater demand for visits to external sites and to meet people within the professional communities that are part of their disciplines. That was seen

across the board in subject areas including Business, Media, Law and Fashion. These students talked about wanting to know more about what is happening in their professional fields. In summary, they wanted avenues of entrance into these communities of practice which they would not be able to access through classroom studies alone.

Another area that came through very strongly in the student responses was in a demand for more real world examples in the classroom. This echoes the ideas of respondents in the aforementioned research study on teaching with technologies (Breen, 2018) where there was a recurring suggestion of good teaching requiring real world elements in order to engage, motivate and educate students. Interestingly too, within this study focusing on the students' rather than teachers' voice, there was a suggestion from some participants that the way of teaching is important. It was apparent that a great deal of satisfaction and engagement depends upon the way that the content itself is taught by individual teachers. Students could see little point in merely bringing real world examples into the classroom purely for the sake of it rather than having a clear teaching purpose or disciplinary linkage. It was notable too that students were able to make this connection between the content and the pedagogy and that they had the confidence to express their ideas about how things can be improved.

## **Students' needs**

Though small scale and only reported in minimal detail here, this study showed that today's Pathway students are more aware of their needs and demands. Within those demands there is a very strong focus on integrating a real world aspect. Students do not want the classroom to be a bubble detached from the rest of the world, in the same way as our universities are no longer bubbles detached from broader society. However, the challenge still remains as to how we use these findings to inform our course design and to what extent students on Pathway programmes can be Co-creators. In this case, students were invited to offer suggestions that would feed into the way their lessons were delivered in the second half of that semester and to offer ideas for how they wanted to see the curriculum take shape in the future. Through this, the pattern of assessment was changed with a better system of scaffolding introduced and tasks that better reflected the level that students are at. Previously, to a large extent, students were thrown in at the deep end in the sense of having to complete tasks in a portfolio, relating to understanding of academic skills. This was adapted to become more experiential rather than theoretical and to have the material more tailored to specific disciplines than to generic concepts. As such that allowed learning to become more personalised, relevant and motivational.

## Discussion of EAP

On the disciplinary side, a great deal of movement has already happened within English for Academic Purposes (EAP) which was essentially the subject area that shaped this module of Introduction to Academic Practice. Over recent decades there has been a significant drive to have more of a disciplinary emphasis in the teaching and learning of EAP, as discussed in such work as Hyland (2006), Dudley-Evans & St. John (2009), Bell (2016) and Breen (2018). However, within EAP, there has been a reluctance in some quarters to embrace real world activity because within this field, there has been a conscious shift to differentiate between this branch of English teaching and those that are more general. This has entailed EAP's gradual shift away from some of the historical features of General English teaching, including Communicative Language Teaching and usage of social events or trips for learning purposes. However, since such trips are a common feature of disciplinary teaching nowadays, this kind of rejection of social practices could be seen as throwing out the baby with the bathwater. It also goes against the "synergy" required in Academic Literacies approaches (Gimenez & Thomas, 2015, p. 30) where there has to be a balance between social and textual practices of disciplines (Turner, 2012, p. 19).

## Conclusion

On the whole that sense of motivation and active engagement with study seems to be crucial in the areas of attendance, retention and course completion. Introducing real world aspects to study is not about bringing in entertainment or dumbing down the curriculum. When managed and integrated properly it is about course enhancement and about introducing students to a stronger awareness of the social practices of their disciplines. Effectively this is an evolution of past approaches such as the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework by Mishra & Koehler (2006) and Academic Literacies rather than any kind of radical break with the past. It is about preparing the students of today to be the real world citizens of tomorrow.

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# Teaching mindfulness to enhance meaningful learning

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*Mindfulness and self-awareness activities were incorporated in the classroom to encourage regular reflection and develop self-awareness. It was found that in lessons where this was done students were more engaged, more motivated and produced better outputs. It is strongly suggested that mindfulness activities and self-awareness strategies are embedded in a foundation programme in order to promote better student well-being and to facilitate student learning, particularly in helping students transition into adulthood and university life.*

## Introduction

A sound mental well-being facilitates learning, but what has been observed lately is that an increasing number of students are seeking help for depression and anxiety (Reetz et al., 2016). There is an increase in the number of students being registered for mental illness (primarily anxiety and depression) at Nottingham University Malaysia's Well Being and Learning Support Centre every year, and the first half of 2019 alone saw a rise of about 40% from the total figures in 2018.

The presence and high usage of social media aggravates the situation, as it has been found to affect the mental health of young adults and children today (Richards et al., 2015). This is a worrying trend, if this generation is to be relied on as future leaders. The immediate concern is that these students need help with stress and task management so that they can perform better academically. This responsibility is an even more important one for providers of foundation education, where students transition from school into university. Mindful, self-aware individuals tend to engage in self-care activities and better manage their stress (Tomlinson et al., 2018; Wilson & Dunn, 2004). Therefore it would seem that one way to effectively facilitate this transition is through the teaching of self-awareness and mindfulness.

## Mindfulness explained

There have been several definitions of mindfulness offered by scholars but for the purpose of this paper it is adequate to view it as paying intentional attention to and being aware of the present moment in a non-judgmental way (Bishop et al., 2004). In other words, a mindful person is in control of their focus, pays attention to and is aware of the

present moment, and views the moment with an open mind. Many researchers have found that mindfulness has a positive impact on a person's general well-being, including in the aspects of mental and physical health, work performance and academic achievements (Wilson & Dunn, 2004; Brown & Ryan, 2009; Tomlinson et al., 2018).

## Issues with foundation year students

Some issues observed with foundation year students at the university where this study took place included not having a clear goal, lacking the confidence to progress in their chosen field, not knowing what was happening around them, and not knowing what to do in order to be where they wanted. Many students tended to get overwhelmed by the new experience of living independently. Therefore, while they did indeed wish to succeed in their studies they may not know how to balance life and study, allowing themselves instead to drift or float along rather than follow a specific direction. Some worked very hard yet did not reach their targets, or developed anxiety in so doing. Others did not know how to get back on track when faced with failure.

## Drawing students' presence of mind

A comparison was made on the engagement and quality of work produced by two groups of students enrolled in an in-session resume-writing course. The students in both groups consisted of a mix of different disciplines and levels of study, and included foundation level students. However, in one group, self-awareness and mindfulness-based interventions were employed. The interventions simply involved getting students to reflect on several key questions about

themselves. For example 'Who are you?', 'What are your personal qualities, strengths, and weaknesses?', 'What can you do to enhance your strengths and remove your weaknesses?', 'What are your priorities?', 'Where are you?', 'What is happening around you?', 'How do you feel?', 'Why are you feeling those feelings?', 'What do you have to do to get where you want to be?' The students were also encouraged to keep a journal to practise mindfulness outside of the classroom, as journal writing provides the opportunity for self-reflection, which increases alertness to one's self and surroundings (Dobkin & Hutchinson, 2013).

In the previous round of the course the syllabus included the technical aspects of resume writing such as structure, document design, content and language. Although the content mentioned the importance of quantifying qualifications with evidence and making sure their focus was on the employer's needs and not their own, 'human element' was hardly discussed. In other words, the course content merely described how their formal education and training, and their work experience, should match the requirements of the job that they were applying for. Since the course was not a credit-bearing one, there was hardly any motivation for the students to stay on the course after they had learnt about the technical details of resume writing, and attendance waned after a few sessions.

In the new syllabus, the classroom sessions involved getting the students to reflect on their own core values and personal traits. The words they used to define themselves would then be mapped on to the employers' criteria for the preferred candidate. As take home tasks, they were also asked to engage in self-awareness activities such as writing journals, daily self-reflection, setting goals and writing these down. The rationale for including these exercises was that a primary way to self-improvement is through self-awareness (Wilson & Dunn, 2004). Thus, the personal traits that the students were trying to project in their cover letters and resumes would be easier to articulate if they recognized those qualities in themselves. In addition, these self-reflection and mindfulness-based activities also have the advantage of making the lessons more meaningful and relevant to them because they could see how and where they could apply the knowledge in real life (Dobkin & Hutchinson, 2013).

## Observations

The findings suggest that self-awareness and mindfulness-based interventions had had a positive impact on the students' reception, engagement and performance, as well as general well-being. The result of the intervention on the quality of their assignments was quite notable: the students managed to write more original and convincing cover letters, and were able to quantify or justify claims they made about themselves (such as possessing a certain quality like leadership or interpersonal skills) with evidence from within their scope of experience. They were able to tap into their life experience as students in university to make up for their lack of professional work experience. In addition, students reported being able to see where the lesson sat within the larger framework of their real life, outside of the classroom. As a fringe benefit, they also said that doing the mindfulness and self-awareness activities helped them re-energise and regain their perspective when they started feeling lazy or demotivated. This is in line with findings in relevant literature which states that mindfulness improves mental health, wellbeing, and performance outcomes (Lomas et al., 2017).

## Conclusion

Clearly, other reasons may have contributed to the difference in the students' engagement levels and performance despite both groups being similar in terms of discipline, gender, level and age. However, observations from the two cohorts of students seem to suggest that explicitly teaching how to be self-aware and incorporating mindfulness-based activities into the lessons did have a positive impact on not only the students' engagement with the lessons within and outside of the classroom but also their general well-being and performance. A larger scale investigation into the impact of mindfulness interventions on learning and wellbeing would be welcome, as well as one focused on foundation students.

It is exciting to see that encouraging students to be mindful and self-aware can have benefits beyond the expectations of the course. Results suggest that teaching self-awareness and mindfulness as part of a Foundation Year programme, either as a stand-alone module or incorporated within a writing or language course may help them develop stronger self-awareness and mindfulness for greater success as they transition into university.

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# Redesigning an existing support programme for low-level foundation students through graded readers

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*To overcome the challenge of supporting students with a low level of English on a foundation EAP programme, a graded reader approach was trialed in 2017-18. Data analysis showed this approach developed students' confidence and improved students' overall English proficiency.*

## The context: why introduce graded readers?

An increasing number of students join the Xi'an Jiao Tong Liverpool University (XJTLU) Year 1 Foundation Programme with a low level of English (CEFR A1-A2 / IELTS 4 on entry). Students used to be enrolled in mixed ability English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classes, but this was later changed to grouping students by English proficiency. All students, however, still had to cope with the same EAP curriculum and assessment. To support these low level students, a Continuing Support programme was put in place. These supporting services were initially EAP-oriented, such as one-to-one consultations on students' writing, and skills workshops, such as "Reading Speed". The problems with these services were two fold. Firstly, some EAP tutors felt the extra classes simply repeated or even interfered with their teaching. Secondly, students often understood the concepts but did not achieve sufficient practice using the strategies. In other words, students might understand the importance of extensive reading, but were simply not reading enough. Krashen's  $i+1$  theory emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input, and abundant research findings show that extensive reading is positively associated with language achievement (Cho & Krashen, 2001; Day & Bamford, 1998; Krashen, 2004). Therefore, a new voluntary programme, aiming to improve students' general English proficiency and confidence through graded readers was suggested and trialed in Semester 1 2017-18 through the Continuing Support programme.

Graded readers are books of various genres with the language level graded or controlled in terms of vocabulary and sentence structure complexity in order to make the content accessible to learners of the language. They could be simplified versions of existing works, original stories, or factual books. The level may extend from the Beginner level (50 headwords)

to Near Native (18,000 headwords) (The Extensive Reading Foundation, 2019).

The participants of this project were recent Chinese high school graduates who had entered XJTLU, where English is the language of instruction. These participants scored between CEFR A1 and A2 in the entrance placement test. However, semester 1 EAP is generally tailored for students at around CEFR B1. Open to 450 lower-level students, on average 70 participated regularly over one semester. They attended graded reader workshops and participated in free reading and consultation sessions.

## Implementing graded readers

The first challenge was to introduce graded readers and their benefits to EAP teachers and students. A short induction meeting was held with tutors. The fact that this approach would improve students' confidence and English proficiency, but not interfere with EAP was communicated. The benefits of this approach as evidenced in the literature were discussed. Then another 50-minute induction meeting was held with students and their EAP teachers in a "graded reader" room. Students were introduced to the concept, benefits, and use of graded readers. Students were advised to read at their own level and to finish at least one book per week. They were also guided to identify their own level by reading one page and counting the number of new words (maximum 5 per page), and to identify books of interest by browsing the physical copies of graded readers in the room. By the end of these two induction sessions, both EAP tutors and students were generally aware of the benefits of graded readers and principles of using graded readers.

The second challenge was to get students to start and keep reading. 14 popular Penguin Graded Readers (as evidenced from library loan records) at suitable levels (7 Pre-intermediate and 7 Intermediate) were selected for a 14-week semester. Two 50-minute lesson

types were arranged for each book. 1 lesson involved starting reading, and 1 lesson involved completing reading and starting a new book. In lesson 1, the teacher introduces a book, through activities such as asking questions to get students thinking. Then, students read a common chapter together in class followed by activities such as a 'reading circle'. In reading circles, students talk about a chapter, but each student also has a specific role such as 'summarizer'. Students should finish their book before lesson 2. In lesson 2, students conduct a book review activity, such as sharing what they like/dislike about what they have read, writing a different ending, or comparing the book with the corresponding movie. Finally, the teacher introduces the next book to be read. To further motivate students to read extensively, a reading award activity was implemented. A student gets a stamp for completing a book. Students could exchange their stamps for small prizes.

### Evaluation of the graded reader project and findings

Four methods were used to evaluate this graded reader project's impact on these low level students: assessment results, interviews, class observations, and a survey.

Participants' overall English proficiency improved. Firstly, all participants passed their semester 1 EAP assessment and successfully moved up at least one CEFR level (from A to B or above). Secondly, students' speaking fluency showed improvement as observed. One tutor commented: "One student, in the first lesson, had to use her dictionary more than once for a single sentence when speaking. Communication was very difficult. I guided her to paraphrase instead of looking for translation. In the second lesson, she's still using her dictionary. By the third lesson, when asked about her opinion of the book she's read, she suddenly started talking, non-stop, not using her dictionary even once. She criticized the male character, saying she didn't like the male character giving the female character advice, commenting the female had her own thought, could make her own decisions, and did not need the male's control." Thirdly, in interviews, students commented on language improvement, including grammar accuracy, long term retention of new vocabulary, and reading speed. They gave comments such as "'I see accurate grammar when reading these books. This helps me use more accurate grammar when I write.'" and "I don't think I

have learned a lot of words by reading graded readers. But for a new word I see in the book, I see it so many times that I can remember it and use it."

Participants' confidence and motivation also showed improvement as shown in interviews and the survey. Participants gave comments such as "Before this project, I had never read an English book. The completion of one whole English novel due to this project makes me feel good about myself." and "I like these graded readers because I can learn culture and useful expressions. For example, in the book "How to be an Alien", I learned a lot about UK culture and idiomatic expressions I could use when I study in the UK in the future."

Despite these positive findings, however, it should be noted that some participants stated that they did not feel the graded readers were responsible for their improved EAP scores.

### Conclusion

Students need to read approximately seven books at their own level before they are ready to move up to the next level (ER-Central, 2017). After 14 weeks in Semester 1 where participants read 14 books of two levels (Pre-intermediate and Intermediate), the plan for Semester 2 is 14 books of two further levels (Upper-intermediate and Advanced), and in Year 2 introducing them to Bridging and Near-native readers.

If a course or a module were to include a graded reader programme, either within the curriculum or as a stand-alone extra-curricular activity, the following suggestions might be useful.

1. Prepare sufficient copies of engaging graded readers from Basic to Near Native levels. For a class of 16 students, for instance, 16 copies of the same title would be useful for in-class activities. For free reading sessions, a range of titles and levels are needed. Books that are connected to personal experiences are more likely to have engagement potential. For example, participants in this project were Chinese high school graduates, therefore, titles, such as "Teacher Man", related to high school life, and "Falling Leaves", set in China, were picked.
2. Apply strategies to engage students in reading. A teacher can act as a model reader, by just reading, with a book in hand, turning a page, reading, and letting students observe and imitate. This is particularly

useful for learners from a context where leisure reading is underemphasized and not practiced, for example, in this case, Chinese students who were used to English textbook reading. Secondly, providing in-class reading time helps. After 30 minutes' reading, for instance, a student can usually finish one chapter, by which time he or she is likely to be immersed in the story, and the desire to keep reading is aroused.

In conclusion, reading extensively at an individual's own level can improve students' overall language proficiency and confidence, even when some learners and teachers are skeptical of the benefits. Though this project focused on English learners, it is believed extensive reading in pleasurable contexts could be introduced in classes other than English to provide a gateway opportunity for more extensive academic reading. For example, a common room containing readers of different languages could be set up, where language tutors and students of different levels speaking different languages share and help reading flourish.

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# Infusing Business and Management curricula in IFP with Entrepreneurship: an appraisal of how Entrepreneurship might enhance both language and business skills

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*This paper critically discusses the nature of Entrepreneurship-infused curricula within Business and Management (B&M) International Foundation Programmes (IFP). International Foundation Programmes in B&M help students develop high level language skills as well as affording the development of skills in this academic area, including Entrepreneurship. However, research suggests that the status of Entrepreneurship in the curriculum is overlooked in many institutions, and students are not sufficiently prepared for high level study in this area. This paper examines the definition of Entrepreneurship and offers possibilities for how its inclusion might offer advantages to both language and strategic development skills of IFP students.*

## The importance of Entrepreneurship in the 21st century Business and Management curriculum

In International Study Centres, there are great pressures on both students and staff to attain high Academic English Programme (AEP) scores for entry into their chosen university programmes of study. Furthermore, Business and Management students (and others of course) must also reach good academic grades in the subjects that comprise the International Foundation Programmes themselves, and that form the basis of core studies and associated skills and attributes. There are several associated skill-sets in B&M such as Negotiation, Relationships and Entrepreneurship that might once have been viewed as adjunct to the main subject concepts, but they have over the last decade become critical areas of the curriculum, which at the same time, must be infused with both language and high academic scholarship. The first section of this paper examines the definition of entrepreneurship and links its importance to language development.

Entrepreneurship has become a key concept in the development of undergraduates within most global education systems over the last decade and it is a concept for which there are multiple definitions. The European Commission's Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (Bacigalupo et al., 2016, p.6)

defines Entrepreneurship as 'a transversal key competence for both individuals and groups across all spheres of life'. In contrast, the definition of Entrepreneurship adopted by the Harvard Business School is 'The pursuit of opportunity beyond resources controlled' (Stevenson, 1983, p.3). Upon deeper examination, both definitions emphasise the cultural capital-oriented and social-relational nature of Entrepreneurship. Within the Harvard usage, first, the term 'pursuit' highlights the urgency with which entrepreneurs operate, and this frequently rests on the ability of individuals to have good social relational skills, and to recognise opportunities for persuasion, both of which rest on excellent linguistic ability. Second, the word 'opportunity' exposes the significance of recognising novelty and innovation: such skill often rests on high level cultural and international knowledge, again, predicated upon personal language and social skill. Finally, the notion of 'beyond resources controlled' is critical since successful entrepreneurial activity builds strongly on networking and bootstrapping – galvanising contacts, resources, and critically social capital, to leverage opportunity that others might miss.

Research suggests that language proficiency affects entrepreneurial ability (Johnstone et al., 2018), and it is clear from the discussion of Entrepreneurship above, that opportunities both to develop specific elements of its definition and link these explicitly to language development, would

be an important curriculum innovation in B&M programmes within IFPs. However, because the area of language and its impact upon entrepreneurial skill development is currently under-researched, it is difficult for academic tutors to know how best to design an Entrepreneurship-infused curriculum which also develops academic language skills. It is therefore critically important that the nature of the relationship between language skill and Entrepreneurship is better understood, and this link is examined in the next section of this paper.

### **Links between language and Entrepreneurial skill: the place of educational theory**

Perhaps the most useful place to start is to understand the theory as to why language ability and Entrepreneurship are intrinsically linked: first, language proficiency may be considered an essential cultural resource in a business landscape increasingly dominated by internationalisation and globalisation. But in addition, just as 'digital nativity' has become an appealing way of understanding the online behaviours of millennials despite criticisms of it as a valid concept, the term 'born-globals' (Knight and Liesch, 2016) is a similar delineator for individuals who have skill in language as well as a variety of transverse skills. However, research demonstrates that language ability does not necessarily translate into cultural awareness and neither does cultural awareness arise naturally as a by-product of entrepreneurial skill.

Research suggests that two key antecedents toward effective Entrepreneurship are the cultural skills of language, and entrepreneurial orientation, learned both formally (from institutions) and informally (through personal interactional opportunities) (Johannisson, 2016). In the first case, the cultural skills of language may be separated into two components – the structural knowledge of language, and the communicative competence elements, for example those frequently taught within EAP. However, Wei et al (2018) identify

a third and potentially capstone domain of language ability that impacts upon the construction of Entrepreneurship, and that is the knowledge about the significance and discursive uses of dialects for languages that have significance in business ownership and self-employment terms. They argue that whilst Entrepreneurship has become synonymous with globalisation, acquisition of generic social skills and proficiency in one of the world's major languages, it is, conversely, the understanding and salience of dialect language that economic migrants adopt that is the crucial channel to building a social network and therefore reducing barriers to entrepreneurial activity. Although their research was carried out using migrant data patterns in China, Wei et al (2018) suggest that in countries where entrepreneurial economic activity is significant, the effect of language on Entrepreneurship is extremely pronounced at a local level, particularly where small-scale start-ups are prominent in the urban fringe and rural areas. Stevenson's definition is brought into sharp focus here – 'beyond resources controlled' suggests that local language knowledge is a key determinant of the decision to become an entrepreneur and thus exploit resources that others might well miss.

Do such research claims resonate with the experience of IFP in relation to linking language and Entrepreneurship? Literature suggests that such an analysis is very persuasive. The rising demand for IFP is in line with the growth of the middle classes from countries such as India, China, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam (Javalgi & Grossman, 2016), whose families regard education as a necessary precursor to economic growth. Such students see entrepreneurial activity as a deeply emotional activity whose ability to be economically transformative for their wider families is the key educational and social driver. The link between language and Entrepreneurship is thus already implicit for many of the students – but it therefore needs to be understood and explicitly developed in the curriculum.

### **Infusing Business and Management curricula in IFP with Entrepreneurship skills**

Teaching Entrepreneurship skills in many IFP and universities is often seen as a matter of project-based case study that is adjunct to the content-laden academic curriculum suggesting that the status of Entrepreneurship in the curriculum is still relatively unsophisticated in its pedagogic approach in many higher education institutions. This is a significant shortcoming since its inclusion might offer major advantages to the language development of IFP students who are preparing to enter universities as previously discussed. The third section of this paper explores ways in which academic tutors might think about approaching curricula to improve the language-Entrepreneurship relationship in Business and Management IFP.

Since the definition of Entrepreneurship is about creating value over and above obvious resources, we suggest that tutors teach using styles that emphasise the emotional nature of language and relationships, through what Lackéus (2014) terms 'trigger activities'. These triggers are essentially emotional reactions to specific incidents and events, some planned, such as formal learning activities, and some unplanned, such as informal experiences. One specific example of a trigger activity might be to use 'context-rich problems'. These are short and realistic scenarios giving the students a plausible motivation for solving the problem. For tutors in IFP this might necessitate for example, presenting detailed knowledge about the economic context of a start-up company from a student's home country, where students have to use emotional and linguistic intelligence to make decisions about the significance of background information to guide their strategy.

Another example of linking language and Entrepreneurship is to explicitly help students become familiar with the psycho-social language of significant terms within the definition of Entrepreneurship, such as organizational trust and rapport, authenticity, tolerance and legitimacy, and the ways in which these are understood at transnational level. For example, phrases such as 'adaptation to local culture' or 'building business relations' might be given to students, and they might be required both to dissect them for discursive as well as communicative significance. In all activities, a combination of language and relationship should be the focus of tutor activity, rather than any motivation to force 'entrepreneurial competencies', or separate specific vocabulary from its context. Such ideas are not new of course - they use a Vygotskian perspective on learning (Roth & Lee, 2007). Using emotional triggers and personal contexts to develop hands-on approaches to teaching transverse skills like Entrepreneurship has given rise to a concept termed 'effectuation' (Sarasvathy & Venkataraman, 2011), which suggests that purposefully taking action and consciously analysing events at an emotional level might be a powerful pedagogic strategy when teaching topics that require personal agency and where conflict is a major issue. It is certainly one that might be increasingly significant in the need for individual responsibility amongst students as we grapple with such complex issues as the economic, social and political impact of mass migration and climate change, increasingly salient topics for all Business and Management study in IFP.

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## 10 years in international pathways to Higher Education: a letter to celebrate a decade of the InForm journal

In 2007, I had a fleeting idea that it would be interesting to create a new forum through which we could provide opportunities for educators to share good practice, linked to the learning, teaching and student experience, which takes place on international pathways to Higher Education. At that point International Foundation Programmes were already well established on University campuses and new models in the private sector were increasingly common.

To take the idea forward, I applied for a small grant from the Teaching and Learning Development Fund at the University of Reading and, after a few weeks, I was surprised and encouraged to discover that my application had been successful.

At the point when the funding was granted, I envisaged that we would have about a year to share a limited series of articles with the sector, which might temporarily showcase the work of students and colleagues in the international pathways sector. However, I had no expectation that the forum would be so well received or that the impact of InForm would be so enduring.

Since 2008, there have been ten years of the InForm journal, which has resulted in more than 200 articles and 10 cross-sector conferences. InForm has provided a crucial forum for the exchange of internationally-attuned pedagogical practice at what is now known as level three, and which is thankfully no longer referred to as level 'zero' or level 'F'.

Over the last decade, the InForm journal has attracted articles from across the UK and beyond. The focus has revealed innovation across the disciplines of international education and in the core component of English for Academic Purposes, at this specific level. Most importantly, InForm has shone a spotlight on the academic and cultural contribution of these excellent students to university and the great work staff are doing in providing robust and effective international pathways to Higher Education.

I'm only too aware that my own work on InForm was mainly at the initial stages of the project's development and, as my own career has developed and my institutional affiliation has changed, I have been very conscious that colleagues at Reading and across the wider sector have been the ones who have ensured that the journal has continued to grow and flourish. Nevertheless, I'm proud to have retained a connection with InForm as an External Editor and was delighted to be invited to present at the 10th year conference in 2019. On that occasion, I was able to present on the themes of Quality and Innovation in International Pathways (Manning, 2018) and a recent project, conducted with the University Pathways Alliance (UPA) (Manning et al., 2018), which has sought to provide advice from international students to international students on Pathways to Success in UK Higher Education!

The platform which InForm has provided to educators and their students over the last ten years has exceeded all expectations and I look forward to seeing how this crucial area of education continues to express itself through this important forum, over the next decade.

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## This is a call for papers for Issue 20 of *InForm*

The submission of papers is now invited for the twentieth edition of *InForm* from members of the academic community associated with international foundation programmes. Issue 20 will be published in December 2020.

We are interested in articles related to the variety of academic disciplines commonly found across international foundation programmes and remind contributors that *InForm* is not predominantly an English language teaching journal. *InForm* also includes a letters page with readers' responses to the articles included in previous editions. Letters should be no longer than 200 words.

Journal articles (of no more than 1500 words) should be sent by email to [inform@reading.ac.uk](mailto:inform@reading.ac.uk) by 12.00 pm on 30 September 2020.

For more information and a full writer's guide please visit [www.reading.ac.uk/inform](http://www.reading.ac.uk/inform)

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