Enhancing Inclusivity in International Foundation Programmes

30 July 2022
Lecture Theatre 1.09
Palmer Building [see pg20 for map]
University of Reading
Welcome to the InForm Conference 2022

The International Foundation Programme at University of Reading is delighted to host this year’s conference. This will be the first hybrid conference since the pandemic and subsequently we’re keeping things simple; taking a more streamlined approach with only seven plenary sessions and four poster presentations.

The theme of this year’s conference, “Enhancing Inclusivity in International Foundation Programmes (IFP),” is timely and appropriate, reflecting IFPs’ changes and growth. According to the University of Reading’s Diversity and Inclusion 20-21 Annual Report, “inclusion refers to the behaviours and culture that ensure people feel welcome.” As a result, we hope that this conference will provide a forum for delegates to consider the behaviours and culture that ensure our students feel welcomed and have a sense of belonging. It’s an opportunity to discuss ideas for enhancing inclusivity in all aspects of teaching and learning. We should also explore drawing on the diverse backgrounds and experiences that students bring with them in order to better engage them with the ‘new’ knowledge we provide.

This year’s keynote address will be presented by Associate Professor Bruce Howell. Bruce’s experience at the Foundation Study and Language Institute (FSLI), Malaysia will provide valuable insights that could be applicable in your own teaching and learning contexts. Joining us at this conference are also representatives from major publishing houses who will be available to chat and display their latest publications during the breaks and over lunch. Please take this opportunity to mingle and meet with them. The talks and poster presentations showcase an array of excellent submissions which will address the conference’s theme from different perspectives and contexts.

We hope you will enjoy today’s presentations and they may inspire you to make some changes in your own practices.

Have a great conference!

Best Wishes

Dr Noor Mat Nayan
Chair of the InForm Editorial Board
# INFORM Conference 2022 programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Speaker(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08.50-09.15</td>
<td>Registration – Coffee and biscuits</td>
<td>Palmer Foyer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.15-09.25</td>
<td>Welcome and conference opening (all delegates)</td>
<td>Palmer 1.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.30-10.15</td>
<td>Inclusivity in British International Foundation Year Programme in Malaysia</td>
<td>Palmer 1.09</td>
<td>Associate Professor Bruce Howell, International Language and Study Institute, University of Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This session will explore the complexity of ensuring inclusivity in a UK-based IFP when it is delivered outside the UK. Suggestions will be made as to what IFP-specific inclusivity measures can most usefully be implemented in this scenario, based on experience of an international branch campus in Malaysia.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.20-10.50</td>
<td>Reflections on the importance of EDI practices for Foundation students in developing culturally responsive global citizens (Online)</td>
<td>Palmer 1.09</td>
<td>Nabila Shariff, University of Nottingham Malaysia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Students entering our Foundation/UG programmes often demonstrate little overall cultural and EDI awareness, skills that are needed in diverse workplaces. Student feedback on an EDI and cultural awareness 3 session pilot recently conducted further underlines the need to develop modules for EDI and cultural awareness. These skills are essential to becoming effective global citizens.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.50-11.15</td>
<td>Coffee and biscuits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.20-11.50</td>
<td>Tourism and Hospitality: A foundation module reconsidered to embrace ideas of decolonisation, inclusivity and sustainability</td>
<td>Palmer 1.09</td>
<td>Clare Stephens and Graham Van Wyk, Oxford Brookes University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>This talk outlines changes made to a business-focused Foundation module in Tourism and Hospitality in order to make it more multi-disciplinary. We have embraced notions of decolonisation, inclusivity and sustainability in line with wider university agendas. Small tweaks to a module can impact the students’ experience and world-view significantly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.55-12.25</td>
<td>Building inclusivity into IFP through the controversial topic of ‘Medical Marijuana’ (Online)</td>
<td>Palmer 1.09</td>
<td>Nancy Woods and Anne Stazicker, University of Leeds</td>
</tr>
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<td>The presentation will demonstrate how inclusivity was successfully achieved through the controversial topic of Medical Marijuana with cohorts of students from the Middle East. The aim being to familiarise learners with healthcare context-specific content and introduce culturally different viewpoints thus aiding their inclusion into academic study in their chosen fields.</td>
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### Lunch and Poster Presentations

| 12.25-13.25 Palmer Foyer | Increasing participation and inclusivity in peer review workshops in the post-pandemic classroom
Caltriona Johnson, Centre for Academic Language and Development, University of Bristol

This poster presentation will investigate why student interaction in peer review workshops has been negatively impacted by the pandemic. It will suggest a more tangible and inclusive framework to incentivize students to engage more actively with the process and develop their ability to both give and receive constructive peer feedback.

| 13.00-13.25 Palmer 1.09 | Scaffolding for Success: Strategies to enhance inclusive teaching practice in the internationalised classroom
Heather McClean, University for the Creative Arts

This poster presentation introduces a successful method to make teaching and learning more accessible both for international students and students with SpLDs. It explains how designing and implementing scaffolding strategies can facilitate communication and ensure meaning is understood.

Mekio Murayama, International Language and Study Institute, University of Reading

The poster will explore the impacts of lockdown on student engagement at the foundation level of study and reflect on what has been learned. As the full impacts of lockdown on students are still to be investigated, this poster will focus on sharing the problems faced over the past two years and provide a discussion platform to present ideas and measures to enhance inclusive learning experiences for students in the coming years. Data is derived from modules at the University of Reading.

| 13.30-14.00 Palmer 1.09 | EAP Students’ Views on their Reading Strategies: An exploratory study using the Fogg Behaviour Model
Heather McClean, University for the Creative Arts

How can we help students to change inefficient strategies from prior learning and give everyone the best foundation for university studies? This poster introduces my research into students’ use of reading strategies with the framework of the Fogg Behaviour Model, showing how simple changes can promote positive behaviours.

| 13.45-14.15 Palmer 1.09 | Reflections on the introduction of an Accessibility Reporting Form as a means of widening disability inclusion and combating preconceptions
Daniel Devane, International Language and Study Institute, University of Reading

Covid-19 and the move to flipped learning has led to increasing digitalisation of materials. IFP students are often reluctant to admit difficulties and disabilities. An Accessibility Reporting Form provides a means of reporting issues whilst mitigating any linguistic, cultural, or historic preconceptions that prevent students from identifying and voicing their needs.

| 14.05-14.35 Palmer 1.09 | Ensuring inclusive and accessible assessment for students with special needs on foundation programmes
Peter Davidson, Zayed University

This presentation presents a case study on how our foundation programme ensures equal access to fair language assessment for students with special needs through a number of innovative accommodations including: changes to the testing environment; adaptation of testing materials; the use of assistive technologies; and the use of Blackboard Ally.

| 14.35-15.00 Palmer 1.09 | Coffee and biscuits

| 15.05-15.35 Palmer 1.09 | Enhancing Inclusivity in IFP: Innovating with academic language and literacy pedagogy in the language classroom
Jill Haldane, University of Edinburgh

Innovative pedagogy in the language classroom on Edinburgh’s IFP acknowledges diversification, equitable opportunities and cultural inclusivity as key to enhancing academic potential. Academic language and literacy approaches to the vocabulary strand in the English for Academic Purposes course will showcase multi-modality as conduit for greater negotiation and co-construction of practices.

| 15.40-16.10 Palmer 1.09 | Is collaboration for all? An Investigation into group work in post-Covid EAP IFP classrooms
Fiona Hartley and Cathy Faulkner, Centre for Academic Language and Development, University of Bristol

Coming from a social constructivist view of learning, where collaboration plays a key role in building knowledge in the language classroom through the negotiation of meaning, being met with silence in the face-to-face classroom encouraged the researchers to investigate why this was the case.

| 16.15-16.45 | Conference Close
Bruce Howell
Associate Professor, International Language and Study Institute, University of Reading

Inclusivity in British International Foundation Year Programme in Malaysia

Inclusivity at a university or other educational institution is a concept that most will understand in general, but definitions can vary depending on the exact context. Inclusivity is nothing new to IFPs, as they function to bring people from different backgrounds together. However, the nature of student backgrounds changes over time, as do societal norms and expectations. The inclusivity concept can overlap with others such as engagement, diversity, equity and so on, but my aim is not to try define ‘inclusivity for IFPs’. Rather, I will use the case study of the University of Reading’s IFP delivered in Malaysia to present practical suggestions on IFP-specific inclusivity measures in that particular context.

After highlighting some relevant research and experience, including from InForm’s back catalogue, descriptions and justifications of measures taken at the Malaysia campus will be given, showing differences from the UK-based IFP. Among the highlights are: welcoming students to their new environment; inclusive teaching approaches; student voice and representation; appropriate social or cultural events, and, vitally, staff training.

There is no simple solution to ensuring inclusivity in every IFP, but many ideas can be shared. It is hoped that this case study illustration can be useful to compare with other scenarios and be a spark for developing appropriate measures in other contexts.

Biography
Bruce Howell (SFHEA) is an Associate Professor in Language Assessment and is currently Head of External Engagement at the International Study and Language Institute (ISLI), University of Reading. He has nearly 20 years’ experience in university work during which time he has taught EAP (English for Academic Purposes), designed and written EAP assessments, led bespoke short courses, and convened ‘English for Science’ modules. From 2017 to 2021 he headed the Foundation Study and Language Institute (FSLI) department at the University of Reading Malaysia campus, which involved leading 15 lecturers delivering Reading’s international foundation year modules, while also leading on campus-wide international projects such as student mobility and international partnerships.

Reflections on the importance of EDI practices for Foundation students in developing culturally responsive global citizens (Online)

The session will begin by presenting the main concepts/definitions of EDI, cultural and emotional awareness and importance to students in tertiary educational institutions. There will also be a brief introduction of the Nottingham Advantage Award programme, its main objectives, which are to enhance student employability by offering modules that allow students to develop skills that they will need as future graduates and employees, and its relevance to the EDI pilot sessions that were conducted.

A brief explanation of the EDI pilot that was conducted for all students will be given. This included all three Nottingham campuses: UK, Malaysia, China. A sample of content from the pilot will be outlined before displaying student feedback and review of the sessions post pilot and what implications this has.

Finally, reflection on the limitations and possible drawbacks will be outlined.
Tourism and Hospitality: A foundation module reconsidered to embrace ideas of decolonisation, inclusivity and sustainability

We have recently taken ownership of a level 3 (Foundation) module called Tourism and Hospitality, designed for Business students and previously covering topics such as Economics, Marketing, and the role of intermediaries. However, our take-over has coincided with two initiatives within the Pathways Team and the wider Business School:

1. Embedding Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
2. Decolonizing the curriculum

the above in mind, we have rewritten this module to move away from the aforementioned business-focus to one that is more multidisciplinary, embracing sustainability and inclusiveness. Our hope is that this revised module might act as an exemplar for other Foundation lecturers on a similar journey.

Learning outcomes were first revised in line with our new agenda. New topics were added to the syllabus and other topics removed. One new topic is on the Tourist Gaze. Urry’s (2018) seminal work on this is broadened to take in gazes beyond those of the British tourist. How might Cohen’s (2016) tourist typology be reconstructed to include those on the margins?

Assessments have also been modified. Whereas in the previous iteration of this module, students were asked to present a proposal for a 2-day tour of any kind for a designated market, we have asked them to pitch a new tourist destination or attraction/ activity which could involve volunteering or staying at a social enterprise/environmentally responsible resort among other things, underlining a different narrative.

The above changes have received positive feedback from our students and created a more discursive and inclusive atmosphere in the classroom.

Anne Stazicker, University of Leeds

11:55 – 12:25

Building inclusivity into IFP through the controversial topic of ‘Medical Marijuana’ (Online)

This presentation will argue that inclusivity can be achieved through topic choices which acculturate international students to specific academic and western cultural expectations, conventions and requirements through guided practice and the creation of ‘safe spaces’ for overcoming ‘learning shock’. Study Skills modules should provide opportunities for students’ voices to be heard, cultural differences and prior learning experiences to be shared, explored and discussed in order to facilitate inclusivity.

Our presentation will use the topic of ‘medical marijuana’ show how materials and classroom exercises and management choices shaped and, in some cases, transformed IFY students’ thinking on the Academic Study Skills for Medicine, Dentistry and Healthcare Professionals module at the University of Leeds, Language Centre. The aim of using this topic was not to enforce a particular viewpoint but rather equip students with sufficient information to understand perspectives other than their own, and to critically evaluate their own standpoints or preconceptions.

We will show how a guest lecturer, medical case studies and scenarios contributed to students’ knowledge about the use or non-use of marijuana in healthcare contexts and that by introducing materials from their specific field of study; such as medical ethics policies and processes, unconscious bias awareness raising exercises, and investigation of university policies on mutual dignity and respect, multiple opportunities were provided to the cohorts for principled discussion and debate. This approach meant that students were introduced to aspects of their chosen disciplines, familiarising them with context-specific content and thereby aiding their inclusion into their chosen fields.

Nancy Woods, University of Leeds

12:25 – 13:25

Lunch and Poster Presentations
Palmer Foyer
Increasing participation and inclusivity in peer review workshops in the post-pandemic classroom

This poster presentation will display an action research project which aims to address the lack of engagement with peer review workshops in the post-pandemic classroom. The current approach, which relies heavily on social constructivism and expects students to be able to interact confidently with each other from the start of the course, excludes many international students who are not familiar with this more Westernized approach to teaching.

Different approaches to structuring these workshops will be suggested before inviting further contributions from the audience, opening up a discussion about how to scaffold learner autonomy so that responsibility for engaging effectively with peer review moves from the teacher to the student (Alexander et al, 2008). The data collected so far from surveys, a focus group and student interviews confirm the need for a more tangible and inclusive framework in order to promote learner autonomy.

Therefore, the findings presented will suggest ways to incentivize students to participate more actively in peer review, so that they develop their ability to engage in multiple acts of evaluative judgement without the guidance of the teacher (Nicol, Thomson and Breslin, 2014). The proposed framework aims to make peer feedback practices more inclusive for all international students by considering cultural differences and previous educational experiences. It also includes how to make the rationale for peer review more explicit earlier on in the course so that foundation students understand the value of this highly important and transferable academic skill prior to progressing to their chosen disciplines.

Scaffolding for Success: Strategies to enhance inclusive teaching practice in the internationalised classroom

Typically, language entry requirements on an International Foundation Programme (IFP) are not sufficient for students to be autonomous learners. According to the British Council (2019), students need a level of IELTS 7.0 to be fully autonomous. Entry requirements for an IFP are often set at IELTS 4.5 to 5.5. Consequently, international students with less than IELTS 7.0 need a significant level of support from academic staff in order to do well.

Experienced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers have a wealth of strategies for simplifying and clarifying content for students with limited language skills and making sure that course material is accessible for all learners. One of the key theories underpinning EFL teaching is Vygotsky’s (1978) theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which posits that with guidance and support from a tutor, learners can succeed at tasks which would normally be just outside their capability. This means that with scaffolded support, students can achieve more than they would be able to by themselves.

This poster presentation describes a simple method of making speaking and writing tasks more accessible for IFP students, therefore making the course more inclusive. It outlines a successful collaborative project between English for Academic Purposes lecturers and IFP lecturers which has led to greatly improved student outcomes.
Polarised engagement: Challenges of inclusive learning experiences and a widening learning gap among Covid-19 lockdown students

There is a real danger that the lockdown environment, derived from the Covid-19 pandemic, has facilitated a shift from students becoming more independent learners, in preparation for university life, to what can be termed a state of ‘collapsed discipline’ for some. It has become clear that, while a small number of students have achieved excellent results in the past two years, on the other hand a significant group of students have shown a deterioration in academic activity and performance. A small number of students have learnt to become more independent learners and yet this ‘thrive’ group was accompanied however by significantly larger ‘survive’ group in the cohorts under study here – that is to say their studies deteriorated. A considerable number of students’ attendance worsened, producing weaker or zero-graded academic results, there were more mental health issues arising, and other factors too such as family bereavement have been cited. These impacted individually and on group working. Some poor behaviour patterns in classroom have also been noted. This combination seems also to have affected stronger students’ learning experiences, especially in group project settings.

The challenges of dealing with poor engagement is not a new problem at the foundation programme level but lockdown has magnified the issues and raised them to a more serious level. Furthermore, extra time required to deal with these issues have impacted on staff who have already been faced with an increasing workload. There is also a concern that the absorption of hybrid forms could perpetuate some of the issues in a proportion of students. How can we close these gaps to achieve more inclusive learning experiences for students and in a context of limited resources? We may face a continuous flow of these challenges for the next several years, i.e., until lockdown students re-learn discipline, re-build mental health and develop as independent learners. The poster will present the issues and ideas for discussion as well as potential solutions.

References


My research used the FBM to understand why students adopt inefficient reading strategies. Eight semi-structured interviews were conducted with pre-seasonal EAP students about their use of reading strategies. The findings show that these students are aware of reading strategies and are motivated and triggered to use them, but face limitations in terms of ability factors (vocabulary, time limits and topic knowledge).

Based on these results, a simple way to promote positive behaviours is to reduce ability barriers (e.g., improving topic-specific vocabulary, increasing time limits), rather than increasing motivation. One of the key takeaway is that courses based on the FBM principles do not even have to include a motivation component, since the model predicts that behaviour can still happen if it is easy to adopt. In other words, students do not need high levels of motivation if the behaviour is made easy to perform.

References


Reflections on the introduction of an Accessibility Reporting Form as a means of widening disability inclusion and combating preconceptions

All students have the right to equal and fair access to materials and learning opportunities as part of their programmes of study. However, whether it be due to linguistic, cultural, or historic preconceptions, barriers to that access can often be exacerbated and left unresolved.

COVID-19, and the growing move towards flipped learning remaining in place, has led to increasing digitalisation of materials across many IFP modules. Experience has shown that IFP students, due to the aforementioned preconceptions, are often reluctant to admit to their difficulties and, diagnosed or non-diagnosed, disabilities (Baxter & Mahoney, 2018), often from a preconception that they will be negatively labelled if they do. This can lead to a potentially detrimental impact on their engagement, learning, and progression.

A lot of digital issues, especially with materials, can be easily and quickly rectified if staff are made aware of them. An Accessibility Reporting Form (ARF) enables students to report any issues they encounter regarding the availability and digital accessibility of learner resources/learning materials for their modules. It also gives students the option to remain anonymous. A submitted ARF allows instructors to design out any unnecessary barriers that make it harder to engage and take part in learning activities. Therefore, in response to the preconceptions that prevent students from vocalising their struggles, it removes the ‘fear of being identified’ and gives all students equal access and opportunity to have their struggles voiced, improved, and resolved whilst minimising potential linguistic, cultural, and historic conflict (Taylor & Mote, 2021).

This session will provide an overview of the context and origin of the Accessibility Reporting Form (ARF); highlight the benefits of an ARF for staff and students; summarise the provisions / learning materials for their modules. It also gives students the option to remain anonymous. A submitted ARF allows instructors to design out any unnecessary barriers that make it harder to engage and take part in learning activities. Therefore, in response to the preconceptions that prevent students from vocalising their struggles, it removes the ‘fear of being identified’ and gives all students equal access and opportunity to have their struggles voiced, improved, and resolved whilst minimising potential linguistic, cultural, and historic conflict (Taylor & Mote, 2021).

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References


Ensuring inclusive and accessible assessment for students with special needs on foundation programmes

All students, including those with physical disabilities and learning disorders, have the fundamental right to be granted equal access to fair assessment that does not disadvantage them in any way. However, this is by no means an easy task—it requires backing from senior administrators, careful strategic planning, significant resource allocation, technical expertise, and comprehensive teacher training and monitoring.

This presentation presents a case study on how our foundation programme attempts to ensure equal access to fair language assessment for students with special needs through a number of innovative accommodations. We provide a brief overview of some of the physical disabilities and learning disorders that special needs students may have have (McCrea, 2009). We then move on to describe the accommodations that are offered to our students with physical disabilities and learning disorders to ensure that they are not disadvantaged in any way. These accommodations include changes to the testing environment, adaptation of testing materials, the use of assistive technologies such as braille and screen readers, and the use of Blackboard Ally.

We conclude by discussing how we attempt to ensure that validity and reliability are not compromised when we offer these accommodations to our students with special needs. The accommodations that we offer help to create a level playing field for our students with physical disabilities and learning disorders, ensuring greater inclusivity and accessibility, and significantly enriching their educational experience.
Enhancing Inclusivity in IFP: Innovating with academic language and literacy pedagogy in the language classroom

Maximising academic potential and enhancing the study and university experience are quoted as the objectives of the policy on Accessible and Inclusive Learning at Edinburgh (Learning and Teaching Committee, 2013). To achieve the aim of learning and teaching that is dynamic, accessible and inclusive, the Foundation English for Academic Purposes (FEAP) course has developed innovations in approaches to pedagogy for IFP students. Positively, EAP practices orient students to academic conventions; they raise awareness of disciplinary discourse features; and they assist in organising, selecting and developing ideas. (Haldane and Davies, 2022). Yet, EAP is critiqued for its uni-directionality in teacher-student relations, and the notion of communities of practice in ‘stable disciplines’ (Kress, 2007). In short, it could be inadequate in the diverse internationalised language classroom.

Accordingly, a modelling pedagogy – academic language and literacy – integrates Academic Literacies’ (AL) critical approaches to language and literacy socialisation with EAP approaches to effect greater inclusivity in learning and teaching on FEAP. This presentation covers how an academic language and literacy approach to the vocabulary strand of the FEAP course can diversify experiences with language in dynamic and multi-modal genres that are inclusive of multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary cohorts on the IFP. It will show how Academic Vocabulary in Literacy (AVIL) facilitates students to engage in communicative practices, while negotiating and co-constructing disciplinary practices in a safe space. The implication of enhanced flexibility, equity and transition are foundational to the pathway for students’ meaningful experiences when progressing to undergraduate study.

References
We invite academics involved in international foundation programmes and pathways to submit a paper for the 22nd edition of InForm.

InForm
CALL FOR PAPERS

We are looking for articles on a wide range of academic disciplines that are commonly found in international foundation programmes and pathways, particularly those that address the theme of this year’s conference: Enhancing Inclusivity in International Foundation Programmes.

In addition to the standard journal articles of no more than 1500 words, we also have the Exchange Section, which contains articles that are more reflective and shorter in length (no more than 1000 words).

The deadline is 12th September 2022. All papers should be sent via email to inform@reading.ac.uk

For more information and a full writer’s guide, or to discuss an article idea, please email us at inform@reading.ac.uk
INFORM CONFERENCE 2022

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