



University of  
Reading

Issue 22 March 2023

# *InForm*

A journal for International Foundation Programme professionals

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How can we best  
research WITH  
International  
Students?

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A foundation module in  
Tourism & Hospitality  
reconfigured to  
embrace notions  
of sustainability,  
inclusivity and  
decolonization

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Enhancing inclusion  
by addressing  
international students'  
preconceptions around  
self-declaration via  
the introduction of an  
Accessibility Reporting  
Form (ARF)

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Simple strategies for  
supporting dyslexic  
learners

This issue:

**Enhancing inclusivity on IFPs**



## The changing nature and expectations of students in a changing world: transforming and being transformed

We are pleased to announce that the InForm 2023 Conference will be held at the University of Bristol.

The aim of this conference is to bring together a collection of research and ideas related to the International Foundation and Pathway programmes (IFP) as well as providing an opportunity for interacting and sharing practice with colleagues from the wider IFP community.

**Saturday 3 June 2023**

Venue: **University of Bristol**

**Conference fee: £70 in person**

**Conference fee: £35 online**



We welcome presentations and proposals related to the theme. To submit a proposal, please use the **speaker proposal form**, and/or register via email at **inform-conference2023@bristol.ac.uk**

Proposal deadline:  
**24 March 2023**

### InForm

Issue 22 | March 2023

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Cathy Faulkner  
Gemma Peacock  
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# WELCOME



**Matthew Tolley**

Chair of the InForm  
Editorial Board

Welcome to the 22nd issue of InForm. This year there have been some changes to the InForm editorial board. I have taken over from Noor Mat Nayan as the Chair for the year. Our board also grew, with Daniel Devane, Cathy Faulkner, Gemma Peacock and Brian Turner joining Liz Wilding, Anthony Manning and Nina-Anne Lawrence.

## From the editorial board...

Issue 22 of InForm continues from the 2022 InForm Conference 'Enhancing Inclusivity in International Foundation Programmes', which was hosted by the University of Reading on 30 July. Bruce Howell's keynote address explored the complexities of ensuring inclusivity in a UK-based IFP delivered outside the UK. Many of the presenters from the conference have successfully written articles for this issue, once again showing the opportunities the conference provides for publication. The papers that have been chosen describe various aspects of enhancing inclusivity for our IFP students, including critical thinking, module design and accessibility.

Our first paper, written by Anna Tranter, puts forward the case for rethinking student involvement in research. Rather than treating students as subjects of the research, Anna discusses the impact of student-staff partnership and other creative research methods in order to shift the current power imbalance. Anna features again in our second article with colleague Amy Stickels and two students: Daniel E Marquez and Hongrui Ouyang. This student and staff co-written article demonstrates how students can be involved in and contribute to research. We welcome more student-staff partnerships in the coming issues. The next two articles present action research focusing on maximising student engagement and interaction. Cathy Faulkner and Fiona Hartley look at reasons why students may intentionally choose not to actively engage in discussions. This is followed by Catriona Johnson, who focuses on student engagement with peer review, drawing on Carless and Boud's (2018) features of student literacy. Anne Stazicker and Nancy Woods then discuss the value of using controversial topics to enhance critical thinking – medical marijuana with medical students, in this case. Article six sees Dr Helena Reis Batalha present findings and reflections on a discrimination in science seminar. Clare Stephens and Graham Van Wyk provide an account of how they redesigned and decolonised an inherited Tourism and Hospitality module, with a focus on sustainability and inclusivity. Jill Haldane then compares a typical English for Academic Purposes model with Academic Language and Literacies, and describes the effects of the University of Edinburgh's Academic Vocabulary in Literacy course. Finally, Daniel Devane introduces the use and impact of an Accessibility Reporting Form which enables students to anonymously report any accessibility issues without worries of perceived stigmas.

The InForm Exchange section starts with Alan Kean, who builds on Michael Groves' article from Issue 19 about machine translation. Alan argues the case for more open discussion around how it can enhance student learning. Next, Nabila Shariff Al-Baiti touches on a similar theme as Clare and Graham: students as culturally aware citizens. Nabila describes a workshop series and how it enhanced students' EDI knowledge and practices. The penultimate article by Emma Hamilton shows measures for supporting dyslexic students in their learning rather than just providing Reasonable Adjustment Plans. The final article, written by Brian Turner, is a reflection on his transition from teaching so-called international students to home students and the necessity of rapport building.

We hope you will enjoy reading the selection of articles in this issue and we thank the authors for contributing and sharing their work with InForm.

Additionally, we are happy to announce that this year's InForm Conference will be hosted by the University of Bristol on 3 June 2023. The theme of the conference is 'The changing nature and expectations of students in a changing world: transforming and being transformed'. The conference will be hybrid allowing face-to-face sessions as well as online participation for those who cannot attend in person. We invite you to register either as a presenter or participant. For more information, please see the enclosed advert inside the front cover.

To submit an article for the next InForm issue, please email [inform@reading.ac.uk](mailto:inform@reading.ac.uk).

# How can we best research WITH International Students?

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*This article questions how we can decolonise our research methods and use more creative methods to enhance inclusivity and empowerment, and work 'with' our international foundation students rather than conducting research "on" our international foundation students.*

## Introduction

The purpose of educational research should be about engaging with the voices of teachers and learners to inform educational practice. Therefore, when we plan research with international foundation students, it is important to consider how best we engage with them, bearing in mind that conventional research methods such as questionnaires, interviews and focus groups, are established on Western colonial ways of acquiring knowledge (Gobo, 2011). For example, interviews are considered an "outright cultural product and not merely a research technique" (Silverman, 2000, p.89). Interviews are not universal, neutral or cultural-free; the interviewees need to understand the unwritten rules and sociological conditions of the process (Gobo, 2011). Students need to have the ability to express themselves freely, to be able to link thoughts and language, to understand the rituals of interviews and be confident to express their own views to someone who they may perceive as having a higher social standing than them.

One of the provocations of researching with international foundation students is one of challenging the deficit model. They are often seen as not having the cultural capital or the linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 2010) to fully engage. Therefore, we need to ensure we are utilising research methods that are inclusive and appropriate for our students.

## Decolonisation of research methods

We need to pursue the decolonisation of research methods in a reflexive manner and ensure we effectively engage with and 'hear' the voices of our students. It is also important not fall into the trap of 'tokenistic decolonisation', which "may even reaffirm colonial structures due to not taking radical

action" (Moosavi, 2020, p.349). A suggestion from Kara (2020) is that we should first decolonise ourselves as researchers and each of us is able to "identify and understand our own ontological and epistemological positions" (Kara, 2020, p.59). By doing so, our own positionality and approach to research may change, but surely this is a good thing, as our research will be more inclusive and more ethical. Maybe the researcher should be the one who is discomforted by the methodology rather than the participants?

## The issue of power imbalance

Power imbalance is a recurring theme within educational research and pertinent when working with international students, who may have experienced didactic teacher centre education. Participatory research may be a possible solution, as it sets out to empower and improve outcomes for the benefit of the community. The community of international foundation students can be involved in every step of the research process, from research design through to data analysis and beyond. The advantage of this approach is that it may support students to work together better as a community, which will potentially mitigate some of the isolation fears identified by international students. It may also enhance students' assertiveness, self-efficacy, and negotiations skills. However, this poses questions as to whether international foundation students are a community and are we doing them a disservice by grouping them together as one community? Students from the same country may well have had a very different educational journey before they reach us.

Co-production of research goes one step further giving students equal power within the research, enabling researchers and students to learn from each other. International students

are 'experts of their experience', so to engage them in the co-creation of research will not only improve the student experience and strengthen their sense of belonging but will improve the educational research process and outcomes.

### Creative research methods

We should consider using more creative research methods, which involve participants engaging in a range of ethnographical encounters, where they can be observed and heard, to analyse both the verbal and non-verbal responses to the situation. Such methods are a great way to conduct intraviews rather than interviews, using a conversational approach rather than questions and answers. "While the interview is based on the assumption that it takes two to tell the truth, the intraview hinges for its effect on the power of introspection" Walker (1985, p.149).

Walking intraviews have been shown to reverse this conventional power dynamic between the researchee and the researcher (Hughes et al, 2014, p.11), and as such helps to decolonise the interview process. The act of walking encouraging the wandering of thoughts (Kuntz and Presnall, 2012) and enables students, who may be speaking in a second language, to have more time to formulate what they want to say. All of which are likely to create richer qualitative data.

Listening rooms as a method, where students are given prompt cards and their conversations are recorded, within a safe and trusted space, is another example of an inclusive research method. The absence of the researcher enables students to openly share their experiences without interruptions and without adverse power dynamics, going some way to negate students' sense of having to say the 'correct' thing. Heron (2020, p.407) concluded "the method provides us with a meaningful window into the lives of students, as defined and explained by students". The conversation legitimises the everyday life of the students, with students co-creating the knowledge.

Creative methods have the potential to be more inclusive and more ethical. However, we must exercise caution, creative methods may be appealing in themselves, but it is essential that the methodological context of the research question is addressed, and a suitable methodology is chosen, which not only

addresses the research question but meets the needs of our international students. We need to listen to their defining moments during their time here in the UK, and by doing so, try to understand what we need to improve and how. We need to slow down the gathering of inclusive data, to truly involve our students and not just to bolt on a 'tick box' to claim we have carried out culturally integrated research.

### Final thoughts

International foundation students are a valuable part of our community. We need to ensure that educational research is fully inclusive and continue to deliver a student experience suitable for everyone, whilst hopefully inspiring the next generation of researchers. We need to embrace more creative, participatory, and co-produced research methods, even though creative research methods are not always recognised as valid forms of knowledge creation by Euro-Western audiences (Kara, 2020).

We need to challenge potential ethical barriers surrounding our research and the inclusion of our international foundation students and deficit model thinking that may be portrayed. Creative research methods are not prescriptive, there is not a one size fits all, they should be iterative and dynamic. As teachers of international foundation students, we are the ones best placed to embrace any number of participatory research methodologies and experiment, to enable the voices of our students to be heard, for them to own their own data and for the research to be mutually beneficial.

We need to be prepared to share the outcome of our research with our students, in a way that is inclusive. The research process and the results of the research should impact positively on their student experience, remembering that if our research has been undertaken inclusively and ethically, this is more important than the outcome of the research itself.

The POP toolkit does not aim to be prescriptive, but aims to open the door to ESD competencies and pedagogy and tease out purposeful contributions to creating a sustainable future over a broad range of teaching and learning contexts. ESD pedagogy in many ways is just good pedagogy, but it has the added orientation of pedagogy to do good: pedagogy with purpose.

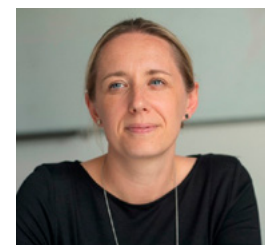
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# Co-created Gamification

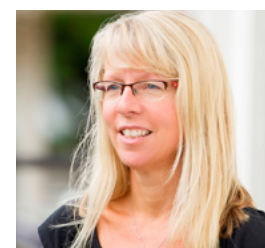
## — A student and teacher co-written article

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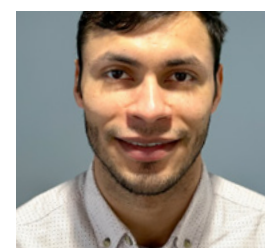
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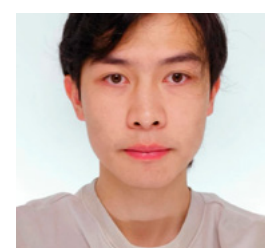
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*Gamification is an increasingly popular pedagogy. Gamification was enhanced by empowering international students to take on the challenge of co-creating their own quizzes. In the true spirit of co-creation, this article has been written by both students and teachers working together on the Warwick International Foundation Program (IFP), to explore introducing co-created gamification into the classroom.*

### Introduction

Gamification is defined as "use of game design elements within non-game contexts" (Deterding, Dixon, Khaled & Nacke, 2011, p.1). The use of gamification focuses on students being motivated, engaged and having fun, meaning that learning is more meaningful and effective (deMarcos et al, 2017). However, others see gamification as a distraction which ignores learners' pedagogical needs, with competition causing students additional stress (Rabah et al. 2018).

Traditionally gamification is used to encourage interaction with teaching materials. On an IFP it has the added benefit of enabling interactions between students to develop their self-efficacy in preparation for undergraduate study. However, we felt that we could enhance this further through co-creation, with "students becoming more active participants in the learning process, constructing understanding and resources with academic staff" (Bovill and Felten, 2016, p.197). We designed a simple intervention combining the positive benefits of gamification on student engagement, with the independence and confidence building from student co-creating.

This research explores what happened when students were empowered and challenged to co-create their own gamification within the IFP classroom, enabling education to become 'done with' and not 'done to' students. Having co-presented the research with students at a conference, we co-wrote this article as a partnership approach, to build and share power (Wegener and Tanggaard, 2013).

### The Intervention

On the Warwick IFP, during 2021-22, students experienced blended learning with one pre-recorded lecture and three one-hour small group seminars per module each week. Within the first seminar of the week students wrote quiz questions and answers, of their choice based on the pre-recorded lecture. For example, following a lecture on motivation theories, students then wrote questions ranging from multi choice questions on identifying key words to true or false questions about application of motivation theory.

The teacher collated the questions, making minor amendments where necessary and then uploaded them to a Kahoot! quiz. In the final seminar of the week, students played Kahoot! against each other, enabling them to review their learning.

Kahoot! was chosen for its gamified elements, as it is bright, easy to access and uses leader boards. The system also allows students to play using their own name or use a pseudonym if they prefer anonymity.

### Evaluation

Two of our student co-creators identified the following themes, which are triangulated with teacher evaluation sought via a questionnaire (response rate: 79%) and a focus group of nine students.



Participation

As a student, writing my own quiz questions made me concentrate more on the lesson because the teacher said that whoever wrote the most difficult question would get a chance to win a prize. Thus, driven by my competitive nature and a desire to be better than my peers, I would concentrate more on the lessons to avoid being surpassed by my classmates. On the contrary, I felt more encouraged and supported by peers when revising and clarifying the question, even if I answered wrong. I think it was a fun challenge to stay focused but was also rewarding to take pride when winning the quiz.

Teacher evaluation showed all students always or nearly always joined in with the quizzes (see Figure 1), suggesting a positive impact on inclusivity. Students within our classrooms come from a variety of nationalities, with incoming IELTS ranging from 5.5 overall to native speakers. One of the early assumptions was that there could be barriers to students participating, however analysis of the questionnaire demonstrated no barriers in respect of gender, English language ability or learning needs.

In the questionnaire, students were asked what they liked about taking part, with many citing the fun atmosphere it created (figure 2). However, some students sometimes experienced difficulties with the length of time given to answer, "it gives me pressure ...and makes me nervous."

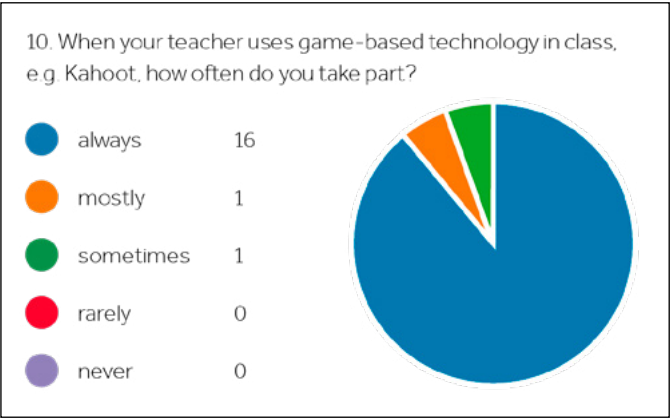


Figure 1: Frequency of taking part in the quizzes.



Figure 2: Word cloud "What do you like about the use of Kahoot!?"

Re-enforced knowledge and understanding

Game-based learning and co-created questions were novel ways for me (as a student) to learn. During class, when I wrote my own questions, I could revisit and reinforce the memory of the content of the lectures. In playing the game, my classmates' questions might cover things I did not know or needed to remember. The fact that the teacher was able to explain when and why students got the question wrong, really helped me understand more.

Overall, in the questionnaire students rated their learning from the intervention as an average of 4 out of 5. Furthermore, teachers noticed the quality of the English construction

as well as the conceptual difficulty of questions increased – from predominantly recall and knowledge-based to application questions, suggesting greater confidence in their learning. The submission of questions enabled teachers to formatively check understanding and amend where necessary. The quiz itself identified any misconceptions, where multiple students answered incorrectly, giving an opportunity for clarification of the correct answer.

Use of leader boards

Contrary to research (Majuri et al, 2018) students appeared to enjoy the competition and the use of leader boards, rather than finding them demoralising. Teachers noticed that students placed in the top three were different students each week. As students were writing their own questions, they were pitched at the right level, giving all students an opportunity to answer and win.

As a student, I liked the leader boards and competing with my classmates. It is important for me to finish in the top three because it is more than a test of what I have learned. The use of leader boards also increased my confidence and provided motivation to continue studying.

Increased interaction

When I forgot a point when I was writing my own questions, I would ask my classmates around me for help. They were all very patient in answering, and I think this increased the interaction between classmates and kept the class active. I liked the fact that it removed the distrust that sometimes exists between students and teacher, and between peers, enhancing communication and competitiveness.

As teachers, it was noticeable that there was a real sense of comradery, with students trying to guess who had written which question. In the focus group, students commented on the sense of belonging that co-creation had, "...makes me feel part of the lesson."

Anonymity

In the focus group, students liked choosing between using their own name or not. One commented, "I like the flexibility of using my name or choosing another – we are all different!" One-third of students alternated between using their own name and a pseudonym (figure 3). As IFP teachers, we were expecting students to reference "loss of face" as a reason for either non-participation or for preferring anonymity. It is significant, therefore, that this was never mentioned.

As a student, I preferred to use my real name instead of a nickname because I wanted to show my teachers how well I had done in the quizzes, and I wanted my efforts to be recognised. However, I think the right to choose was the best thing. It was exciting keeping your identity secret when you had the lead, everyone was curious about it. Then you could take pride when revealing yourself as the winner and show off. It was liked the masked singer unveiling!

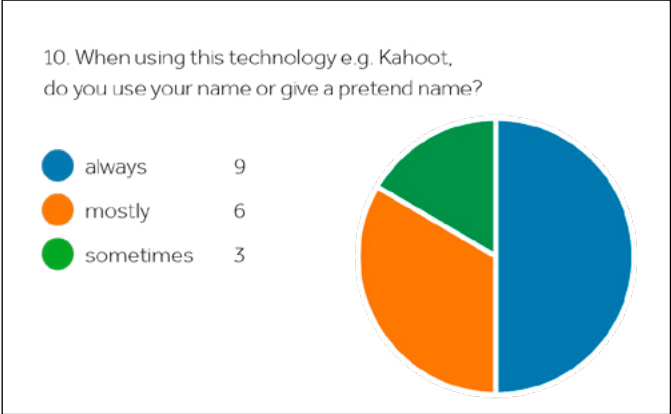


Figure 3: Use of name during Kahoot

Feeling valued

As teachers, an unexpected outcome of the intervention was the increased value it gave to students. As a student, I felt valued by my teacher and boosted my confidence and enthusiasm for the subject as the teacher not only allowed me to write my own questions, but also did not change my questions. In the past, writing questions belongs to the teacher, now the power was being shared with us. I also felt valued by my teacher, I was participating and creating content to be imparted to the rest of the class.

Conclusion

Empowering IFP students to co-create quizzes has many advantages in terms of motivation, engagement and learning for both students and teachers. Students felt that by co-creating they were playing a game not being tested. Students were engaged and motivated, as one student said they were creating and not just learning. They felt valued and identified a greater sense of community within the classroom. Teachers felt the intervention gave them greater opportunities for formative feedback. Teachers could gauge the understanding of the class and were able to clarify any misunderstandings as they occurred, explaining why an answer was correct or not. Overall, the integration of co-created gamification was a simple yet effective intervention.

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# Is collaboration for all? An investigation into groupwork in the EAP classroom

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*In an attempt to understand the disconcerting silence when IFP students were asked to participate in discussion tasks in the face-to-face EAP classroom, a small-scale action research project was conducted. Interpretative analysis of data from a survey and six semi-structured interviews with students enabled the identification of the following five themes: previous educational background, cultural background, maturity, technology, and course design. Results indicated that collaboration is not necessarily for all, but given the expectations of undergraduate degree programmes, interventions were designed to equip students with the necessary discussion skills in order to increase verbal interaction.*

## Introduction

A reduction of active collaboration in IFP classrooms has been anecdotally reported across the University of Bristol's Centre for Academic Language and Development (CALD) and more widely across the sector. It was certainly observed in the authors' International Foundation Programme (IFP) English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classes in 2021–2022. With social constructivism as a personal philosophy of learning and an underpinning theory at CALD, and collaboration one of the six guiding principles of the centre, the authors found it disconcerting to witness laptops being passed back and forth when students were completing tasks in class, rather than meaning being negotiated verbally. This raised the question of whether collaborative knowledge building is, in fact, for everyone. Are collaborative interactive tasks inclusive? Do they enable all to 'feel seen and valued' and able to 'work to their full potential' (Andrews, 2021) or are practitioners excluding IFP students by expecting them to engage in such tasks? Furthermore, considering the expectations of progression degrees, what should be done about this? A small-scale action research project was conducted to investigate further.

## Methodology

Having decided on a mixed-methods approach, a survey consisting of nineteen questions was given to forty-five IFP students, twenty-three of whom responded. These were aged between sixteen and twenty-six and were from eleven different countries.

The mixture of open-ended and closed questions addressed participants' understanding of the purpose of working collaboratively, their feelings towards it, level of participation, whether they wished to increase that participation, and any barriers to doing so. They were also asked about prior experience of groupwork, their role in the EAP classroom, and their feelings towards the use of technology in class. The final question invited participation in a semi-structured interview to explore these issues in greater depth. Eleven students accepted and participated in a total of six interviews, and an interpretive analysis of the interview data was conducted.

## Results

Whilst the survey results indicated that two-thirds of the students valued group work, they did not see themselves as speakers; in fact, the majority were not particularly interested in increasing the amount they spoke in class. After investigating this through the interviews, five themes were identified as influencing the lack of verbal interaction in class.

## Educational background

Whilst over four-fifths of questionnaire respondents reported experience of groupwork prior to the IFP, the interviews revealed that this was often limited, carried out with peers who were well-known to them, and was often regarded as an opportunity for division of labour rather than knowledge building. Therefore, adapting to groupwork on the IFP was seen as a challenge for many. In addition, one student's comment, 'teachers are experts and students don't have expertise', seemed to summarise the common reluctance to contribute to discussions.

## Cultural background

Participants explained that they found it easier to relate to peers of the same cultural background. Although an understanding of the value of intercultural communication was not uncommon, putting this into practice was regarded as a significant challenge, with one student saying that it made her 'afraid'. A number of participants suggested that being allowed to work with people of a similar cultural background initially would be helpful.

## Maturity

In the interviews, it became apparent that many of the younger students were not familiar with taking responsibility for their learning; some stated that 'groupwork needs to be graded' to incentivise participation. However, the oldest participant clearly understood the value of working with different people but observed that this was often not the case for younger students.

## Technology

Whilst device use in classroom groupwork was regarded by 57% of questionnaire respondents very highly in terms of usefulness, some saw it as distracting; as one respondent said, 'sometimes people just look at their laptops'.

## Course design

A number of the interview comments related to course design. Some participants wanted more tasks or a greater variety. Others felt that more relatable topics, for example 'social topics and those related to society,' would generate more discussion.

## Discussion

The data revealed a number of different factors affecting verbal classroom collaboration. In a minority of cases, respondents saw little value in groupwork and voiced a dislike of participating in it, for example, "I prefer to work at my own pace and set my own deadlines". Such students may have been demonstrating 'intentional silence' whilst others may have been unintentionally silent (Wang et al, 2022). Both groups may have been influenced by the five themes previously identified; Sequeira (2021), for example, points out that in Confucian-heritage cultures, reticence and thoughtful reflection are highly valued. Students from such backgrounds may prefer to continue working in this way or find it difficult to adapt from. Are they, therefore, being excluded by being expected to build knowledge collaboratively?

Although one could argue that Western learning and teaching methods should not be imposed on students (Wimpenny et al, 2021), and that individual learning preferences must be respected, the preparatory nature of the IFP means that for the very sake of inclusivity, it is vital that students are equipped with collaboration skills that will enable full participation on a range of undergraduate programmes. The authors, therefore, redesigned the first three weeks of the IFP Academic Writing (AW) unit to address the five themes to enable greater participation in groupwork among unintentionally silent students. Some adaptations were designed to address multiple themes.

## Educational and cultural background

To address the differences in students' educational backgrounds, the initial weeks of the unit now seek to raise awareness about the purpose of collaboration. Garrison et al.'s (2000) Practical Inquiry model was chosen to scaffold student engagement and to develop a critical community of inquiry. By showing students what is expected of them in groupwork and providing the necessary language to collaborate, it is hoped this will be a more inclusive experience.

In addition, the perceived lack of student expertise was addressed by basing discussion tasks around familiar, relevant topics such as cultural similarities, international communication and culture shock. These topics will also hopefully allow students to develop their intercultural competence and overcome the difficulties and fear reported. By focusing on Holliday's (2016) cultural threads rather than nationality-based essentialist cultural blocks, students will have regular opportunities to identify commonalities, which may be more inclusive than focusing on differences.

## Maturity and technology

Whilst IFP students at CALD are not significantly younger from those of previous years, the lack of social interaction caused by lockdowns and online learning may have played a part when it comes to maturity. Although this situation is unprecedented and thus difficult to address, the provision of opportunities for intercultural interaction may also help here. In addition, discussion tasks about classroom device use were incorporated into the first three weeks of the unit to encourage reflection on when it helps or hinders participation.



## Course design

In terms of course design, collaborative tasks were designed to involve more meaningful interaction, and a good balance of task types was included to accommodate different learning preferences, be more inclusive, and support active collaboration. Laurillard's (2013) six learning types (acquisition, inquiry, practice, production, discussion, collaboration) were carefully considered to ensure this balance.

## Conclusion

While this is a small-scale action research project, the findings suggest that collaboration is not for all IFP students. Some actively choose a more individual approach to learning and are intentionally silent during groupwork, and although individual learning preferences must be respected, students will ultimately feel more included and empowered if they are equipped to engage as fully as possible in collaborative tasks. It is hoped that the redesigned AW unit – with its initial focus on intercultural communication, its range of task types, greater opportunities for more meaningful interaction and a more considered use of technology – will do just that, making students feel more seen and valued. Further questionnaire and semi-structured interview data will be gathered from students and teachers to assess the impact its roll-out has had, and whether this approach can be applied to other IFP units.

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# A more inclusive approach to peer review on international foundation courses

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*This article reports on an action research project which investigated barriers to peer review on foundation courses, with the aim of creating a more scaffolded and inclusive approach to these workshops to increase student participation. Thematic analysis of data from surveys and interviews with 28 students from two Academic Writing classes revealed that the main barriers related to cultural, linguistic and affective factors. Using the student feedback literacy framework (Carless and Boud, 2018), the findings were analysed further to suggest pedagogical recommendations to incentivize students to take a more active role in the peer review process.*

## Introduction

For IFP students, the advantages of engaging regularly in peer review and becoming active participants in self and peer evaluation are widely acknowledged (Hoo, Deneen and Boud, 2021; Tsui and Ng, 2000). Developing learners' ability to seek, give and receive peer feedback has far-reaching benefits beyond their foundation year as it enables them to develop their own internal perception of 'quality', evaluate and improve their own work more effectively, and build confidence with the skill of reviewing, useful for their future academic and professional lives (Nicol, Thomson and Breslin, 2014). However, the collaborative interaction required during peer review activities, in line with social constructivist principles, can often exclude IFP students who are unfamiliar with this approach to learning. The focus on active participation can be alienating to students who are used to adopting a more passive role in feedback processes where the teacher is considered the 'teller' (Carless and Boud, 2018). Therefore, EAP professionals need to consider carefully how to integrate more inclusive peer review activities into IFP courses.

## Context

This article reports on an action research project conducted during the academic year 2021–22 to investigate some of the student barriers to peer review with the main aim of improving the materials and approach taken to these workshops. The project focused on two IFP Academic Writing classes (28 students) at the University of Bristol. During the first teaching block (TB1), these students engaged in peer review workshops with limited guidance or training from the tutor. In the second teaching block (TB2), modified peer review activities were introduced, which were more scaffolded to promote inclusivity, for example, with pre-review and post-review class discussions and language work. Surveys and student interviews were conducted at the end of the academic year to evaluate these interventions and consider how to make peer review practices more inclusive.

## Using the student feedback literacy framework

A thematic analysis of the data revealed several key themes, including cultural, linguistic and affective barriers to participation in peer review. These themes were then analysed through the lens of Carless and Boud's (2018) framework for student feedback literacy to understand how peer review activities can be sufficiently scaffolded to help students overcome these barriers. As shown in Figure 1, their framework focuses on four interrelated features of feedback literacy in general and suggests that if students develop their ability to appreciate feedback, make judgements and manage affect, they should then become more competent at taking action in terms of applying feedback to future work, thereby closing the feedback literacy loop (Boud and Molloy, 2013). In this project, the framework was used to demonstrate how all four features can be developed in peer review workshops during an IFP course to increase student participation and create a more inclusive approach.

## Appreciating feedback

The first feature involves helping students to recognise the value of peer feedback and understand the active role they have in the process. Students from different cultural backgrounds are often dismissive of peer feedback and are more likely to incorporate tutor feedback into their writing, as they consider the teachers the more experienced and trustworthy experts (Tsui and Ng, 2000; Yang et al., 2006). Data from the interviews confirmed that some of the IFP students valued tutor feedback more highly than peer feedback, describing it as more credible and useful. The modified activities in TB2, however, demonstrated that this barrier can be addressed by building in time to share students' preconceived ideas and culturally-bound reservations about peer review through guided class discussions. Activities included eliciting and ranking the benefits of giving and receiving peer feedback, as well as asking students to evaluate their attitude towards the difficulties associated with peer review before comparing answers in groups. As confirmed by Banister (2020), these regular meta-dialogues not only increase students' understanding of peer feedback practices by exploring the often unknown or underappreciated benefits or peer review, but also help to build empathy in the classroom and create a 'sense of belonging'.

## Making judgements

The second feature refers to students' ability to make evaluative judgements through comparison of their own work with that of their peers or exemplars (Carless and Boud, 2018). However, IFP students often lack the linguistic resources to provide and interpret feedback, so that even if they can identify strengths and weaknesses in the samples, they struggle to articulate their evaluation. For example, one of my students commented that his English "is not so good, so I can't express what I want or understand what others say." In TB2, this gap in linguistic competence was addressed by focusing on functional language needed for constructive peer feedback by including a bank of phrases for praising, sensitively critiquing and asking for clarification in the materials. Students identified and categorised this useful language in sample peer review dialogues before using it in their own post-feedback discussions. The process was scaffolded further by asking students to make a holistic judgment about their peers' work before giving more complex analytical feedback (Nicol, Thomson and Breslin, 2014). For example, students were asked to rank peer samples in terms of overall effectiveness or find key similarities and differences between them. This increased their confidence with reviewing, as well as helping to develop their own internal perception of quality.

## Managing affect

Resistance to peer review is also related to affective factors, as negative emotions, such as shame about sharing work, anxiety about upsetting classmates, or defensiveness about receiving feedback, can prevent active participation, especially at the beginning of a foundation course when students do not know each other. Several of the IFP students mentioned the challenge of engaging in peer review in TB1 before an atmosphere of trust had been established, with one commenting that "you just don't want to criticize something wrongly because you don't have that confidence between each other" while another observed that in TB2 it was easier to review each other's work "since we were closer to each other." Although trust and confidence will often develop naturally over time, providing opportunities for reflection on negative reactions to peer review may also help

students to overcome these affective barriers. During this project, Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988) was used to allow students to explore their experience, and associated feelings, of participating in peer review workshops. Students responded to a series of scaffolded questions relating to the six stages of Gibbs' model, which encouraged a deeper analysis of their experience and helped them understand how to participate more effectively in future workshops.

## Taking Action

This feature of the framework focuses more directly on the process of applying peer feedback to future work by encouraging students to set goals for their next draft. One of the interventions in TB2 involved building in time for post feedback discussion, in which students helped each other to make sense of the comments, generate solutions together and complete an action plan for their next piece of writing. Students selected two or three key areas for development and were asked to explain how they would specifically achieve these goals, thereby turning peer feedback into feedforward. They appeared to value this dialogic approach, as one student commented that "it's really necessary to discuss with the people who give you feedback because it will help you understand it more" while another confirmed that "we must discuss the feedback and talk about how to improve this work". In this way, the students began to understand the transferable nature of peer feedback to their future assignments, which also increased their motivation to seek feedback comments from their classmates outside the formal classroom setting.

## Conclusion

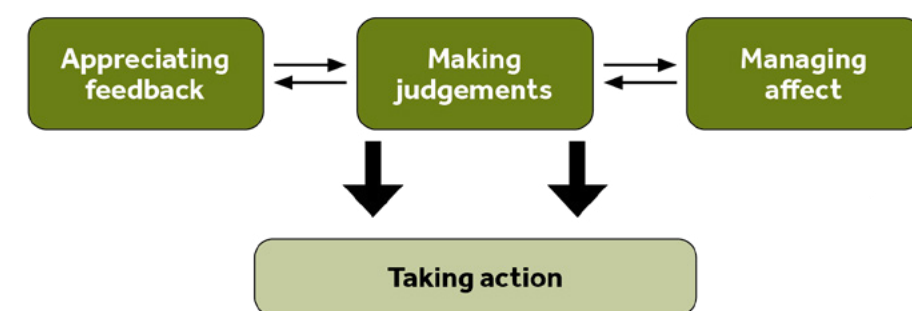
The findings from this action research project suggest the following pedagogical recommendations for peer review on international foundation courses: providing more opportunities for meta-dialogues about the value of peer feedback; integrating more functional language into workshops; encouraging students to reflect on feelings related to peer review; and building in more time for discussion and goal setting post feedback. With sufficient scaffolding, in terms of tutor guidance and material design, peer review workshops can become more inclusive, so that IFP students from a range of backgrounds and cultures feel more motivated to participate and, consequently, will become more confident and critical reviewers of each other's work by the end of the course. This should also improve their overall feedback literacy and support their development as self-regulated learners, so that they can assess their own progress more autonomously at undergraduate level.

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**Figure 1:** Features of student feedback literacy (Carless and Boud, 2018)



# Building Inclusivity through the Controversial Topic of Medical Marijuana

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*This article argues that inclusivity can be achieved through topic choices which acculturate IFY students to specific academic and western cultural expectations, conventions and requirements through guided practice and the creation of 'safe spaces' for overcoming 'learning shock'. The topic of 'medical marijuana' shows how materials, classroom exercises and management choices shaped and, in some cases, transformed students' thinking on the Academic Study Skills for Medicine, Dentistry and Healthcare Professionals module at the University of Leeds, Language Centre. This approach meant that students were introduced to aspects of their chosen disciplines, familiarising them with context-specific content and thereby aiding inclusion.*

## Setting the context

At the Language Centre, University of Leeds, we run an Academic Study Skills module for Doctors, Dentists and Healthcare Professionals. The decision was made to offer content-based EAP in order to maximise motivation and begin to raise International Foundation Year (IFY) students' awareness of content in their chosen discipline area and enable us to build inclusivity as well as develop academic skills and language.

The module is a 40-credit module run alongside other IFY subjects over the course of one academic year. The student cohorts on this particular module are entirely Arab and almost exclusively Kuwaiti nationals interspersed with a few Saudi and Omani students. They tend to be quite young and for many it is the first time away from home and family. This means that there are some socio-cultural norms which might impact individual students.

## Interpretations of inclusivity

A more standard view of inclusivity is possibly one where we, as the host nation, accommodate other cultures and that is a good model for a functioning multi-cultural institution. However, our students are going into a discipline area where they will do practical placements within the NHS. They will be working alongside others and within a culture which might be different, perhaps one which is more open than they are familiar with. They will work with patients from all walks of life and encounter a range of situations which may not always be comfortable for them.

Therefore, it is important to gradually and gently expose them to those feelings in a safe environment through topics and situations which allowed for multiple opportunities to explore and challenge their pre-existing beliefs and opinions. In other words, this topic was chosen because it was controversial.

## Familiarity with students' cultural background(s)

A key factor for inclusivity building, we believe, is to have some understanding of the possible socio-cultural norms of our student groups. For example, Aljurf et al (2020) claim that in Arab cultures there is a kind of collective conscience, whereas Western cultures rest more on individual conscience. So, it may be that individuals feel more pressure to conform rather than to voice an opinion which may be at odds with the consensus. Equally, whilst it may not be the case that Arab cultures are truly collectivist, there are other societal influences which could influence a student's thinking and potentially impact their receptiveness to other possibilities. For example, what Islam says about drugs. This varies according to the views of different religious leaders, but what does not vary is the law, which is very clear in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Cannigma (2022) states that all drugs are illegal and this includes medical marijuana (MM), with severe penalties for those who break these laws.

## Introducing alternative cultural perspectives

It is hardly surprising then that an individual may start from a point of view which could be considered as conservative. However, we are not implying that we can or should stereotype according to nationality, religion or any other factor, but that it is important that educators are aware of their students' cultural contexts and be prepared to tread with caution. This approach allows individuals to become aware of alternative perspectives, but not necessarily to adopt them for themselves. In other words, presenting individuals with options, which allow informed choice. However, in our experience, controversial topics require scaffolding to be successful. Therefore, at the syllabus planning stage, ways of building knowledge of the topic and the necessary skills were incorporated.

This included:

**Unconscious bias training**, as a way of encouraging students to acknowledge biases they may hold as a result of their upbringing, education, culture that could impact on their personal and professional lives (See Stazicker and Woods, 2022 pp 6–10). This paved the way for the introduction of this project as a reference point to examine why they may feel a particular way about certain issues. We also spent some time exploring the basics of **medical ethics** and we begin with a basic discussion of what ethics are (See Stazicker and Woods, 2022, pp 54–55). We used Beauchamp and Childress' (2009) Four Principles of Biomedical Ethics for this.

**Video clips** of real-life cases were incorporated. For example, the case of Alfie Dingley, who is severely epileptic, whose seizures reduced significantly as a result of receiving cannabis oil (BBC, 2018). We also discussed the case of Charlie Gard. Charlie had a rare genetic disorder with a very poor prognosis and there was a court battle regarding turning off his life support. (Debnath, 2017). Obviously a very difficult and emotive case, but students were encouraged to apply Beauchamp and Childress' (2009) Four Principles of Biomedical Ethics to try to establish what was in Charlie's best interests. Using such case studies then allowed students the opportunity to discuss different scenarios through the criteria, which was another effective method of allowing students to gain a more balanced viewpoint on some quite controversial medical topics. All of this awareness raising helped them approach the issue of MM quite differently to how they may have approached it without it.

They were encouraged to search for evidence in **academic journal articles and reports**, including Professor Michael Barnes' report. He is a consultant neurologist, who is the UK's greatest proponent of MM, and part of the 'End Our Pain' campaign; the aim of which was to increase awareness around MM and its positive impact on pain and severe epilepsy in children. He was responsible for compiling the All-Party Parliamentary Group report which captured all the evidence to date on the use of MM for pain relief and was instrumental in a change to the law in the UK (Cannabiz, 2021).

We were also lucky enough to have Professor Barnes give a **guest lecture**. Having a reliable expert at hand to personally answer students' questions was very powerful. However, if you cannot find a guest lecturer, this could be substituted for a recorded equivalent.

The students read **an article** on the use of opioids in the US for pain relief and the vast profits made by pharmaceutical companies followed by **a documentary** that looked at how MM is viewed in the US. Students were encouraged to be critical, particularly when discussing the question: 'Why is it difficult to conduct research on MM?'. This is where they began to see some of the possible links between lack of money being available for research and the fear pharmaceutical companies have of MM as a substitute for opioid drugs.

**Class discussions and seminars.** Students were encouraged to keep up with the topic of MM in **the media** and classes often started with discussion of the latest developments on the legalisation of MM.

The focus for the seminar was 'should marijuana be legalised for medical purposes?' By the time we had this seminar discussion, the students tasked with arguing against MM said they found it quite difficult to do so as the evidence supporting its efficacy was overwhelming and the main reason we stopped using this particular topic.

## Student evaluation and feedback on the topic

At the end of our first semester, we asked students for feedback on the MM project. At the start of the year, when they were asked their opinions about using marijuana as a treatment for various ailments, approximately 75% of them said that this shouldn't be allowed as it was a gateway drug and very dangerous. However, the comments after the project seemed to show that the topic was well received and that they learnt not just about MM, but also to be more open and more critical of the status quo.

## Final thoughts

As tutors, through tackling this topic, we learned that we shouldn't be afraid of introducing controversial topics and students do respond well if such projects are scaffolded with care. If you decide to use a controversial topic in your teaching, we suggest that you use the following steps:

1. Include unconscious bias training.
2. Introduce alternative cultural perspectives in a non-threatening environment and manner.
3. Use a range of materials and sources to present a balanced view of the controversial issue.
4. Use and continue to build your own cultural awareness of your students' backgrounds to approach the topic sensitively.

The above steps outline how inclusivity can be achieved through topic choices which acculturate (IFY) students to specific academic and western cultural expectations, conventions and requirements through guided practice and the creation of 'safe spaces' for overcoming 'learning shock'. Acculturation should be possible with any international student cohort, not just IFY students, using these steps but be mindful to monitor your own potential unconscious bias and be prepared to accept and respect your students' newly informed cultural choices at the end of the project, whatever they are.

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# Starting the discussion about discrimination in science with international foundation students

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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## Importance of EDI training for undergraduates

EDI (equality/equity, diversity and inclusivity) awareness is increasingly recognised as important for successful progression through higher education for students, and later on for both employers and employees in the workplace. Being able to navigate a diverse world and collaborate with different team members is critical for student success, especially when many course assignments rely on group work (Koenig et al., 2013). Students are also encouraged to develop soft skills which are essential in today's workplace, and teamwork is in strong demand (Ritter et al., 2018). Consequently, EDI training is being embedded in many undergraduate and foundation programmes across the UK, often in the form of workshops or single day training courses (Miah et al., 2020; Jones et al., 2022).

## Context

On the INTO University of East Anglia International Foundation Pathway in Pharmacy, Health & Life Sciences students mainly aim to progress towards health care and life science degrees. Coming from all over the world, our students have grown up in societies with different cultural and academic backgrounds to the UK. The Preparation for Health and Life Sciences module was developed to address

the gap between students' educational backgrounds and the requirements to enter a UK higher education institution. In this context, a series of exploratory, discussion-based seminars about current issues in science and society has been developed for life science students. One of them encourages students to explore the controversial topic of discrimination in science.

This seminar aimed to start the conversation and raise awareness about race and gender discrimination in the scientific world. Facilitating free small group discussion encourages the expression of opinions and feelings about an emotional topic, without the need to reach a consensus (Kitchen, 2012). Thus the seminar was run in a semi-structured conversational style, and allowed all students to express and discuss their views on the subject in a non-judgemental atmosphere. During the seminar, students raised points that were further discussed with their peers, and observation, reflection and critical thinking were encouraged rather than memorisation of concepts, as this promotes deep learning, the development of team and communication skills, and formation of opinions (Cottrell, 2017). Student written reflections, following the Gibbs reflection model (Gibbs, 1998), as well as comments and attitudes in class, were used to evaluate the perceived value of this seminar.





**Figure 1:** Countries of origin of students participating in the discrimination in science seminar in 2021 and 2022. From left to right: Panama, Albania, Kuwait, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Myanmar, Indonesia, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Japan. Created with <https://www.mapchart.net>

Method – the seminar

The students in the seminar had worked together throughout the year, so knew each other well and were able to interact harmoniously. They were aged 16–24, although most were 18, and came mainly from Asian countries (Figure 1).

Before the seminar, the students were required to watch the movie 'Hidden Figures', about discrimination in science (Table 1). During the seminar, the students were joined online by a guest speaker, closer to their age group, a Cape Verdean ecology researcher doing her PhD in Japan. Being a female scientist of African descent, she provided her perspective by recalling her experiences in the academic world.

At the beginning of the seminar the students and the guest speaker were asked by the moderator to introduce themselves, and to share their impressions about the movie. As groups of students were small, during the seminar each student was invited by name to participate, thereby allowing less confident or fluent individuals to express their opinions. They were asked to describe any type of discrimination they might have observed in their countries. Students, the moderator and the guest could expand and follow up on points that raised interest, and ask further

questions to each other. The students were asked to think specifically about discrimination in science, how discrimination can impact wellbeing, and how diversity can benefit science. They were not lectured on any topic but questioned for clarity when they expressed unconventional views (eg "there is no racism in my country").

During the seminar, participants were shown a short racism-related video entitled 'Doll test – The effects of racism on children' (Table 1). Again, the students and guest speaker were asked to express their feelings and reflections on the video. Finally, the students and the guest speaker were invited to propose and discuss ways to minimise discrimination in the workplace and contribute to a more diverse and inclusive society.

**Table 1:** Videos watched by the students before and during the seminar on discrimination in science.

	Hidden Figures	Doll test - The effects of racism on children
Created by	Theodore Melfi, Fox 2000 Pictures	Fanpage.it
Available via	Box of Broadcasts	YouTube
Visualisation	Before the seminar	During the seminar
Topic	This 2016 Hollywood movie is loosely based on the stories of Katherine Johnson, Mary Jackson and Dorothy Vaughan, female scientists at NASA in the 1960s, highlighting the gender and race discrimination they faced	Test created to assess the effects of segregation in African-American children, by asking them questions about a black and a white doll, adapted here to Italian children.

Results

All students that watched the movie "Hidden Figures" claimed to enjoy it (Figure 2). Some mentioned being nervous before the seminar for fear of saying the 'wrong' thing but all responded when given opportunity to participate. All students in both years shared stories, issues and/or perceived lack of race discrimination in their country. All students interacted with the moderator (Figure 2), either spontaneously or when prompted, and most students interacted with the guest speaker and each other as well, by asking each other or answering questions.

Some students expressed surprise at learning that racism is still an issue, particularly within the scientific community, while others said they were already aware. Some students see themselves as part of a minority while studying in the UK and recounted incidents of abuse towards Asians during the pandemic; they reflected that being part of a minority might adversely affect their studies or career. Some students claimed that they did not notice discrimination based on race in their countries, and proposed reasons for this, such as being from very small countries with very

homogenous communities, and not many people from different races or ethnic groups being present (eg Kosovo, Vietnam).

Some students proposed historical reasons driving systemic racism. Some were aware of discrimination against ethnic or religious minorities in their countries and believe this is a bigger problem than race-based discrimination. Students highlighted greater awareness of sexism than racism in society as this is something they observed within their own families. Some mentioned how their mothers had to work harder than men, including their fathers, to advance in their careers. Such comments were made by both male and female students.

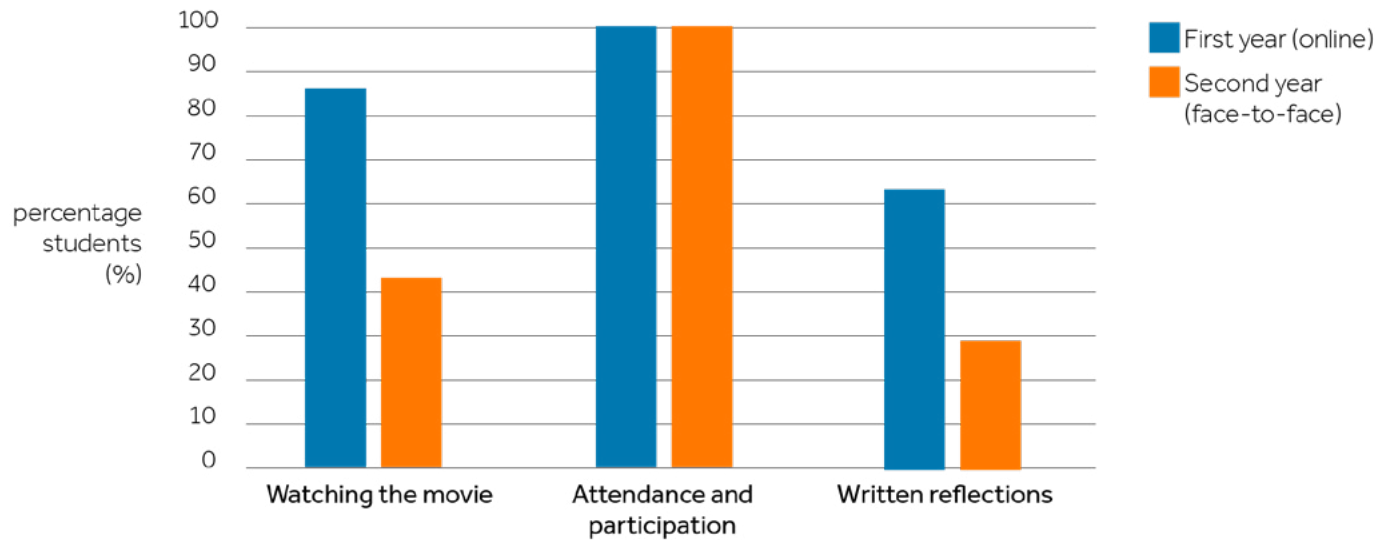
Some students realised they sometimes unconsciously discriminate against people, and said the seminar made them more aware of this. Others reflected that, in addition to striving to overcome this and be more inclusive, they should help where necessary through being an ally in such struggles.

All students reported enjoying the discrimination seminar, none made offensive remarks and none reported feeling offended during or after the seminar.

Discussion and conclusion

To summarise, this was the first time that some students talked about racism in science, and the first time some reflected on discrimination in their home country. There was some discussion about other forms of discrimination (see Results). Most students recognised this is still an important issue in society and expressed the wish for this to be taught in schools and/or discussed more often. Overall, students demonstrated an increased awareness of discrimination issues in society by the end of the seminar.

Using a Hollywood movie to start the seminar contributed to creating an informal atmosphere and facilitated the start of what might otherwise be an uncomfortable discussion. It also illustrated how discrimination, a potentially abstract topic for some students, affects lives of real people and science development in general (Graves et al., 2022; Woolston, 2021). Using a guest participant with a different background and experiences to the seminar moderator was an attempt to reinforce the positive message that diversity is valuable; importantly, this contributed to the informal and relaxed feel of



**Figure 2:** Percentage student preparation work for the seminar (watching the movie 'Hidden Figures'), attendance and participation, and optional written reflections (between a choice of four different seminars), in both years. A total of eight students participated in the first year and seven in the second.

the session. Students agreed having a guest speaker helped them get another perspective and they enjoyed learning from her experiences.

Discussions about racism and discrimination in science have the potential to be uncomfortable and controversial. It is however important to raise awareness, as the students will encounter these issues in the future, including in their workplace, and it is important to start open-minded, impartial discussions about the topic. Seminars are a good way to do this as they enhance inclusivity in the classroom (Figure 3). By asking students to report personal observations, a more neutral, non-judgemental backdrop is created in which to have these discussions. It is critical to make sure there are no right or wrong answers; when a student makes an unexpected observation or remark we can simply ask why – if anything this will encourage further reflection. A dialogue can start and, by not having a fixed learning objective, creates the possibility for students to develop their opinions and place in society (McArthur, 2022). Observation, reflection and discussion open the door to heightened awareness and, hopefully, encourage attitudes that minimise discrimination, in the scientific world and in society in general.



**Figure 3:** Multiple ways in which seminars can enhance inclusivity for students. Inspired by Ruggs et al., 2012, and Greer, 2014.

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# A foundation module in Tourism & Hospitality reconfigured to embrace notions of sustainability, inclusivity and decolonization

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*This article outlines changes made to a business- focused Foundation module in Tourism and Hospitality taught at Oxford Brookes University in order to make it more multi-disciplinary. Notions of decolonization, inclusivity and sustainability were embraced in line with wider university agendas and the authors' own backgrounds and concerns. This article describes the initial changes made to the module, but it should be noted that this is a work in progress and further changes are planned. However, the authors' discovered that even small adjustments/additions to a module can impact the students' experience and world-view significantly.*

## Introduction

Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) has become an increasingly contested industry, facing a range of challenges. The movement of people as a result of climate change, the industry's contribution to global warming as a result of dependence on fossil fuels and the increased regulatory restrictions on crossing borders have made many reconsider the standard practices and expectations in the industry, from both an entrepreneurial and consumer perspective. As a consequence, the academic study of T&H also needs a reboot.

With this in mind, when the authors took over the teaching of a Foundation module in 2020, a measure of trepidation took hold. This was a module that had previously been taught by Ph.D. students in the International Hospitality Management Department at Oxford Brookes University focusing primarily on the economic value of T&H to a country with only a nod to sustainability issues. There was hardly any mention of decolonization or inclusivity, relatively new buzzwords around the university. The authors' combined backgrounds in Economics, Anthropology and EAP meant that whilst continuing with the business aspects of the module, it was also incumbent to add a social science perspective to the module, all knowledge being viewed as contestable. As Shepherd (2002) notes, tourists may view cultural experiences as sacred and

economic transactions as profane, but the two are in fact inextricably linked. This was alongside the need to update the module in line with the university's concern for inclusivity, decolonization and sustainability (from the IDEAS framework).

Teaching Tourism and Hospitality is well-placed in a programme of study to enable students to encounter these thoughts in an academic context that is appropriate to foundation studies. In addition to developing academic literacy in written and spoken communication, T&H also validates 'experience' (the experience of the tourist) and raises the issue of the 'cultural bias' of perceptions (when encountering the 'other').

## Education for sustainable development and decolonization projects

The taking over of the module coincided with two Oxford Brookes Business school initiatives, one being to embed the Advance HE Education for Sustainable Development Competencies and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in all Foundation modules starting with our Learning Outcomes (LOs) (D'Abreu, 2021). The other was a PETAL (Peer Enhancement of Teaching and Learning) Project on Decolonization. These initiatives required some quite dramatic changes to the inherited module.



A decolonised programme needs to encourage students to be more mindful of the nature of the 'reality' that the tourist encounters, the set assumptions and behaviours of tourists and their hosts, and how to create authentic experiences for tourists without perpetuating the very conditions that undermine that authenticity. Undoing the legacy of colonising practices starts with the recognition of how these practices have influenced and shaped lives in the past and which are still present today. It is about challenging long-standing biases and omissions, interrogating assumptions and broadening our intellectual vision to include perspectives of those silenced or marginalised. It involves a fundamental reconsideration of who is teaching, what the subject matter is and how it is being taught.

Embedding a decolonised approach to the curriculum is a worthwhile challenge. The Foundation Programme presents an opportunity to decolonise the curriculum in ways that are less constrained by the disciplinary expectations of undergraduate programmes. It can embrace critical questioning of the ways knowledge is framed and the underlying assumptions of such framing. Over the years, students have been empowered on their learning journey as critical and autonomous learners but this has been taken further by applying transformative learning pedagogies, shown in figure 1.

Transformative learning

Learning phase	Leads to:	
1st order change: Cognition	Effectiveness, efficiency	Conformative learning 'Doing things better'
2nd order change: Meta-cognition	Examing and changing assumptions	Reformative learning 'Doing better things'
3rd order change: Epistemic learning	Paradigm change	Transformative learning 'Seeing things differently'

↓

Cognitive justice	Transforming practices
Inclusivity, decolonization	'Intercultural translation', 'collaborative self-learning', anti-rascism, intersectionality

Figure 1: Transformative learning (Sterling,2001 & De Sousa, 2018)

Learning Outcomes (L.O.s)

The first task was to rewrite some L.O.s whilst ensuring that the new ones were measurable. Table 1 shows an example of a change to an L.O. and how student understanding is assessed.

Table 1: New learning outcomes on the module

Old Learning Outcome	New Learning Outcome
Understand the principles of management as they apply to the tourism and hospitality industry	Identify possible behavioural change in management practices where they are shown to have a negative impact on the human and natural environment
Measuring L.O.: Students show in their presentation and report how they would manage peaks and troughs in transportation both to and around their chosen destination.	Measuring L.O.: Students take part in a simulation regarding a made-up tropical island called Esmeralda with a unique flora and fauna. The island is hoping to build a runway and 5 star hotel to attract more tourists. Students are given roles as stakeholders and participate in a “town hall” meeting. The debriefing asks students to consider management responses to concerns raised by the stakeholders.

Topics old and new

The next step was to review the topics on the inherited syllabus, jettisoning some, modifying others and where appropriate adding new topics. An important topic to add to the syllabus was The Tourist Gaze based on Urry's (1990) seminal work of the same name. What are the factors that make tourists want to 'gaze' (see/experience/touch/eat) certain

things rather than others during their travels? Questions students are asked to consider include why certain kinds of poverty are considered worthy of gazing at whilst others may simply be invisible. Tours of the poorer neighbourhoods of Nairobi appear on the tourist agenda whilst visits to Blackbird Leys in Oxford do not.

A questioning approach to knowledge

The opportunity to encourage a questioning approach to the 'knowledge' presented in this module happens on a regular basis. Leiper's model (1990) of the Tourism System (figure 2) was at first taught unquestionably but it was ripe for social and environmental critical thinking.

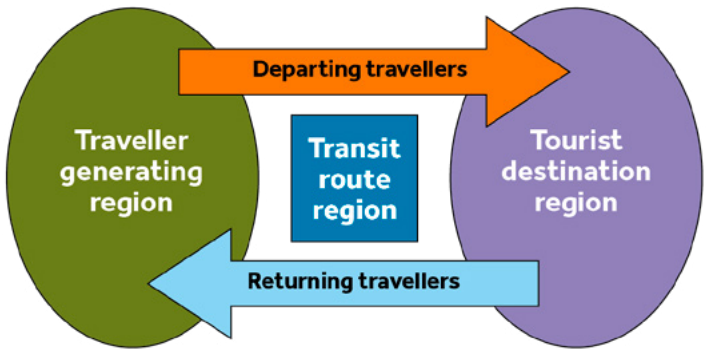


Figure 2: Leiper's model (1990)

As Hannam (2006) points out, the transit route region is occupied not only by tourists but many other individuals some of whom will find their transit more or less difficult and in some cases even impossible.

The global order is increasingly crisscrossed by tourists, workers, terrorists, students, migrants, asylum seekers, scholars, family members, businesspeople, soldiers... (Hannam, 2006).

This suggests that T&H is exclusive by its very nature, but by including Hannam, the module became more inclusive, not leaving any person, part or group out of discussions.

The terms authenticity and commodification come under scrutiny too. For some, ideas of the authentic are tied up with the past, but was there ever a totally authentic, 'untouched' people and destination waiting to be discovered? The authentic may be seen to be corrupted by the guests if it is commodified, whilst for the hosts commodification of an 'authentic' experience is essential to their livelihoods. The market economy has transformed the travel experience in fundamental ways that cannot be ignored.

Assessments

To ensure that assessments incorporated notions of environmentalism, decolonization and inclusivity, one of the original assignments, a two-day tour for a chosen clientele, was abandoned and instead students had to pitch a new tourist destination which had at its heart one of the following:

- volunteering
- social enterprise
- eco-friendly resorts
- budget conscious destinations.

These ideas need to permeate every aspect of the tour from transport to accommodation to activities on offer.

The pitch is followed by a report which in its previous iteration had focussed on the costs and profitability of the two-day tour. Students were asked instead to consider some ethical and environmental issues inherent in their chosen tours.

Finally students are asked to design a flyer to promote their pitch with a focus on communicating visually with their audience through carefully considered images, fonts and headings to enhance their curated text. The flyer allows students to demonstrate skills not normally apparent in traditional assignments such as the essay and embraces OBU's view on inclusivity which requires looking beyond oral and/or written forms of communication in teaching and learning situations.

Conclusion

This article has presented some ideas for ways to review modules taught at Foundation level to embrace ideas of sustainability, decolonization and inclusivity. Feedback from our students on the impact of the changes made to the module is continuously being sought.

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# Enhancing inclusivity in IFP: Innovating with academic language and literacies pedagogy

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*One of the keys to enhancing the academic potential of pre-degree international students is innovation in pedagogic approaches on the Foundation English for Academic Purposes (FEAP) course. The FEAP classroom on the University of Edinburgh’s International Foundation Programme (IFP) adopts Academic Language and Literacies (ALL) approaches in the vocabulary strand that showcases multi-modal fluency development as a conduit for greater negotiation and co-construction of practices than English for Academic Purposes (EAP) learning and teaching methods.*

Introduction

‘Maximizing academic potential and enhancing the study and university experience’ are objectives of the policy on Accessible and Inclusive Learning at the University of Edinburgh (The University of Edinburgh, 2016). To this end, guidance for how to enhance inclusivity notes the primacy of ‘promoting [...] diversity of thought by [...] actively supporting new ideas, approaches and ways of working’ (The University of Edinburgh, 2022). To develop inclusivity, such as ways of valuing and thinking about knowledge and skills, the Foundation English for Academic Purposes (FEAP) course has progressed innovations in pedagogy for International Foundation Programme (IFP) students at Edinburgh.

This innovation is defined here as Academic Language and Literacies (ALL), a higher education classroom methodology for enhancing inclusivity. It is based on Wingate and Tribble’s (2012) ‘best of both worlds’ pedagogic model for writing instruction. The authors judged ‘best of both worlds’ as a discipline and context-specific method of raising awareness of discourse practices (Haldane and Davies, 2022). ALL extends this approach primarily with an integrated academic language component as the thread that runs through disciplinary literacies: reading and writing, as well as talking about the outcome of literacies activity. The plurality

of ‘literacies’ in ALL is key to its inclusivity because there are impacts (plural) of students noticing the ideological, cultural and contextual ways of behaving or practices (plural) explicit to a discipline and implicit in pan-academic expectations. ALL affords negotiation of literacies in a way that is most meaningful to an individual’s socio-economic, educational and cultural trajectory.

This paper covers the inclusivity of an ALL approach to teaching and learning on the vocabulary strand of the FEAP course, diversifying experiences with multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary cohorts on IFP. It will also demonstrate that multi-modal literacies facilitate students’ and teachers’ discussion about different ways of thinking, while negotiating and co-constructing knowledge and new ideas.

EAP and ALL pedagogy – comparative analysis of language component

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) practices orient students to academic conventions; they raise awareness of disciplinary discourse features; and they assist in organizing, selecting and developing ideas (Haldane and Davies, 2022). Yet, EAP is critiqued for potential inadequacies in the diverse internationalized language classroom. Accordingly, ALL integrates critical approaches to language and

literacy socialization to include the collective dynamism of the higher education classroom. Table 1 shows a comparison of the pedagogies.

**Table 1:** Comparison of EAP and ALL pedagogies

EAP	ALL
Text-based culture	Genre-switching (Lea and Street, 2006) – see below for practical application
uni-directionality in teacher-student relations (Tribble, 1996)	student-centred, co-construction of knowledge production (Wingate and Tribble, 2012)
notion of communities of practice in ‘stable disciplines’ (Lave and Wenger, 1991).	negotiation of identities in multi-disciplinary contexts (Duff, 2010)
study skills approach to writing and literacy simplifies to ‘an individual and cognitive skill’ (Lea and Street, 2006).	approaching discourse practices as social practice (Haldane and Davies, 2022)
skills in language and literacy are transferable from one situation to another (Kress, 2007).	diversity in differently-organised modes of expressing knowledge and making meaning (Lea and Street, 2006)

EAP practices may improve IFP students’ performance in using English and foster academic socialization in mostly international and so-called “deficit” students (Wingate and Tribble, 2012, p.491). However, this one-size-fits-all model to help specific cohorts of students “over the line” could be rendered as a normative approach to teaching and learning that does not afford openness to enhance differences and plurality in ways of thinking and working.

Academic Vocabulary in Literacy (AVIL)

AVIL is the vocabulary strand in FEAP Plus course – this is for students who have met the language requirements for admission to undergraduate programmes. The course aims of AVIL manifest the inclusive approach of ALL, as outlined in table 1, creating an enhanced pedagogy for all students with discourse as the cornerstone to:

- 1. Develop knowledge of academic vocabulary by identifying and interpreting meaning in academic text.
- 2. Develop critical reading skills, such as analysing ideas and identifying voice.
- 3. Develop fluency in academic literacy.
- 4. Develop context-dependent and flexible use of academic vocabulary.

ALL pedagogy in AVIL has potential to maximise the study and student experience from a student perspective. In student surveys, AVIL was evaluated as 87.5% helpful with the subject options. Student narratives that detailed the help include: “lots of words in AVIL are those I met frequently in other subjects”; “some professional terms”; “taught me a lot about academic writing and being more formal”; “helps me be more concise and clear, also taught me to use certain words more confidently”; “It helped my discussion

skills and vocabulary to improve”; “It gave me some insights about other courses I take.”

AVIL maps an academic discourse component to subject options in IFP. The principles for the AVIL course strand were taken from Nation and Yamamoto (2011) article into innovations in English language learning. In AVIL, this looks like:

- Meaning-focussed input – intensive reading and comprehension questions plus critical reading tasks; e.g. critical identification of factual information and ideas as opinions;
- Language-focussed learning – software ‘Vocabprofiler’ to identify types of words, word tokens and coverage plus activities around form and function;
- Meaning-focussed output – e.g. Academic Reading Circle or Extended reading;
- Fluency development – Multi-modal activities to develop fluency and consolidate knowledge around the theme.

AVIL has fortnightly ‘modules’ of integrated language and knowledge input and output using disciplinary texts from the IFP subject options of the term. In AVIL 1 – see Table 2 for an example of a 10-week course – the first week of each module comprises language-focussed learning and meaning-focussed input of disciplinary text on the subject option theme by practicing comprehension and text processing; using reading strategies to make meaning, as well as awareness of an academic discourse function, and academic, general and subject-specific vocabulary. The second week of the module comprises meaning-focussed output and fluency development using multi-modal genres of language production to engage with the subject option theme.



Table 2: AVIL 1 syllabus for Semester 1

	AVIL 1
Week 2	Living learning in Britain theme – multiculturalism in Britain
Week 3	Seminar: Multiculturalism and social change
Week 4	Economics and business theme – microeconomics
Week 5	Paragraph writing: Scarcity of commodities
Week 6	Sociology theme – The origins of sociology and social construction
Week 7	Blogging: Social roles
Week 8	Art & design theme – VR in art education
Week 9	Seminar: Digital art
Week 10	Philosophy theme - Origins of modern science and pseudo-science
Week 11	Summary writing: Conflict between science and religion

Genre/mode-switching as an inclusive practice

In AVIL, genre, or mode-switching (Lea and Street, 2006) is intrinsic to the pedagogic approach of ALL. Genre/mode switching is “mixing two or more genres or modes,” and can be defined as the “transformation and changing of meanings and representations from one genre and mode to another” (Lea & Street, 2006, p. 231, cited in Haldane and Davies, 2022, p. 109). To detail, students become aware of different discourse in a variety of literacies at different stages of academic activity. In this way, students can play with meanings in disciplinary texts, enabling the noticing of potentially conflictual features of a certain community, which is essential preparatory experience for successful negotiation of different identities through discourse in literacies. This means pathway students can reach across and project into disciplinary and academic spaces, which ultimately opens up the path to new ways of understanding and talking about ideas and knowledge.

Conclusion

Enhancing inclusivity is achieved by using Academic Language and Literacies (ALL) learning and teaching methodology in Edinburgh’s IFP. The AVIL strand of the FEAP course enables multi-modal fluency development as a conduit for increased negotiation and co-construction of academic and disciplinary practices. By putting language and literacies at the corner stone of the pedagogy, the implications to enhance inclusivity are indexed as follows:

- greater openness to a variety of meaning-making potential in academic contexts with ways of using language;
- negotiation of disciplinary practices that is critical, complex and debatable can enable insights into students’ potential academic identities;
- co-constructing disciplinary and academic spaces means students mediate what is means to be successful to them, and by associated, others at university.

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# Enhancing inclusion by addressing international students’ preconceptions around self-declaration via the introduction of an Accessibility Reporting Form (ARF)

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*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 identifiably vocalising their needs. An overview of the context and origin of the Accessibility Reporting Form (ARF) will be provided before highlighting the benefits of an ARF for staff and students. The adaptations, trials, and responses on the International Foundation Programme at the University of Reading will be summarised before outlining aspects to consider when including an ARF within feedback mechanisms.*

Context and origin of the Accessibility Reporting Form (ARF)

All students, irrespective of origin and characteristics, have the right to equal and fair access to materials and learning opportunities (University of Reading, 2020). However, whether it be due to linguistic, cultural, or historic preconceptions, barriers to that access can often be exacerbated and left unresolved (Baker et al., 2010). Subsequently, materials, and access to them via the platforms on which they sit, should maintain and uphold equitable access and inclusivity at their foundations. Their design needs to encompass the removal of any possible barriers that make it harder for students to participate and contribute to core activities and learning. This principle is a constant truth: however, arguably, this need is now more pertinent as a result of Covid-19. Covid-19 has resulted in the growing move towards flipped learning, or aspects of it, remaining in place, and the

increasing digitalisation of materials across many International Foundation Programmes (IFPs). Personal experience has shown that IFP students are often reluctant to admit to their difficulties and diagnosed or non-diagnosed disabilities, often from a preconception that they will be negatively labelled (ibid). This can potentially lead to a detrimental impact on their engagement, learning, and progression. However, many digital issues, especially with materials, such as contrast, sizing, and availability (LibGuides, 2021), can be easily and quickly rectified if staff are informed.

Dr Calvin Smith (2020), Associate Professor in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of Reading, introduced the Accessibility Reporting Form (ARF) at a Teaching & Learning (T&L) Showcase as an additional contact point for students to relay their experiences and issues and receive a timely response. The benefits to student voice and agency were emphasised; however, the potential benefits for international

students or students from diverse cultural backgrounds were overlooked. It is clear that the ARF has the potential to be of greater benefit to international, rather than home, students. The ARF enables students to report any issues regarding the availability and digital accessibility of learner resources and materials (ibid). A submitted ARF allows instructors to design out any unnecessary barriers that make it harder to engage and take part in learning activities. It also gives students the option to remain anonymous. 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 specific requirements voiced and addressed whilst minimising potential linguistic, cultural, and historic conflict (Taylor & Mote, 2021).

### Facilitating cross-cultural competency

Staff awareness of disability requirements largely depends on students’ self-declaration. However, this doesn’t always happen. Whether it be due to the previously noted preconceptions, barriers to access to materials and learning can often feel immovable. Students from almost every country can, in theory, study on an IFP in the UK. Some countries and cultures share our beliefs, whilst others vary greatly, which can significantly contribute to reasons for a lack of self-declaration (Ravindran and Myers, 2012). An individual’s culture influences their understanding of a need, or disability, and its aetiology, as well as whether to seek support (Baxter and Mahoney, 2018). Therefore, educator-practitioners and institutions have a duty to have a system in place that allows students to raise issues and needs, and get the support they need, whilst sensitively managing and considering a multitude of varying, and wide-ranging, views and beliefs. This allows us to work within, rather than challenge, the students’ social and cultural framework (ibid). When working with students from multiple linguistic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, best-practice involves cross-cultural competence (McClean et al., 2004).

According to Baxter & Mahoney (2018), this can be achieved by:

1. “Being aware of your own beliefs and values, and clarifying when needed”. In a UK context: an awareness of British and Western values.
2. “Obtaining information on the culture and background of [new students]”. Within an IFP this has the potential to be from anywhere, though specific home countries will be known at a local level.
3. “Engaging and working with [students], using approaches that are sensitive, receptive and responsive to their cultural perspectives”. The ARF is an example of a sensitive approach.

Many student preconceptions are related to being identified. They may not ask for the help they need due to concerns around being negatively mislabelled and the associated connotations from it. The ARF allows for anonymity, thereby reassuring the student that by identifying a need or issue, they are not going to be identified or misconstrued. Regardless of what assurances are provided, students’ beliefs are deeply rooted and can be viewed, to a certain extent, as a form of a systemic barrier to assistance and support. Much like universal design for learning (UDL) principles, the ARF allows this barrier to remain in place, but it has been transformed; it addresses the cultural inequity of self-declaration and identification without creating internal cultural conflict. The ARF is a tool so that the barrier, i.e., the linguistic, historic, and cultural preconceptions, is not a hindrance to the students’ self-declaration and, subsequently, to their access to materials and learning.

### Incorporation of the ARF

The ARF requires limited resources for inclusion and operation whilst achieving significant impact. It consists of six questions (Figure 1), hosted on Microsoft Forms. It is embedded on module pages on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and signposted via announcements and at student inductions. Having submitted, the student is signposted to further support. The completed form is received by the IFP administrator and forwarded to the relevant module convenor(s) for response and action, if appropriate.

### IFP Accessibility Reporting Form

*All submissions are handled in confidence. You can give your name and student ID below if you would like us to contact you directly about this issue, but you can also submit the form anonymously if you prefer.*

\*Required

1. Select the module(s) where the issue or problem exists. \*  
[Incl. list of programme modules to select]
2. Please describe the issue or problem you are experiencing. \*
3. Please outline what you need or would like to happen. \*
4. Surname (family name)
5. Given name
6. UoR Username / Student ID number

**Figure 1:** IFP Accessibility Reporting Form Questions and disclosure (Adapted from Smith, 2020).

### Benefits of the ARF

An ARF does not claim to be a comprehensive solution in dealing with this complex systemic barrier to international students’ self-declaration. However, it is a tool that allows for progress without cultural conflict and is mutually beneficial for students and staff.

1. **Ensures better institutional alignment:** The focus on, and increased inclusion of, accessibility needs and considerations better aligns the IFP with current institution-wide Accessibility Guidelines (University of Reading, 2020), providing staff with a standardised framework.
2. **Strengthens student voice:** It gives students more methods of submitting feedback asynchronously, also anonymously, when they have specific accessibility needs. This especially helps students when working or attending remotely.

3. **Strengthens student agency:** It empowers students to take more control over their learning and helps to increase learning and learning opportunities. Means of evaluation is given to them and they are able to see the impact.
4. **Increases response:** It allows staff to respond in a more timely and effective manner, when it matters most to the student. It allows for student feedback at any time, reducing their administrative burden (Smith, 2020), which isn’t included in existing feedback mechanisms.
5. **Facilitates cross-cultural competence and normalisation:** It helps to normalise the conversation about accessibility and inclusivity practices by considering and catering for, via embedded anonymity, divergent cultural perspectives (ibid).

### Responses to the ARF

Submitted issues will vary depending on the module and programme. Masses of responses should not be expected, as if there were, it would indicate there is a flaw at the core of the materials and learning platform. The ARF is designed to help students who most need it, who otherwise may have been ignored or marginalised, and to report on accessibility issues that may have traditionally been unreported. Responses to the IFP ARF have been minimal, 1–3 per year since Autumn 2020. This aligns with the expectation that responses will be low, implying that materials and platforms are well designed and accessible. Nevertheless, responses emphasise that the facility is of value to students as it has allowed students to seek assistance that may have otherwise remained hidden and unvoiced; either due to not knowing how, or whom, to give feedback, as a result of perceived inaccessibility of formalised feedback, or from concerns around identification.

Off-topic responses can also be anticipated, or responses that seemingly appear to be off-topic. For example, a response that read as a complaint, and ‘offloading’, of having ‘too much work’ informed us to release session materials earlier than the recommended 48-hours in advance so that students have more time to interact with, and cognitively process, the content in preparation for a class.

This also allows the student to better manage their time, highlighting how digital accessibility is connected to academic, or cognitive, accessibility. Having a facility to capture this information has value, even if it appears out of context, as it may present points and issues that we, as staff, have not thought about in order to continually review and refine our modules and programmes. It also allows us to signpost students, in general or specifically depending if the response was anonymous, to the most beneficial support.

### Recommendations

After ARF implementation on the IFP at the University of Reading, the following should be noted for any future inclusion:

- A. There is value in ‘off-topic’ responses.
- B. Clarity of instruction, and description, of the ARF is needed for students on the student-facing host platform.
- C. Introduction of the ARF to students, modules, and programmes should be made as early as possible in the module, and programme, cycle.
- D. The scope the ARF has in raising awareness of specific accessibility needs and requirements should be made clear to all staff.

### Concluding Remarks

As a result of its success on the IFP, the ARF has been included on other programmes and modules, with potential for expansion to our Transnational Education partners and Home Foundation Programme. The ARF’s overarching capacity to normalise accessibility practices helps to enhance the inclusion of all students with diverse needs and perspectives, not only international foundation students, without requiring the use of extensive resources to make an impact.

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# *InForm* *Exchange*



# An 'open secret': Is it time to engage more with our students regarding their use of machine translation?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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*The quality of machine translation software has improved significantly and is now a commonly used tool by students on IFPs. Teachers, however, are generally reluctant to engage proactively with students on the issue. This small-scale research paper summarises interviews with two students on the topic of their usage of and attitudes towards machine translation software. The students' heavy reliance on MT suggest that IFP teachers and administrators may wish to consider a greater incorporation of MT into the academic discourse surrounding study skills and good academic practice.*

The vast majority of students on international foundation programmes face the significant challenge of comprehending and transmitting information in a language other than their first. To help with this, many make use of machine translation (MT). In InForm issue 19, Groves (2020) detailed the huge advances in 'neural MT' technology, its widespread adoption by IFP students, and the implications for issues such as academic integrity and assessment.

Despite its increasing ubiquity, student use of MT is often perceived negatively by educators due to concerns that it can have an adverse effect on both learning motivation and language development (Briggs, 2018). However, few if any HE institutions offer official guidelines or regulations regarding MT. This can lead to student use of the technology becoming an 'open secret'. On IFPs, where the stakes are high and the students are often quite young (and therefore likely to have been using new generation MT software for much of their language learning experience) this issue is of growing importance.

## A small-scale piece of action research

After noticing that students in my own IFP Academic English class would occasionally shield their screens in order to hide their use of MT, I decided to interview two students regarding their experience of using these tools. Specifically, I asked about the frequency with which they used MT, the process they followed, their attitudes towards the technology, whether or not they felt comfortable discussing MT with their teachers, and if they believed some kind of training on how to use MT effectively would be helpful.

The participants were two 19-year-old students from China (one male and one female) who had recently graduated from the University of Edinburgh's IFP.

Clearly, this is a very small sample and the views expressed may not be representative of the cohort at large. The intention was to learn more about how my own students use MT and consider how educators may wish to more fully engage with the issue.

## Use of MT

Both students expressed positive attitudes towards MT and stated they had used it extensively throughout the IFP. Student A reported using MT for 'almost 90% of the programme', and both reported using the technology for a wide variety of reading and writing tasks. Various reasons were given for why they used MT, including time saving, difficulty of the reading requirements, and greater confidence when writing in L1. However, the use of MT was not a habit these two students developed on the IFP; each reported regularly using MT in their language studies since middle school.

In terms of their process, both interviewees described similar methods. Texts were first written in L1 and then translated to English using software such as Google Translate or Baidu. Subsequently, the translated texts would be edited and improved with further language tools such as Grammarly or Quillbot, which offer suggestions on how to improve sentence level grammar and structure. The students would then use their own knowledge of both the topic and of academic writing to edit and improve the texts. Interestingly, student A reported that at this late stage of the process she often translated the text back into Mandarin in order to check and assess her work.

Despite having largely positive attitudes towards MT, both interviewees expressed some concerns regarding its use, including the danger of developing an over-reliance on the tools and of experiencing potential issues with accuracy.

## MT as an 'open secret'

When the students were asked if they had felt comfortable talking about their use of MT with their teachers both answered that they had not. Student B stated "I did not tell my teachers I'm using the machine translations. I think some students may be afraid because they think it's unofficial, and they think that teachers may say: stop it". Student A agreed with this, recalling: "I think all the teachers know that we use translation but we were not sure whether teachers support us to do so. I remember once a teacher told us that we'd better not use it because it's better to practise English".

## 'MT workshops' for IFP students

At the University of Ottawa, Bowker (2020) trialled workshops for international students in which they were trained to effectively edit their translated texts for clarity and academic register, recognise inaccuracies and bias in translated texts, and use MT in a manner which did not breach academic integrity (e.g. not translating the work of others without citing and referencing). When asked about the idea of offering a workshop like this on an IFP, student B reacted positively, stating "yes, I think that will help students improve their skills to use translations because they could be more academic or more professional in their writing". Student A, however, was a little more cautious, speculating "perhaps it's good but I think most of the students are already good at it".

## Concluding thoughts

This small scale study confirmed how extensively some of my students had used MT throughout their IFP studies and showed they felt unable to discuss their use of MT with teachers. Moving forward, it seems unrealistic to ask IFP students, who may have been using MT for a number of years prior to starting their programme, to significantly change their study habits. As Loyet (2018) expresses it, blocking the use of MT discounts the reality in which our younger students operate: effective use of MT can, in fact, assist and not replace student effort.

Realistically, despite these advances in MT, IFP students are still likely to require subject specific knowledge and academic English tuition in order to produce high quality work. However, the use of MT is now so ubiquitous that we need to ask ourselves: how can we, at some level, acknowledge and incorporate student use of MT into our existing tuition? Perhaps the engagement could occur in the form of a workshop (as described by Bowker). An open two-way dialogue regarding how students can both effectively revise translated texts and maintain academic integrity may be a good place to start.

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

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*Students entering International Foundation Programmes and UG programmes often seem to demonstrate limited overall cultural and EDI awareness, skills that are increasingly valued in diverse workplaces. Student feedback on an EDI and cultural awareness pilot, collaboratively conducted by the Nottingham Advantage Program at the University of Nottingham, further underlines the need to develop modules for EDI and cultural awareness. These skills are arguably essential to becoming effective global citizens. This paper contains reflections on the need and frequency for in-depth EDI and cultural awareness practices in classrooms for IFP students. These considerations are based both on student feedback through reflective assessments of a taught module on Intercultural Awareness and, more recently, the results of a pilot workshop series. It is important to note that the paper outlines reflections in the form of classroom practices that are observed in teaching. Discussions on conducting more in-depth research in this field is being taken into consideration for the near future, as an outcome of this initial exploration.*

*The observations made within the existing module activities and the workshop have the potential to reveal learning and development opportunities which could be used to enhance EDI and intercultural awareness training in other modules through focusing on feedback from student experiences, preferences and descriptions revealed in the pilot described in this paper.*

## Introduction

The University of Nottingham Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy is centred on ensuring opportunities are open to everyone, recognising who is in the room and getting people from different cultural and social backgrounds to feel included and accepted. Emphasis on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in educational institutions is observed in courses across all fields and disciplines, though there is much less detail on actual teaching activities, strategies and assessments that can be utilized (Hartwell et al., 2017). It is also apparent that EDI practices do not normally include Foundation students, even though they are arguably equally in need of this as their Undergraduate counterparts. It could also be argued that our Foundation students may be in more need of this as they will be unlikely to have experienced the breadth of diversity of international University education, having just transitioned from a high school environment.

Furthermore, studies suggest that exposing students more fully to intercultural experiences and encouraging them be aware of their understanding of self and EDI early on in their academic lives allows them to be more skilled at developing respect for differing perspectives (Cross 1998). Cultural awareness is arguably of ever-increasing significance, given the continual increase in diversity on many UK university campuses.

## EDI and the Nottingham Advantage Award (NAA) Programme: bridging the gap

The NAA is a programme that operates across all three Nottingham University campuses, and its main aim is to enhance student employability. The Programme operates on the premise of increasing students' chances of future employment by offering modules that supplement skills acquired in their academic programmes. Preparing students to be global graduates includes understanding of university values and EDI from the employability perspective. Even within the NAA there was not a sufficient level of teaching practices that encouraged understanding of EDI in modules. Having identified the gap it became vital to explore the idea of integrating EDI and cultural awareness into the NAA. This process needed to start with ascertaining the level of need and students' general attitudes to enhanced EDI training opportunities.



**Figure 1:** Topics covered in the three sessions.

## A pilot EDI workshop series

A pilot online workshop activity was developed which consisting of three sessions, each an hour long, and was open to students across all three campuses. It was a collaborative effort by the author and colleagues from all Nottingham campuses. Each workshop focused on a specific dimension of EDI (Figure 1). The first session introduced EDI, provided clear definitions of the concept and outlined its importance, especially in diverse workplaces. The second workshop focused primarily on cultural awareness and emotional intelligence, offering different cultural angles on everyday work situations. The aim was assisting students in realising how perspectives and behaviours might differ depending solely on cultural backgrounds. The third and last session explored unconscious bias, highlighting the effects this may have on teamwork.

## Student evaluation of pilot: responses

To gauge understanding of EDI, students were asked to answer a number of questions prior to the start of the first session. Two examples are given below:

1. "How confident do you feel about working with others in a group where the people are different to you?"
2. "How confident are you about your understanding of EDI?"

The same questions were asked at the end of the session. In addition to this, an evaluation survey was conducted through MS Teams where students were encouraged to provide anonymous feedback on the workshops.

There were approximately 100 students from all Nottingham campuses who attended the sessions. Responses to the surveys were received from 36 respondents in total. Four, 15 and 17 students responded regarding sessions 1, 2, 3 respectively. In response to questions on confidence levels of EDI awareness, all students initially responded with 'good' or 'very good'. 32, the majority of students, responded with 'very good' at the end of the sessions, the remaining four responded 'good'. Half the respondents felt more content could have been covered to increase the perceived usefulness of the session after the first session. 12 out of 15 respondents 'strongly agreed' that the second session was useful, and the remaining three 'agreed'. Additional comments received from attendees were positive. The comments revealed students found the sessions 'useful and eye-opening, helping them understand many perspectives.' Other comments included: 'Students in break out rooms could have been more interactive [during discussions where students were put into groups].' Students also included suggestions to run more sessions in the future, as well as extending group discussion time.

In summary, the pilot appeared to be successful in its aim to introduce students to a better understanding of EDI. This is based on the increase in the number of students responding to the question, 'how confident are you about your understanding of EDI?' with 'Very good' at the end of the sessions, as opposed to how more felt before the sessions were conducted ('good'). Students affirmed their confidence levels in how they understood the concept of cultural awareness.

Pilot limitations

Although the pilot seemed to help students better understand EDI, discussions for a full module based on EDI need to take several factors into consideration. Among these are:

- Cultural sensitivities. This is mainly due to existing cultural and/or religious sensitivities that would need to be taken into account.
- The definition of EDI, if not fully inclusive, may put the programme in its entirety in a precarious position when it comes to the student union in the UK campus. This is mainly due to the student union being particularly committed to ensuring all students are included, and anything that may result in members of the student population feeling discriminated against in any manner may result in complaints being issued. This particular concern was identified by the author’s colleagues at the campus, and so a module such as this would have to take great care and consideration when it comes to inclusivity.
- High student engagement across all three campuses may be a challenge, especially taking time differences into account.

Due to the above constraints, further discussions would need to take place before a definitive decision to develop and deliver a full-scale EDI module could be made. The author intends to further investigate the importance of Intercultural Awareness within the Foundation curriculum. It has not been decided whether this will be included in the discussions involving the EDI module.

Suggestions for transferable application

An EDI module may not be possible in all teaching and learning contexts within foundation programmes at this point in time, mainly due to the current scheduling of classes within our programs which present challenging time constraints. However, that does not mean classrooms cannot start embedding some effective EDI and cultural awareness practices/ strategies for Foundation students. The author has been teaching Intercultural Awareness, a module that has successfully run under the NAA programme for the last seven years. The module is open to all students and has implemented techniques for understanding culture and self that have yielded positive student feedback (within the classroom and through feedback channels). The module has also been shown to be effective in improving overall student mindset, based on increased student engagement. This has also been keenly observed in the reflective assessment for the module.

The author recommends that readers consider implementing some of the following practices:

1. Assign students scenarios of different cultural situations and encourage students to discuss their individual perspectives on them. Allow students to express their interpretations freely without constraint. Challenge them to identify aspects of bias and other aspects of behaviour that would be connected to EDI.
2. At the start of every session (consistency is key), assure students that the classroom is a non-judgmental space. A statement to the effect of, "You are in a non-judgemental space/zone. There is no judgement in this space, please feel free to express yourself" is sufficient.
3. Encourage students to reflect on themselves and how they are affected by discussions that occur in the classroom, particularly if the topic touches on sensitive issues. Doing this repeatedly will allow them to develop self-awareness. Literature has shown that developing self-awareness provides for a solid foundation on which ground rules and acceptable interaction are fostered (Griffin 2007a).

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Simple strategies for supporting dyslexic learners

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*This article discusses the importance of embedding simple strategies and teaching techniques into classroom practice and 1-1 tutorials on a Foundation course to support learners with dyslexia. It is argued that these need not take extra time or require additional planning, as they can be implemented in regular tutorial slots, or if used in class, will benefit all students, with or without neurodiversity. Ideas for how to build student’s confidence and awareness of their strengths are discussed as well as a simple learning aid which can benefit both dyslexic students and non-dyslexics.*

According to the British Dyslexia Association (2022a), around 10% of the UK population has dyslexia. Although the number of international students diagnosed as dyslexic may be lower due to cultural factors such as stigma associated with disability (Saetermoe et al., 2001), this does not negate the likelihood of at least one dyslexic student in any given Foundation class. The British Dyslexia Association (2022b) defines dyslexia as an information processing difficulty which not only affects reading and writing, but also areas such as memory, literacy skills and organisational skills. Despite these challenges, there are many common strengths that dyslexics possess, such as 'big picture thinking', creativity and strong communication skills (British Dyslexia Association, 2022b; Macdonald, 2010).

Given the emphasis on linear thinking and the typical forms of assessment in Higher Education which do not favour these types of learners, the average dyslexic student can find studying on a Foundation course particularly challenging. The usual means of support provided by universities tends to be through a Reasonable Adjustment Plan, which allows them concessions such as extra time in exams and the use of assistive technology such as a digital voice recorder. Unfortunately, many students are not aware of the support available to them, or find that it does not aid them in their day-to-day academic life and studies (Mortimore and Crozier, 2007). Neither does it assist those without a formal diagnosis, such as many of the international students who come from cultures where neurodiversity also may not be recognised or diagnosed in the same

way. Zhang et al. (2022) state that in China, reading difficulties may be attributed to a 'lack of effort, motivation or aptitude' rather than a medical or developmental condition such as dyslexia, and so a student coming from such a background may not be aware of their difference or if they are, perhaps reticent to declare it and therefore cannot access support.

As a result, the task of supporting and enabling dyslexic learners to meet the learning outcomes of the Foundation class falls heavily on lecturers and EAP tutors. This can seem like an additional burden for the majority, who may feel ill-equipped and untrained, as well as lacking the time needed to develop accessible materials such as scaffolded tasks, mind-mapping, or more task-based, creative activities. I faced this conundrum myself, whilst teaching a small EAP Foundation class in which 25% declared they were dyslexic. With limited planning time, and minimal training in Specific Learning Difficulties, I felt that it must be possible to identify support strategies and accessible teaching materials which were either already embedded into the EAP Foundation curriculum or if not, would benefit all learners, regardless of their neurodiversity needs.

Firstly, I found that a simple conversation in a 1-1 tutorial can form the basis of an informative needs analysis as it allows the student to identify and articulate areas of difficulty as well as their strengths. Very often, students with dyslexia are keenly aware of the challenges they face in education but are not as aware, if at all, of their dyslexic-based strengths (Mortimore, 2008), and so asking



Source (reference)	Page	Direct quote	My paraphrase
Ecochard, S., & Fotheringham, J. (2017) International students' unique challenges – Why understanding international transitions to higher education matters. <i>Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice</i> , 5(7), 100-108.	103	"... for most international students, the linguistic dimension of their experience may well be the greatest challenge, as language is the medium to all other aspects of life in the UK (Sawir, 2005 in Burdett & Crossman, 2012)"	Language is one of the biggest barriers for international Ss – it affects everything.  This is my experience so far. Probably links to difficulties socialising?

Figure 1: Notetaking table

about and encouraging these gifts can be an invaluable confidence and motivation booster. Additionally, allowing students to reflect in this way can supply Foundation tutors with ideas for how to cater for the student's specific learning preferences in classes, lectures and seminars.

Secondly, tutorials can allow dyslexic students a space to reflect on and develop their study strategies and organisational techniques. Many dyslexic students find coping with the requirements of academic life, such as following lectures whilst simultaneously taking notes, much harder than non-dyslexics. As a result, coping strategies are needed, such as re-watching recordings of lectures, accessing PowerPoints in advance or using assistive technology (MacCullagh et al., 2017). However, not all students come to university armed with such strategies, and so having conversations about their current methods as well as suggesting simple ideas such as the above, can have a significant impact on their academic success, not only in their Foundation year but also when they embark on their undergraduate studies.

To illustrate the benefit of this, a dyslexic tutee and I jointly identified a key area of development: keeping a clear record of notes, sources and ideas when researching for an essay. Although this was one of the learning outcomes on the EAP course, more scaffolding was needed to enable him to apply this to his self-study. As such, we collaboratively devised a simple document called the Notetaking Table (Figure 1) which provided a structured approach to collating his research and ideas. Despite its simplicity, this learning aid proved to be incredibly beneficial, and at the end of the semester, he reported using it to research all his essays on the Foundation programme, not just the EAP module, and that it was 'the most useful thing he had learned on the Foundation course'.

Since scaffolded learning aids are beneficial for all students, not just dyslexic learners, I subsequently decided to introduce the Notetaking Table to an entire EAP Foundation class. The students were surveyed after 4 weeks of use and 70% responded that they used the table either 'frequently' or 'sometimes'. When asked to expand on why they found it useful, responses demonstrated that they had understood its purpose and value, stating for example that it aided idea collation, clear organisation, easier review later on; and, that organising notes was easier as they were in one place with their references to the source. Those who did not use the table mostly responded that this was because they already had a note-taking system in place, such as a Google Doc or a physical notebook. These results demonstrate the potential for accessible materials to benefit all learners, dyslexic or not.

In conclusion, although supporting dyslexic learners can seem daunting and perhaps beyond the scope of a non-specialist, there are very simple strategies that can be employed to promote student success and confidence. Tutorials are an invaluable opportunity to recognise the student's particular strengths and personal challenges as well as develop study skills and organisation techniques. Secondly, accessible materials developed to scaffold learning for dyslexic learners can have a broader scope for teaching and supporting learning in general. Ultimately then, since good practice for dyslexic learners is good practice for all learners (Microsoft, 2022), supporting those with dyslexia need not be an insurmountable task.

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# Reflections on teaching a new programme

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*This article shares a number of critical reflections based on recent experience of teaching on Foundation Programmes. After a very brief background of my teaching background and experience, I describe a series of perceived idiosyncrasies of my new student cohort and outline some of my main teaching approaches and principles, designed to address their needs and maintain motivation. I will describe how I have been able to refine and evolve newly current practices as well as challenge certain held preconceptions. Though focused on home students (though some of these from international origins), the points raised are transferable to international students.*

The tale of my decade of teaching at the International Study and Language Institute in the University of Reading has predominantly involved Pre-sessional and In-sessional students and thus working almost exclusively with undergraduate and postgraduate international students from Levels 4–7. However, this academic year, the narrative moved in the exciting new direction of working on our International Foundation Programme (IFP) at Level 3. This experience has enabled me to consolidate my teaching methods in a new area and I will highlight a key element in my approach which I hope can inspire the reader to consider ways of building and maintaining student engagement.

Given my previous experience, I was initially a little trepidatious at the new direction. Specifically, IFP students sometimes have the reputation of being challenging in terms of engagement and motivation especially given their age. True, the undergraduates that I have taught have been young, there have been a few foundation age Pre-sessional students, and my career-beginning experience on the Japan and Exchange Teaching Programme and the private sector in Japan led me to teach many teenagers and young adults. Overall, however, the Foundation demographic represented a new chapter for me.

A further plotline was then introduced when I was assigned to home student classes, though

with some students of international origins. Specifically, my three classes would consist of twenty students each, with one Humanities group and two from Pharmacy courses. It also turned out that the students would not all be as young as first anticipated, with several returning to education. What I could predict (and ultimately observed) though were the varied social demographics, disciplinary mindsets and cultural differences evident. Additionally, there was an inherently greater awareness of neurodiversity and learning differences (or so-called 'disabilities') with several declared cases on record. As such, I prepared to support diversity and inclusivity by actuating my own personal radars and lenses for such issues as acquired from varied reading on the subjects (Fung, 2021; Lancaster University, n.d.; LaRoque, 2021; Silberman, 2015) and thereafter incorporating my observations into my practice.

Despite the manifold new plot twists and the different pedagogical dynamics to contend with, I was confident in my abilities and techniques and decided to focus on rapport building. This ultimately means being enthusiastic, friendly, approachable, and building relationships with the students. A part of this and a way to facilitate it is to have a course playlist and incorporate music into the sessions – a practice I developed during online teaching during the pandemic.

To stipulate, this is not about songs as part of the lesson as such, or some kind of 'jazz chants' pedagogy (Graham, 2010; Nagata et al., 2012). Instead it involves music at the start and/or end of sessions, in breaks, or unobtrusively during taskwork. However, it is distinctly not about trying to be 'down with the kids' or the 'cool teacher', which will never work. It is about showing myself as a person and using the content with delivery method hooks to stimulate conversations and initiate relationship building opportunities so that students might reciprocate. This in part occurs in the way the music is introduced, the 'stories' around and throughout that, the thematic threads across the weeks, the integration of suggestions, and overall the interactive, culminative narrative(s) created. The corollary drive herein in turn is to nurture a sense of belonging (Thomas, 2012) with the ultimate goal of encouraging student engagement, motivation, retention and success. Further, it aims to aid the deconstruction of the dichotomous teacher/student power structure which enables dialogic, dynamic and co-constructed learning that is inclusive of all (Laville et al., 2022).

I quickly discovered in Week 1 that matters were indeed going to be somewhat different to my previous experiences with international students, and actually, the differences even seemed slightly more pronounced: There were different energies (and apathies!), attention spans and engagement levels. This ranged from those students completely involved to those seemingly completely disengaged (but who could still approach me at the end of class with insightful questions). Also, something all educators know became as apparent as ever: One can deliver the same materials to different classes with completely different timings, reactions, interactions and estimations of success.

Admittedly ruminating upon the lower degrees of success, I realised it was still essentially a rapport building challenge wherein getting to know the students by engaging them as much as possible was paramount. Again, the playlist

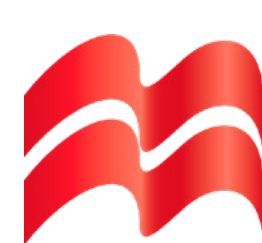
was a road in. It exists outside of the learning in a sense, but can enable an open, buoyant and enjoyable learning environment and thus promote and sustain engagement, again with those hooks in delivery the tracks both provide and necessitate. With that atmosphere in place I can work on building towards the learning outcomes with confidence of a greater likelihood of maintained focus. Thus I resolved to persist, but with awareness of the schema change occurring for the students: My approach was perhaps one they were not quite used to – a suspicion corroborated by various student comments later in fact.

By the end of term I felt I had been successful. Indeed, engagement had improved in pockets where it had been more distant, some students had sent in songs, others had stated our classes were the highlight of their academic week and inspired their efforts, and some had opened up about their learning differences and other life issues. Of course, these wonderful and gratifying phenomena are not solely due to the inclusion of music, but were the rewards of the whole narrative we had created and were some of the best results I have had in any class previously.

The moral of the story centres on the need for a commitment to rapport building to get the most out of our learners. It is about making connections beyond the immediate syllabus and the main learning objectives by constructing a sense of belonging and community. This means approaches that keep building on what works, but that also experiment with new techniques to refresh repertoires and bring dynamism to methodologies. Overall, the challenges of the term helped me to reassess some prior interpretations and opinions. In doing so I have drawn upon my stock of teaching skills while keeping a steady focus on motivating my students in creative ways beyond solely focussing on the intended learning outcomes. As such, I hope the reader might be encouraged to give some attention to honing and maintaining their own 'playlist' of classroom engagement activities, whatever their versions are.

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