

Title: **International Students, Academic Writing and Plagiarism**

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Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Be aware of research conducted through an FDTL project by Lancaster University and the London School of Economics into previous academic experiences of international students coming to the UK to follow postgraduate programmes
- Develop their understanding of ways in which international students evolve their academic writing abilities at postgraduate level in a UK HE context
- Identify the effects of previous academic experiences and the process of development of academic practices on apparent plagiarism amongst this group of students
- Have greater insight into how electronic plagiarism detection software tends to pick out international students as having 'plagiarised'
- Identify ways in which educational developers can support academic and other colleagues in better understanding and supporting international students.

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

This session results from a phase 5 FDTL project at Lancaster University Management School and the London School of Economics which looked at the particular issues which arise for students coming to the UK to study at postgraduate level. Plagiarism detection software appears to disproportionately identify international students as engaging in academic malpractice. The results of this study, which focussed particularly on students from China, India and Greece, indicate that international students on postgraduate programmes in the UK go through a very different process of academic skills development than their UK equivalents as a result of their previous experience. By gaining greater insight into this process we can help international students better to be able to understand the culture and academic practices of the higher education system in the UK. The project has developed web-based materials for academic staff, educational developers, policy-makers and international students to support workshops and provide reference materials for work in this area. This session will be based on these materials.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

There will be an introduction to the project, video material about the three countries in the study including the voices of a range of students, task-based discussion activities using case study material and open discussion of the issues raised by the materials. Participants will also have the opportunity to discuss how they might use the project resources for educational development purposes within their own institutions.

| Approx timings | Topic/focus | Activity |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| 10 mins | Brief introduction to the project | Presentation |
| 5 mins | Introduction to this workshop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - context of dissemination materials - limitations of the research, but indications of good questions to ask - quick tour round web site | Presentation |
| 10 mins | Lead into video clip of student undergraduate experience in Greece | Participants to consider in relation to what they know about their own students' backgrounds and previous experiences |
| 10 mins | De-brief video clip: what surprised you, what questions were raised in your mind | Plenary discussion |
| 15 mins | Apply the issues raised from the video presentation to own students, using a pro forma | Small group discussions. |
| 15 mins | Issues of plagiarism detection | Presentation & plenary discussion |
| 20 mins | How, as educational developers, can we support the thinking and planning of academic staff in relation to the development of appropriate academic practices of their international students and the use of plagiarism detection processes and software | Plenary discussion: De-brief pro forma discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - usefulness in bringing out issues - appropriateness for different purposes - for whom is it useful - what changes needed for other groups Consideration of plagiarism detection processes. This project aimed at business and mgt students at post-grad level – what would be needed to transfer the insights gained to other contexts |

References

Project web site is at: <http://www.lums.lancs.ac.uk/Departments/owt/Research/sdaw/>