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Learning and assessment in the higher education context

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Research Notes: 77

CONTENTS

Editorial

This edition of *Research Notes* looks at teaching, learning and assessment at institutional level. This is an important component of Learning Oriented Assessment (LOA), a systemic approach to assessment and learning which links local and national contexts with international standards to promote a positive impact in classrooms. The authors of the three studies in this issue all teach in the university sector, where English language proficiency is essential not only for admissions purposes, but also to advance professionally post-graduation, or to share knowledge in the increasingly interdependent field of international higher education. Here, each of the three authors describe projects they carried out in their own contexts to support learning and provide reliable assessment. Each of them uses the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to assess learning outcomes.

In our first article, Lucy Davies focuses on writing assessment in pre-sessional courses at a UK university. She uses introspective methods (think-aloud protocols) to gain greater understanding of the decision-making processes of six experienced English for Academic Purposes (EAP) raters when marking a written task using criteria aligned to the CEFR. The author found that the raters fell into two categories: 'orange' raters, who tended towards a more thorough approach but were more emotive and had high expectations, resulting in lower scores; and 'yellow' raters, who tended to be more objective and considered the marking criteria and level of the student more, resulting in higher scores. The findings raised questions regarding potential variables such as language proficiency levels, time pressures of marking, the effectiveness of the marking criteria, and what could be considered 'good practice'.

Next, we have Sharon Hartle who gives us an example of LOA in the context of higher education in Italy. She describes the learning-oriented approach to assessment adopted in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures of Verona University. Its aim is to implement assessment as a systematic component of the teaching-learning cycle rather than seeing the two processes of teaching and assessing as being separate from each other. Here she illustrates a practical example of how LOA was implemented on an Advanced English for Professional Purposes course in the department. It shows how summative and formative tools can be combined systematically to create a cycle whereby formative assessment aids learning by means of teacher and peer observation, reflection, and goal setting, which, in turn, leads ultimately to improved performance on summative tests.

In our final report, Elizabeth Long describes an initiative at another Italian university, this time to train lecturers to teach their subject in English. She describes the evolution of lecturer training courses designed to meet the growth of English-medium instruction (EMI) degree programmes. She illustrates how methodology and language instruction were delivered to Italian lecturers through three distinct 'Lecturing in English' modules, and outlines both the peer- and self-assessment. Finally, she also considers the new role of the teacher trainer and reflects on the evolution of the course over time, as well as participant reactions.

These three studies with individual teachers working in the field of higher education provide diverse examples of learning and assessment tailored to individual contexts.

What are English for Academic Purposes raters looking for in a written task?

Lucy Davies English Language Training Services, Swansea University

Introduction

This case study aims to gain some understanding of the decision-making processes of a group of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) raters whilst they are marking a written task. Although overall scores are usually similar, raters have been found to differ in their consideration of the many individual factors within subjectively marked work and attach varying levels of importance to different criteria (Eckes 2008, Kuiken and Vedder 2014). In addition, a number of studies have also observed raters considering extraneous factors (Douglas 1994, Huhta, Alanen, Tarnanen, Martin and Hirvelä 2014, Schoonen 2005). As inconsistency between raters could lead to variation in scoring and therefore affect validity, there is much support in the field for studying the thought processes of raters whilst they are marking (Brown, Iwashita and McNamara 2005, Douglas 1994, Huhta et al 2014, Shaw and Weir 2007, Vaughan 1991), in order to understand the reasoning behind any variation.

Rating processes

Individual characteristics of the rater, the task itself and the language level of the work may be influential in the variations in rater approaches to marking and decision-making. A number of studies have categorised raters according to their strategies or their focuses. Milanovic, Saville, Pollitt and Cook (1996), for instance, observed four different strategies employed by raters when marking an essay. The first, they labelled the principled two-scan approach whereby the rater will always ensure they read through a paper twice, even if the second read is not strictly necessary; the second is the pragmatic two-scan approach where a rater will only read through another time if they feel there is a specific need. Other raters will only read through once, with some simply looking for positive and negative aspects (the read-through approach), and the remainder will pause near the beginning of their read-through to form a hypothesis which they will either confirm or deny when reading the remainder (the provisional mark approach). Cai (2015), on the other hand, categorised the raters in her study according to the main focuses of their marking, which were grammatical accuracy (form-oriented raters), whether a response answered the question (content-oriented raters) and a combination of the two (balanced raters).

With regard to the effect of the individual characteristics of the rater, a few studies have found marking experience influential (Cumming, Kantor and Powers 2002, Schoonen, Vergeer and Eiting 1997, Thompson 1991), with Milanovic et al (1996) noticing that experienced raters tend to mark holistically and newer raters take a more analytical approach. Hamp-Lyons (1990) and Vann, Lorenz and Meyer (1991), meanwhile, found that the amount of exposure to second language (L2) writing affected rating. It is not just experience particular to marking that may affect rating. According to Shaw and Weir's (2007) adaptation of Weir's (2005) *socio-cognitive framework*, experiential factors, such as professional background, and physical, physiological and psychological factors that may be experienced at the time of marking could all influence the rating process, although it is noted that the body of evidence relating these to marking of writing is limited.

A further affective factor in the marking of writing is whether or not the rater is also the teacher. Shaw and Weir (2007) advise that raters should undergo a selection process to ensure they have an appropriate background and level of experience but this is usually only possible for centralised and commercialised tests. EAP departments within a university, for example, by necessity use their tutors as raters. This facilitates excellent formative assessment *for* learning opportunities in the classroom; however, Sundqvist, Wikström, Sandlund and Nyroos (2018) claim that teachers are not always the most reliable assessors *of* learning when it comes to summatively assessing work against a set of criteria. They also found that, despite the provision of detailed testing instructions, teachers would vary in their practices across all testing activities, with existing teacher belief sets playing a role in this. Furthermore, Tengberg (2018) found that teachers also had difficulties matching items with what they were testing; likewise, they were unable to accurately and consistently identify the difficulty of an item.

Bias towards candidates and/or task types and severity of marking can also affect scoring. Huhta et al (2014) found that raters can differ considerably in the severity of their marking, with McNamara (1996) noting that the degree of severity can be influenced by bias. Based on the assumption that severity and bias are often present in rating, Trace, Janssen and Meier (2017) looked at the effect discussion can have on the two factors. They found that negotiating scores can minimise the effect of rater bias but does not necessarily influence the severity of scoring.

Bias can take a number of forms, most obviously towards candidates, particularly when a teacher is rating (attempts at anonymising work are not always successful in smaller settings) but bias is also found towards task and item types (McNamara 1996, Schoonen 2005, Tengberg 2018). One example of how raters' task/item type bias has been found to affect validity is when a marker adjusts their scoring to compensate for perceived task difficulty (Polio and Glew 1996). This is particularly an issue if the marker does not have a clear understanding of item difficulty (Tengberg 2018).

Finally, the proficiency level of the script has also been considered an influence on rater behaviour (Milanovic et al 1996). A number of studies have found that scoring is most accurate at the extremities of the scale (Granfeldt and Ågren 2014, Kuiken and Vedder 2014, Yan 2014) with raters reporting difficulties in marking intermediate learners' work (Ågren, Granfeldt and Schlyter 2012). Milanovic et al (1996) found that raters focus on different aspects of the work at different levels, e.g. vocabulary and content in scripts at a higher language level, and communication and task realisation in scripts at a lower language level.

Case study

Method

Six raters were asked to mark the same 1,500-word discursive EAP essay at Level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, Council of Europe 2001). The essay had previously been used with a different group of 12 staff for a standard-setting exercise prior to their marking similar scripts, and was marked against criteria that are aligned to the CEFR and focus on content, critical thinking and linguistic competence. The scoring is such that marks are awarded out of 20, with students needing over 15 marks to achieve the top band and 10 to 15 marks to achieve the second band. During the moderation process, all scores awarded were within the second band; there was, however, a 4-point variance within the band. This meant I could be reasonably sure of the level of the paper but it also included enough variance to elicit any differences in thought patterns between raters.

The raters participating in the study were all EAP tutors with a minimum of three years' experience in the field. I asked each rater to complete a biodata questionnaire in an attempt to determine other factors that may be affecting their decision-making process, in line with the socio-cognitive framework (Shaw and Weir 2007).

Areas investigated were occupational experience, academic experience, language background, and physical and psychological factors such as motivation and concentration. Participants' responses were fairly varied. In order to stabilise other potential variables, I selected participants who had been using the marking criteria for one full academic year and had attended regular training sessions during this time period. I also ensured the task was undertaken in the same quiet location, separately, during the working day.

During the task, raters were asked to verbalise what they were thinking while they were marking, in line with Ericsson's (2002) claims that a concurrent *think-aloud* is claimed to be the most effective and accurate method of eliciting thought processes. I wanted to avoid creating expectations for the think-aloud as I was concerned too much input may have led to tutors describing what they thought I wanted to hear, thus skewing the data. Instead of a training session, I created a short demonstration using a completely different task which was marked against different criteria. I also attempted the task myself to raise awareness of any challenges the participants may face as think-alouds add extra load to the working memory during the rating process (Dörnyei 2007) and may lead to a change in rating behaviour (Lumley 2002). On the day, each tutor was asked simply to 'verbalise all the thoughts you have whilst marking'. Tutors were also told that they did not need to worry about bad language, or thoughts drifting elsewhere, as this would all create valid data. Tutors were then played an extract of the demonstration and asked, firstly, if they understood what they needed to do and, lastly, if they had any further questions, before embarking on the task. Transcripts resulting from the think-aloud were then cross-referenced against the essay, which I was able to segment into paragraph- and sentence-level data, and then coded and re-coded to elicit the raters' focuses and any other significant patterns.

What aspects of the task are EAP raters focusing on when marking an academic essay?

Raters appear to be focusing on seven different aspects of the task. These aspects were tagged as: language (where raters were talking about grammatical structures and vocabulary, for example); communication (where the focus was on the student's ability to convey a message); topic (how focused the essay was on the topic and whether the student had answered the question); sources (whether students had incorporated external research into the writing and referencing skills); structure (how the essay was organised, paragraphing and rhetorical functions); criticality (focusing on the student's ability to evaluate and analyse, for example); and style (appropriacy to the situation and academic register). Each rater focused on different aspects of the task to differing degrees, with Raters 1, 2 and 6 very focused on relevance to the topic and answering the question, with language and communication most important to Raters 3 and 4 (see Table 1).

Table 1: The proportion of coded utterances from each rater's protocol that focus on the seven identified aspects of the task

Focuses	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Rater 4	Rater 5	Rater 6
Language	18%	32%	51%	25%	4%	25%
Communication	12%	7%	16%	21%	9%	6%
Topic	25%	26%	0%	9%	4%	25%
Sources	11%	3%	18%	9%	31%	13%
Structure	8%	3%	2%	18%	13%	11%
Criticality	20%	19%	9%	12%	35%	10%
Style	6%	10%	4%	6%	4%	10%

With regard to *how* raters mark, the participants were evenly split into two very clear and distinct types with strong and unique characteristics: *orange raters* (1, 2 and 6) and *yellow raters* (3, 4 and 5). The tendencies exhibited by each 'type' are in Table 2.

Table 2: The unique tendencies exhibited by the two identified rater types

Orange raters	Yellow raters
Read the essay sentence by sentence, analysing almost every sentence in detail, in a linear pattern. Referred regularly to the question.	Read the essay paragraph by paragraph, before highlighting key aspects. Referred regularly to the co-text.
Used emotive language e.g. 'This is confusing!'	Used neutral and positive language e.g. 'Let's see what they are trying to say here.'
Compared the student's abilities to what they would do e.g. 'If this were me, I would …'	Thought about what the student was attempting to achieve e.g. 'I presume they are trying to …'
Were less specific when discussing linguistic competence. Often just using the word 'language' e.g. 'The language used here is unclear.'	Were specific when discussing linguistic competence e.g. 'This is the wrong use of the passive here.'
Expressed hesitation.	Rarely second-guessed decisions.
Spent around 50 minutes marking the task and spent the majority of the time looking at the essay.	Spent around 30 minutes marking the task and spent the majority of the time considering the marking criteria.
Resulted in lower marks (but within the same band).	Resulted in higher marks (but within the same band).

Discussion

There were two very different approaches to marking, despite all raters receiving the same training in marking such a task. Orange raters tended towards a more thorough approach but were more emotive and had high expectations, resulting in lower scores. Yellow raters tended to be more objective and considered the marking criteria and level of the student more, resulting in higher scores. While this does not provide the same findings as previous studies, some similarities can be found with raters employing different strategies (Milanovic et al 1996). Orange raters approached the task at sentence level, reading from beginning to end in detail. Yellow raters read at paragraph level with regular cross-referencing to the co-text. In line with Cai's (2015) findings, it was also clear that tutors were focusing on different aspects while marking. However, potentially due to the integrated nature and specific purpose of an EAP essay, most of the raters exhibited a significant focus on content-related aspects and there were no clear patterns here. However, two of the three yellow raters demonstrated the highest percentage of mentions for language and communication, and when language was mentioned by yellow raters it was discussed quite specifically. On the other hand, orange raters, often just referred to 'language' generally and whether it was 'unclear' or 'confusing'.

Given the suggestions in the literature that rater characteristics can influence rating (Cumming et al 2002, Hamp-Lyons 1990, Milanovic et al 1996, O'Sullivan 2000, Schoonen et al 1997, Shaw and Weir 2007, Thompson 1991, Vann et al 1991), the participants' biodata was examined against the findings above and no patterns, expected or unexpected, were observed. The only similarities found were, firstly, two of the three orange raters had studied English as a first language for their first degree and, secondly, yellow raters were arguably taking a more holistic approach and orange raters a more analytical approach; although, unlike Milanovic et al's (1996) findings, these different approaches did not appear to be related to experience. Of course, the sample of raters in this study is very small and a wider piece of research may demonstrate stronger patterns across the biodata.

One of the key differences between the orange raters and the yellow raters was their expectations. Orange raters were all observed comparing the student's work with what they themselves would do. This seemed to lead to frustrations. Yellow raters demonstrated awareness of what the student was trying to achieve, actively used can do statements from the CEFR as their frame of reference, and spent a far higher proportion of their time considering the marking criteria. Overall, they seemed to have a far more positive marking experience, tending to use neutral and optimistic language throughout their think-aloud. In addition, yellow raters seemed to express far less hesitation and were more confident in their marking decisions.

The findings raise many questions of course. Would the marking of different skills (reading, listening, and speaking) and tasks result in similar findings? Would the student's proficiency level affect the approach towards marking? How do the time and quantity pressures of real-life marking affect the findings? Are the marking criteria effectively minimising the imbalance in construct representation found during the marking process (in other words, do the marking criteria result in a balanced and fair assessment of what is being tested, despite the differences between the markers)? And, finally, could a particular 'approach' be recommended as 'good practice'?

Conclusions and recommendations

In short, this case study found that a group of six tutors exhibited two sets of clear and distinct tendencies when rating a 1,500-word EAP essay at CEFR Level B2. The raters were categorised, according to the tendencies observed, into orange raters, who approached the task analytically and had high expectations of the student, and yellow raters, who took a more global view of the task and framed their expectations within the standards set by the marking criteria. Whilst the resultant scores fell within the same band, the orange raters all awarded lower scores than the yellow raters. A key limitation of this study is its size: it is a snapshot of a group of EAP tutors rating a particular writing task. Given the distinct categories noted, expanding the study to include a larger sample of tasks and/or raters would allow us to observe whether orange raters and yellow raters remain two distinct categories, or whether further rater types emerge. If an expanded study establishes clear approaches then it would also be good practice to look at the resilience of marking criteria to these different approaches. Furthermore, as Trace et al (2017) found that discussion can minimise the effect of severity and bias in marking, it is recommended that marking leaders promote discussion during standardisation and moderation sessions to facilitate shared reference points. In addition, awareness-raising exercises could be created to promote discussion and understanding of the different approaches to marking. To conclude, while the size of the case study is a limitation, the distinct nature of the two rating types discovered encourages further investigation into this area.

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Combining formative and summative practices in higher education ELT: Implementing learning-oriented assessment

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Introduction

Proponents of educational reform frequently call for 'higher standards' but in their influential article, Black and Wiliam (1998) point out that national reforms worldwide fail as 'the sum of all these reforms has not added up to an effective policy because something is missing' (1998:140): a focus on what actually happens in the classroom and how learning is managed. Classrooms have changed since 1998, but there is still a tendency for reformers to call for higher standards and better exam results without clearly explaining how to achieve them. This puts pressure on teachers, who already face time, administrative and curriculum constraints, to take responsibility for managing assessment processes while also promoting learning in the classroom.

The primary aim of this article is to describe ways in which assessment tools, ranging from summative to formative assessment, can be combined systematically to promote learning as well as measuring achievement, with a particular emphasis on how formative assessment can aid learning and ultimately benefit learners in summative tests. This is illustrated by the system applied on the English for Professional Purposes (EPP) course, 'English for the World of Work' at Verona University. This is a postgraduate course, designed and implemented by the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures of Verona University, to form a bridge between the theoretical studies of language undertaken at the university and the more practical language skills required in the workplace (for a full description see Hartle 2018b). Although this is not a General English course, the assessment tools used can also easily be extended to school courses teaching professional English or General English.

Two assessment cultures: Summative and formative

Hamp-Lyons (2007:487) discusses two frequently conflicting assessment cultures: a *learning culture* and an *exam culture*. In a learning culture, the focus is on learning and the learner, whilst an exam culture sees learning as preparation for the exam. The two cultures can be equated, in broad terms, to formative assessment, sometimes known as assessment *for* learning, and summative assessment, sometimes known as assessment *of* learning. These notions provide a useful benchmark for considering assessment tools (for further classifications of assessment types see the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe 2001:183). Summative assessment is a measurement of achievement, proficiency and knowledge, which is usually carried out at the end of the learning process and is graded for both external and internal certification. Formative assessment is defined in different ways. It is generally thought to focus on future learning rather than past achievement and is often classroom-based, seeking to foster learning through observation, reflection and feedback. It may, however, be more complex than it initially appears (Yorke 2003:478); some think of formative assessment as formal planned practices such as class quizzes, or feedback interviews whereas others consider it to be more informal, a matter of teachers and learners noticing progress, difficulties, providing feedback and developing learning strategies which foster more effective learning. To understand what this means here are three practical examples.

Summative and formative assessment

Let us begin with a task-analysis exercise, adapted from a similar one by Miranda Hamilton (Hamilton and Jones 2013). Which of the following practices do you consider to be formative assessment, summative assessment, or classroom activities rather than assessment tools?

1. A progress test at the end of a module, to see how much learners remember.

2. A reflection task where learners discuss what they have learned.

3. A teacher taking notes on learner performance during a speaking activity.

Most would answer that a progress test is summative, a reflection task formative, and teachers taking notes simply a matter of good classroom practice. This, however, is not the entire story.

Hamilton and Jones (2013:11 mins 40 secs) emphasise that what should be considered is not necessarily the nature of the tool, but its purpose. A summative tool such as a progress test, for instance, may be used to measure achievement, but it may also be used formatively to promote learning. If a record is kept of problem language areas for individuals and groups, for instance, the information gathered can then guide the teaching process, as the teacher, now in possession of new information, can decide what needs to be revised, extended, and so on. Discussions of specific items on the test may provide insight into both successful and unsuccessful learner strategies. A reflection task, on the other hand, is certainly formative as teachers and learners reflect on learning processes, difficulties and strategies, which will inform both lesson planning for the teacher, and private study and revision choices for the learner. However, such reflection tasks may lead to language being produced by learners which can also be assessed summatively. When learners write their reflections in a journal, for instance, the ideas can be used for discussion and reflection, and the written language produced assessed summatively as an example of written performance. Finally, many classroom practices such as teachers monitoring a speaking activity and taking notes are formative assessment strategies, as what is noticed can form the basis for feedback, remedial language work, extension of skills and so on. In short, across all these activities, it is the aim rather than the practice which is key.

Combining formative and summative tools systematically

Learning-oriented assessment (LOA), a term originally coined by Carless in 2003 (Carless 2007, 2015), is now being used as an umbrella term (Jones and Saville 2016, Purpura and Turner 2014), which refers precisely to what Black and Wiliam outlined in their assessment for learning approach in 1998. This approach aims to combine formative with summative assessment tools to create a system that prioritises time in classrooms for teaching and learning. This system will also aid learners to develop their own learning strategies and ultimately lead to higher performance on summative tests as well. Whilst summative assessment such as tests and certification is generally well known, it is worth, perhaps, exploring formative assessment in greater detail.

Formative assessment for learning

Formative assessment entails gathering information about learners and then providing feedback based on this, which will then help them to learn. Useful resources for this are widely available (see the sitography), but the difficulty is often in how to combine these activities systematically as part of the teaching process. One example of how this may be done is outlined by the Assessment Reform Group, who were active in the UK until 2010. They developed different categories of formative assessment practices for learning (Assessment Reform Group 2002), which, for the sake of simplicity, can be condensed into three main practices which may be applied by teachers, peers or as self-assessment:

Table 1: Three main concepts related to assessment for learning

1. Noticing and collecting data	**Gathering information** about individual and group **learning experiences**.
2. Feedback	Providing constructive feedback **to modify teaching and learning activity**.
3. Goal setting	Establishing goals **closing the gap** between **the present position** and **the desired goal**.

These three strategies have been simplified from the original description but the emphasis on observation of tasks and activities in the classroom by both teachers and learners to inform their practice is clear. These strategies can, in fact, be linked systematically to different lesson stages (Hartle 2018a). However, in Figure 1, the process is presented as a cycle revolving, in this case, around a task (although the focus may be any type of classroom activity). Formative assessment feeds into learning by means of feedback and goal setting, and it is largely the observation and record-keeping stages that make this systematic. Providing support, feedback and goal-setting activities both for classes and individual learners can smooth the way to improved learning strategies and subsequently better results on summative assessments. The two assessment types complement each other and all feed into both learning and measurement in a cycle. One basic progression of this may be:

1. Learners do a classroom task such as doing spoken interviews in pairs.

2. Teachers/peers observe and provide feedback or support, both at an individual and a class level, which may be by direct monitoring of the task, or by taking notes and discussing them anonymously with the whole class after the task, or as written notes handed to the individual learners.

3. Records are kept to develop learner/class portfolios and to inform goal setting for future lesson content or revision activities, such as a list of problem language, pronunciation areas that arose during the task, or repeated errors by individual learners.

4. Learning outcomes are measured in summative assessment tasks, such as an oral test where learners do a similar type of interview task and are assessed on their range of lexis and grammar, pronunciation or communicative ability, to name just a few sample areas.
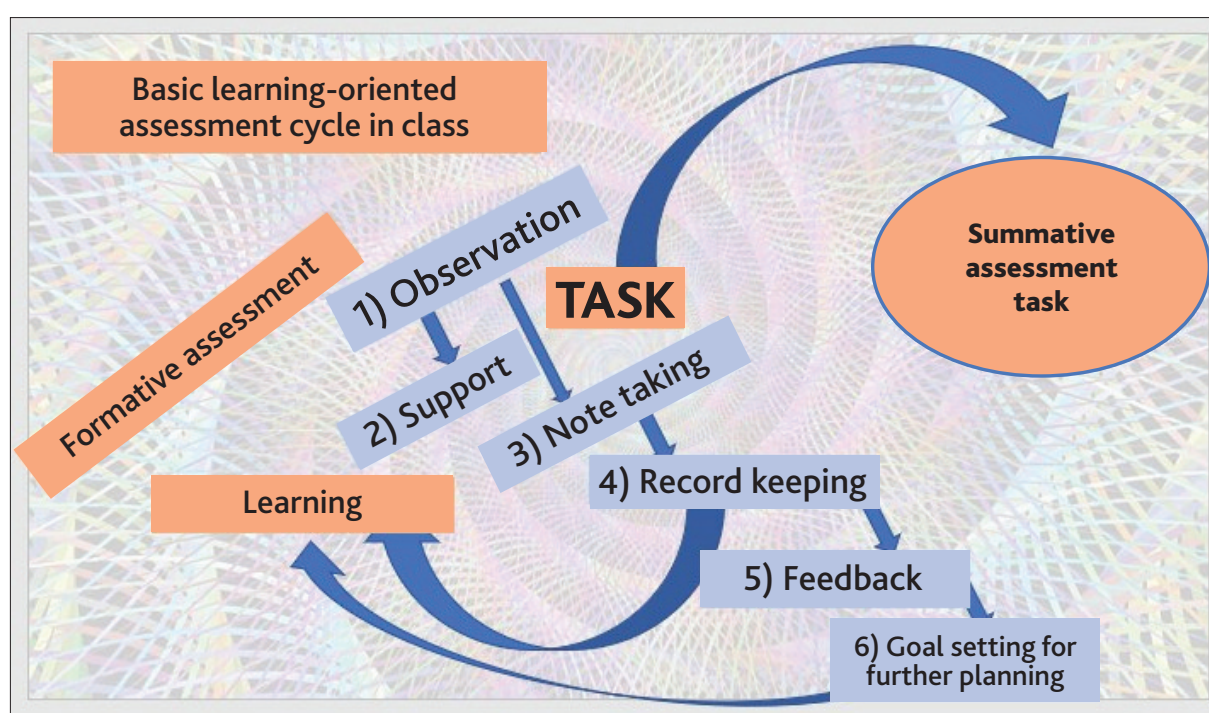

Figure 1: Basic LOA cycle in the classroom

LOA: Gathering information and building up records

Two cornerstones of LOA, as mentioned in the previous section, are the practices of gathering information and record keeping which point to future action in the classroom. Teachers do this in a range of ways, such as class journals, success charts and portfolios, to name just a few. Some fear this is overly time-consuming but digital tools can aid the process. Learners can, for instance, do an online progress test which has in-built feedback to help their own self-assessment, and then track their progress by creating an e-portfolio of their achievements. Teachers and learners can access this so that once the teacher has created the quiz and the initial feedback, the platform will organise and deliver the feedback as many times as required to individual learners. In this way, both individual and class records of achievement are built up.

Question 1   1 pt

Despite it was raining we decided to go for a swim anyway.
○ Correct
○ Incorrect
_____

Feedback

You cannot use 'despite' with a verbal phrase like this.
How could you change this?

Figure 2: Canvas Instructure online quiz question with built-in feedback

Figure 2 shows an example of how this is done using Canvas Instructure, a free online platform for educators, with one quiz question designed to revise the use of connectors in writing. Learners answering this question are immediately shown feedback online, created by the teacher to fit the needs of the specific context or group, and designed to guide learners into a discussion of problematic answers. The feedback questions can be discussed in pairs and then together with the whole class. Canvas Instructure also provides an achievement report on the quiz both at individual and class level. In Figure 3, for instance, it is clear that the score was high overall on this quiz.

Quiz summary

Section Filter ▾   ⬛ Student analysis   ⬛ Item analysis

ⓜ Average score   ⓐ High score   ⓛ Low score   ⓞ Standard deviation   ⓣ Average time
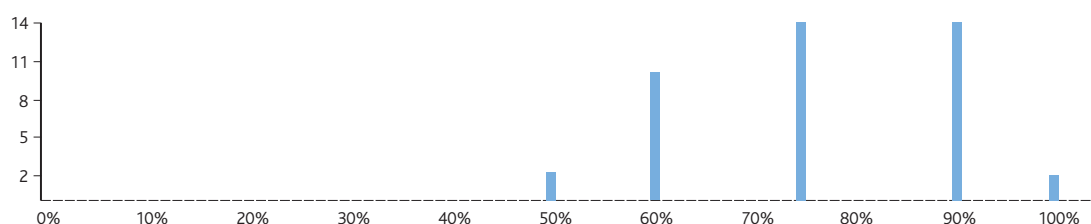76%   100%   50%   0.97%   03.38

Figure 3: Canvas Instructure overall quiz statistics

The platform also provides a question-by-question breakdown for display and whole-class discussion, as well as informing teachers and learners about areas that require clarification or revision. The results on this question, as shown in Figure 4, show that it might be a grammar rule worth revising.
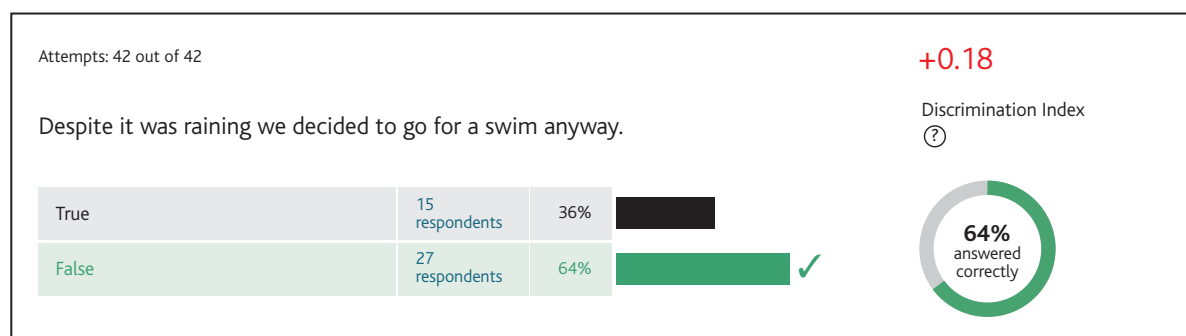
Question breakdown

Figure 4: Canvas Instructure quiz question breakdown

Digital record keeping like this, then, is not time consuming for teachers once the initial quiz has been created, and can be a valuable aid to both learners and teachers in their planning.

Summative assessment of 'English for the World of Work'

The examples in the previous section are taken from 'English for the World of Work', an Advanced English course (*corso di perfezionamento*). The aim of the course is to meet the growing need to prepare learners, as far as their language skills are concerned, for the world of work in general, developing language skills that may be required in various fields. The assessment construct adopted for this course reflects the socio-cognitive aims embodied particularly in the latest publication of the Companion Volume to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, Council of Europe 2018). The assessment is cognitive in that learners are required to demonstrate an awareness of and competence in certain language skills, such as organising text, as well as being able to use language in professional contexts, which is the social, communicative aspect. The tasks focus on productive language skills and are criterion-based assessments of performance. Speaking is assessed summatively in a formal 5-minute presentation of one topic of particular interest from the course, followed by a group discussion. Writing is assessed from samples of production collected in a portfolio of learner work. What is radical perhaps is that the written summative assessment focuses on reflection tasks and course materials collated in e-portfolios which are also part of the ongoing formative assessment of the course; in other words, written reflections are used both formatively and summatively. This process will be described in the rest of the section to give a clearer idea of how it was done.

The e-portfolio in Figure 5 is developed online using Weebly, a freely accessible content management tool. Links are then shared with all members of the class who comment and provide support for each other before it is finally assessed by the teachers. It has four sections, which can be seen in Figure 5:
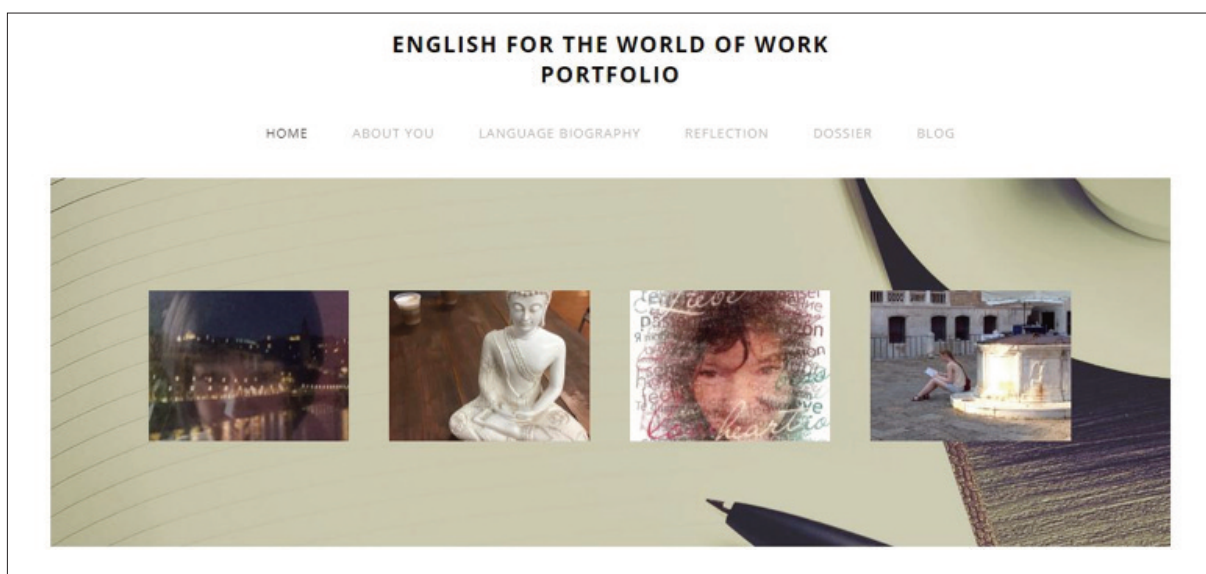
Figure 5: Cover page of the Weebly e-portfolio model

About You: a short learner introduction from a professional or academic viewpoint.

Language Biography: learners self-assess their language levels using CEFR reference grids before and after the course and set learning goals, initially in class, and then independently.

Reflection: this section, together with the dossier (described in the next section), contains the minimum required production for the final assessment: two reflections on the learning process itself, and two reflections on specific content of the course.

Learners are encouraged at the beginning of the course to reflect on their learning process by means of in-class discussion and also by using such strategies as exit tickets, where they are asked to write or discuss the answers to three key questions:

1. What did you learn today?

2. What did you find difficult?

3. What was most interesting today?

This helps them to focus on their own learning process and to notice problematic areas. If writing answers learners can simply use pen and paper or can use platforms such as Socrative. Once again, the digital platform can save teachers time as it generates records of answers that teachers can easily download. Learners can use this type of in-class discussion to help them write their reflections on the learning process, two of which are then assessed summatively, as previously mentioned, at a later stage.

Here is an example of a learner reflection from an e-portfolio (please note comments are unedited to maintain authenticity):

> 'I am starting to realize that I'm becoming always more confident in using formal language almost spontaneously. At the beginning of this course it was quite hard from me to find the right structure and words when it came to speaking or writing in a formal way …'

Formal reflection questions related to module content are also provided after each module of the course such as this one after Module 2 on the language of meetings: 'Taking part proactively in a meeting means choosing the role you intend to play. Which role do you choose and why?'

Learners, in this case, discuss the question together and then write independently in their e-portfolios. The minimum number of reflections required is, again, two, but in actual fact learners often write more than this. Here is an example of one learner's reply to this question:

> 'If I think about a possible situation in which I get to participate to a business or working meeting, I would feel confident to play the Leader role. I'm very good at dealing with my emotions …'
> (learner e-portfolio contribution)

Dossier: This contains a list of contents and at least four examples of a learner's work that has been done during the course, such as a pdf of a learner's curriculum vitae, or specific recordings or written work done during or outside class.

The whole portfolio is assessed holistically by the teacher but writing skills such as text organisation, clear use of grammatical and lexical resources together with creativity and originality are assessed in the reflection and dossier sections (see the assessment criteria in the appendix). The assessment, therefore, aims to assess learners' productive writing skills, but producing the portfolio also acts formatively. The oral presentation is also the fruit of both classroom and digital work and will be described in more detail in the next section as an example of how LOA works in practice in class. As a summative assessment, however, the skill of speaking professionally is assessed both holistically and with a specific focus on discourse organisation, pronunciation and a clear use of grammar and lexis to express ideas (see the appendix).

Formative assessment on a micro task from the course: Giving an oral presentation

The final oral presentation on this course aims to reflect a skill that is required both in academia and at work, and is an instance of formal oral communication followed by a less structured discussion phase. The teaching approach used here is task based, and Figure 6 provides an overview of formative assessment working in a cyclical manner within teaching in the task of creating professional oral presentations. Assessments such as observation and reflection lead to goal setting, and this ultimately aids learners in their final summative assessment where performance is measured. See Table 2 for the steps in the progression of teaching and assessment in detail.
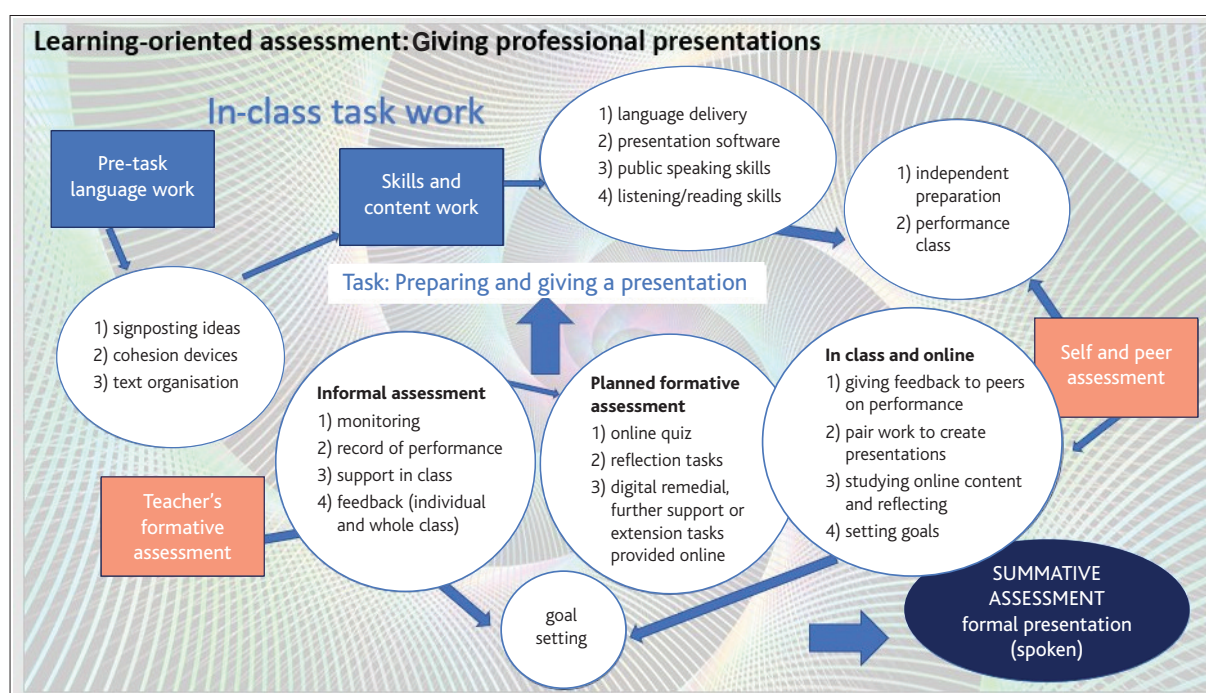

Figure 6: The LOA cycle of learning and formative assessment: Formal oral presentations

Table 2: Teaching and assessment stages when learning how to create effective professional presentations

Stage aim	Teaching	Procedure and assessment
A: Pre-task language skills: conducted face-to-face (f2f) with support language practice activities available online	Clarification and practice of specific language for giving presentations. It is carried out both in class and with online support activities. **Focus** 1. Signposting ideas in a presentation (connectors, adverbial phrases etc.) 2. Cohesion and coherence 3. Text or content organisation	Formative assessment is applied by both teachers and learners. They observe gaps in learner knowledge and skills which need support. They also note areas where knowledge can be extended (for instance, by supplying more signpost expressions if learners can already use the basic ones such as connectors: first, second, third etc.). Observation leads to feedback, and notes taken may then be collated in a class diary by teachers to record the overall progress and difficulties of the class or individual learners. This, in turn, leads to goal setting of future teaching aims for the class or specific individual work for learners.
B: Skills and content: conducted f2f with support video activities and further practice work available online	The f2f skills work is divided into two phases: **A. Clear delivery of ideas** **Focus** 1. Pronunciation at word and sentence level (stress) 2. Speed and clarity of delivery 3. Intonation **B. Clear use of presentation tools such as PowerPoint or Prezi**	**Stage 1** Delivery is modelled as learners compare audio files of different speakers delivering the same content. They then practise delivery in pairs, providing feedback on delivery; telling their partners, for instance: 'The first part was a bit too fast' or 'You speak clearly but you could sound more enthusiastic'. Observation of this work may lead to feedback to the whole class with examples of problem areas (such as speaking too fast, with a monotonous tone, or unclearly). Similarly to Phase A, observation feeds into feedback and goal setting as both learners and teachers can respectively focus on skills to develop or extend which may be done independently or in class. **Stage 2** The work in Stage 2 is not primarily linguistic, although it is carried out in English. It involves learning how to use specific support tools effectively, so the assessment once again both by teachers and learners involves observation, feedback and goal setting.
C: Planned formative assessment	This is provided as an online progress test identifies ideas and practices that which have been introduced in Phases A and B.	This progress test, which is a summative assessment used formatively, is provided as an online quiz with immediate feedback online (see LOA: gathering information and building up records). Data generated can be used for further class or individual feedback. An added advantage for learners is that access is not restricted to such tests and they can be repeated as many times as necessary for revision purposes or for independent study. Teachers can use the data for goal setting, and performance data is also stored by the system to build up a digital portfolio of learner achievement over the whole course.
D: Reflection tasks	Reflection tasks are provided at the end of the task for learners to take stock of their learning process. **Reflect on these ideas and explain what it means to you personally in your experience of presentation:** 1. Either at work or at university: visual aids such as PowerPoint slides can make or break a presentation both for the audience and for the speaker. 2. A presentation with clear signposting can make a considerable difference for the audience.	These reflection tasks are once again used both formatively and summatively, as learners write their answers to the reflection questions, discuss their ideas in class and online with their peers and, finally, include them in their final e-portfolios, where the writing is assessed. The cycle of observation, feedback and goal setting applies here too, as teachers and learners are informed during the discussion stage. Teachers can indicate support activities provided online for learners who need help in specific areas or who would like to extend their knowledge.
E: Giving the presentation	Learners prepare and practise their presentation skills by giving a presentation on a professional topic of their choice.	The preparation is prepared independently and the presentation is then carried out in small groups. It consists of two stages: 1. The presentation is given, and 2. Peer feedback and discussion is carried out. The teacher observes and takes notes which can be used for feedback, record keeping and goal setting.

Conclusion

What emerges from this specific example is the importance of the observation, record-keeping, feedback and goal-setting cycle, both for teachers and learners. This work not only optimises learning but also feeds into the final summative tasks. When considering assessment it is a common mistake to think of it merely in terms of summative tests. Formative, ongoing assessment is just as important, and when thinking about assessment it is not only a question of which type of assessment tool we use, but also of the underlying purpose at specific points in the learning process. A summative test can be used formatively and a formative process may be included in a summative assessment, depending on how they are used. A systematic combination of both types of assessment can definitely contribute towards helping learners understand their position at a given moment and point the way forward to their desired future learning goals. What is required is balance, where one type of assessment is not favoured over another, and the willingness to devote time, in what may be perceived as an already limited teaching schedule, to such practices as reflection and goal setting. In this work at Verona University, implementing an LOA system of assessment has had positive results so far which we hope to improve on in future courses. In particular, we would like to extend the record-keeping and the goal-setting processes, which have been done informally but could be integrated more formally, in the learner portfolios, for instance. The portfolio task, in fact, has proved to be very popular with learners and just over half of our course participants (57.5%) list it as one of the most useful components of the course. Above all, LOA helps us discover where our learners are in the learning process, which steps they need to take to be able to reach their next destination, and to develop effective learning strategies that will give them the confidence to use the language well.

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Sitography

Assessment Reform Group (2002)
www.aaia.org.uk/news/category/assessment-reform-group

Canvas Instructure
canvas.instructure.com

Prezi
prezi.com

Socrative
socrative.com

Weebly portfolio
ewwportfolio.weebly.com

Further useful resources

Blackboard (free content management system for educators)
www.blackboard.com

The British Council on Assessment for Learning and teaching English
www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/assessment-learning

Gershon, M (2009) *Assessment for Learning Toolkit*
www.tes.com/teaching-resource/assessment-for-learning-toolkit-6020165

Moodle (open-source learning platform)
moodle.org

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Appendix: Assessment criteria for e-portfolio

Written task assessment criteria: 6 marks per category to make a total of 30.

1. **Holistic overall impression:** this covers content choice, relevance, appropriacy and language register as well as coherence. (A good mark will be given to a candidate who expresses themselves thoughtfully, without digressing too much from the main subject and communicates with the reader in mind.)

2. **Logical text organisation:** this involves clear, coherent organisation and development of relevant content in paragraphs that help the reader follow the line of reasoning. Ideas are extended and each one leads on to the next, rather than being haphazard ideas.

3. **Lexical resources:** a good candidate will use a range of appropriate lexis to express themself clearly. Any errors should not be impeding and should be the result of experimentation with the expression of complicated ideas.

4. **Grammatical resources:** a good candidate will use a range of appropriate grammatical structures to express themself clearly. Any errors should not be impeding and should be the result of experimentation with the expression of complicated ideas.

5. **Creativity and originality:** a good candidate will add something of their own to this writing so that his/her voice can be clearly recognised.

Oral task assessment criteria: 6 marks per category to make a total of 30.

1. **Holistic overall impression:** this covers content choice, relevance, appropriacy as well as language register, and appropriacy. (A good mark will be given to a candidate who expresses themself thoughtfully and meaningfully and presents his/her content in a clear, accessible way for the audience to follow.)

2. **Logical discourse organisation**: this involves clear, coherent development of content, both when presenting and when discussing. Content is relevant to the topic being discussed. Hesitation is natural as is the use of spoken discourse markers, and interjections such as 'Mmmm', etc. but these pauses should not be too long and a good candidate will organise their ideas in such a way as to make it easy for interlocutors to follow their discourse.

3. **Lexical resources:** as above.

4. **Grammatical resources**: as above.

5. **Pronunciation:** a good candidate will use sentence and word stress naturally and will be aware of the pronunciation of single sounds. Intonation should also be appropriate. The presence of a candidate's own accent is natural but the overall pronunciation should be clear enough for the interlocutor to understand without difficulty.

Have we got the lecturing lingo? Supporting academic teaching staff delivering content through the medium of English: A case study

Elizabeth Long University of Modena and Reggio Emilia

Introduction

Italian universities are addressing the challenges of internationalisation in higher education in terms of strategy, policy and instruction, and are increasingly offering degree courses taught wholly in English. However, to date there has been little pedagogical training for university teachers embarking on teaching content through English on a global scale (Dearden 2016:2) despite evidence that teacher education courses are being developed and offered in some universities on the Italian peninsula (Costa 2015:132). In general, although they are key stakeholders, many university teachers are unaware of the need to modify teaching strategies in order to become practitioners of English-medium instruction (EMI). One study commented on 'a distinct lack of awareness of a need to change pedagogy in order to help students (whether home or international) cope with content delivered through a second language' (Dearden and Macaro 2016:479). Research undertaken by Guarda and Helm as recently as 2016, however, indicates that a 'shift' in perceptions of teaching and participation in professional development courses is necessary if lecturers are to be more effective practitioners as they embrace teaching in another language. Results from their study show that, far from having a negative impact, EMI can provide 'opportunities for reflection and innovation in pedagogy' (Guarda and Helm 2016).

In Italy, there has been some resistance to offering courses entirely taught in English. This issue is currently being discussed in Italian legal circles and may actually necessitate higher education reforms on language policy. Teaching through another language may not be un-constitutional but has been described as 'threatening [the] freedom of teaching and the primacy of the Italian language. It could also prevent non-English speakers from accessing education' (Civinini 2017). The Council of State has ruled that, as a compromise, English courses may need to be offered concurrently with Italian courses of a similar nature. There is, at the time of writing, no clear outcome on the matter. This article provides a snapshot of the teacher education strategies in place at a local level at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (henceforth UNIMORE) through three phases of teacher development that are offered to academic teaching staff.

The concept of the term 'lingo', used light-heartedly in the title of this article, may bear some relation to the issue of EMI. If a 'lingo', according to the Macmillan dictionary, is defined firstly as an informal term for a 'foreign language', and secondly as words used by a group of people engaged in a particular 'activity or job' (see: https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/lingo), the term refers to both the foreignness and unfamiliarity of the language as a medium as well as its uniqueness as a jargon or genre to be embraced by teachers using it and teacher trainers designing courses in it. Therefore, in this article the lingo reflects both definitions, a foreign language of instruction and language necessary to provide instruction. The 'we' in the title is intended to refer to the stakeholders in the higher education institution in this case study at UNIMORE, specifically the lecturers themselves, the teacher trainers and the policymakers involved.

The university context – a growing international curriculum

The University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, a medium to large public university based in the north of Italy, embarked on its initiative of offering teacher education courses in English to its professors and lecturers in the academic year 2011/12. While some degree course modules were already offered in English in Economics and Science departments, the launch of four completely English-taught degree courses at postgraduate level in 2015 (Languages for Communication in International Enterprises and Organizations (LACOM), International Management, Physics, and Electronic Engineering) heralded a more urgent need to provide EMI teacher education.

EMI teacher development at UNIMORE: 'Lecturing in English' courses

As the demand for places on English-taught degree courses grew, so did the need for quality assurance in the form of awareness-raising and training in content teaching in a foreign language. As early as 2011, UNIMORE started to address the challenge of equipping teaching staff with some of the tools needed to internationalise their courses.

The initiative began as a small project emerging from discussion and reflection between the university language centre and the personnel responsible for implementing initial internationalisation strategies. Teacher training courses were conceived for training in-service lecturers already teaching or intending to teach courses in English, and from the outset the dual teaching expertise of an Italian linguistics expert alongside a native-speaker English language teaching expert was proposed. A system of financial incentives for participants was also approved, and potential recipients of this award were invited to formally apply; if successful, they would complete a short introductory pedagogical training course 'Lecturing in English I'. The selection process still consists of a formal application and a language proficiency test. This initial in-sessional course, consisting of 28 hours of lessons over eight weeks, was originally designed to give the most promising and most linguistically competent candidates some basic skills in teaching their subjects in English, as well as the financial assistance to plan the delivery of such courses and conduct additional research. At first, numbers on the annual courses were low (fewer than 10) but as the numbers of English-taught programmes multiplied, interest flourished, and for the 2017 course there were over 20 candidates interested in attending. Other faculty members have also attended this course out of pure interest and personal motivation. As far as language levels are concerned, the target entry level was initially fixed at C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, Council of Europe 2001), although some participants may be more competent in reading and writing in English and find the spoken aspects of teaching particularly challenging. As the number of courses offered in the vehicular language and the interest of teaching staff have grown, the requirement of a C1 level of language competence has been relaxed.

Course organisation: 'Lecturing in English I' – rhetorical implications and language choices

The first course is team-taught by a UNIMORE researcher (non-native speaker) and a qualified and experienced native-speaker teacher from the university language centre. The first tutor provides input lessons based around the concept of the 'Lecture as a Genre' (Bhatia 1993, Swales 1990), focusing on the rhetorical features of the lecture as a macro-linguistic event to outline the lecturer's overall goals. In order to do that, the course adopts a multi-layered methodological approach providing the lecturers initially with a macro-analytical analysis of the lecture, including topics such as the context (Goffman 1981), communicative purpose, intended audience, and rhetorical structure

(Dudley-Evans and St John 1997). This part of the course is also concerned with problematic areas that a lecturer may encounter while teaching, i.e. how to address student needs such as real-time processing or distinguishing what is relevant from what is less relevant.

Subsequently, the focus shifts onto the micro-analysis of the linguistic features of lectures, addressing topics ranging from pedagogic strategies to 'vocabulary teaching'. Since a key issue for students is understanding subject-specific lexical items in their discipline, lecturers need to be equipped with the linguistic flexibility to respond to moments of contingency which might emerge during lectures. This may require the lecturer to repeat, reformulate and even provide lexical glosses while teaching, as well as to be able to perform unscripted questioning to involve the audience in the lesson.

As regards the rationale of the course and the resources used, a genre-analytical approach is applied to authentic lecture examples from a variety of disciplines (e.g. economics and the hard sciences). More specifically, the materials used are drawn from the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE) and recorded lectures from both native and non-native speakers. Lessons in this part of the course involve both traditional teacher-fronted input sessions as well as group discussion of relevant issues leading to in-class practice. Therefore, tasks such as analysing videos of lectures, transcripts and academic corpora help participants understand models of academic content delivery.

These genre-oriented lessons alternate with the other facet of the 'Lecturing in English I' course, which are more practical awareness-raising lessons aimed at introducing teaching strategies, particularly of a communicative nature, delivered by the native-speaker language teacher. These 'hands-on' sessions focus on a variety of topics such as the effective use of visual materials, the importance of subject-specific vocabulary and collocations, using multimedia in the classroom, dispelling myths regarding pronunciation, and the importance of signposting language and reformulation strategies, among others. It is not uncommon to allude to other procedures and approaches such as the flipped classroom (Bishop and Verleger 2013), task-based learning (Ellis 2003), project-based instruction, and problem-solving methodologies.

A typical lesson would consist of an input session (using slides) interspersed with pair and group tasks allowing ample opportunity for participants to work together in the target language and improve fluency, with a micro pedagogical goal in mind. The main aim is to provide a stimulating learning environment that is student-centred rather than teacher-fronted, and rich in classroom interaction to allow for discussion and reflection on teaching issues in a multidisciplinary context. While it is impossible to guarantee that participants are willing to accept and adopt specific pedagogical strategies, awareness-raising of the challenges of the EMI classroom is of paramount importance.

The combination of a non-native speaker linguistic expert and an experienced university language teacher seems to be an effective strategy to bridge the gap between a lecturer's excellence in content knowledge and potential low levels of language proficiency. Fontanet-Gòmez (2013:164–166) points to the importance of a collaboration between the content teacher and language teacher in facilitating students' acquisition of 'disciplinary discourse' thus drawing on the strength of both content knowledge and language expertise. This would appear to be a healthy partnership in regard to delivering teacher training courses too. However, the challenge of satisfying course participants who are content experts but not master linguists, often with little or no formal teacher training, as in the Italian higher education context, requires a sensitive and empathetic approach. It is evident that no one pedagogical course can satisfy all higher education teaching contexts and disciplines; similarly, there can be no one course that can be uniquely effective given the multifaceted nature of audiences (Ball and Lindsay 2012). Considerable flexibility is required by the teacher trainer in fielding queries and doubts that emerge spontaneously from participants, which then can alter the course of a lesson or even lead to modifying the content of successive lessons.

During both elements of the course, the tutors make use of the institutional Moodle multimedia platform as e-moderators as a means of publishing course materials and slides, creating homework tasks and inviting lecturers to participate in discussion forums. One task introduced after the initial lesson is for the participants to post their biodata on the platform. This is intended to encourage a sense of community and collaboration amongst the group, and an opportunity for participants to showcase their disciplinary competences as well as practising academic writing skills with their peers. Many of the academic staff on these courses may have had little contact with other departmental colleagues beyond professional duties at the university.

At the end of the course, the lecturers participate in a final evaluated task which involves preparing and delivering either a 20-minute portion of a lecture in English, or a segment of a course overview of the same length to the class. They are required to provide a written abstract in advance, outlining their proposed lesson, for their peers to read. The observations are scheduled over several sessions and all participants must attend as they, in turn, are involved in the evaluation process as peer reviewers. The lesson observation is designed to obtain feedback from three sources. Firstly, the course tutors evaluate the lesson segment, considering factors such as its overall impact, the use of visual materials, language, clarity, coherence, organisation and handling of questions. Secondly, as peer-observers, course participants complete a basic evaluation form on their colleagues in which they are asked to comment briefly on their overall impression of the lesson, aspects that were effective and less effective, and make suggestions for improvement. The final assessment comes from the observees themselves, as they have to complete a post-lesson self-reflection grid immediately after their observation, identifying which aspects of the lesson were successful and which could be improved.

These three feedback tools allow the tutors to compile a personalised feedback document on the observation which is sent by email to the individual participant (and to administration as proof of course completion). Drawing on teacher trainers' comments, peer comments and the post-lesson reflection allows the final evaluation synthesis to provide a comprehensive picture of the participant 'going live' in a classroom situation from several angles. This opportunity for lecturers to teach in front of a familiar audience that is unlikely to be expert in the subject discipline is extremely challenging and stimulates a lively post-observation question and answer session. The peer assessment element is 'dependent on establishing collegial trust and respect' (Atkinson and Bolt 2012:3); not only can participants demonstrate their subject knowledge, language and presentation skills during the observation, but ideally they can attempt to put into practice some of the strategies for EMI teaching that they have encountered on the course.

'Lecturing in English II' – digging deeper and problem solving

A second step, 'Lecturing in English II', was created in response to a demand from participants who had completed the first course and desired to attend, at least on a weekly basis, a supplementary course tailor-made to their language and pedagogical needs. This follow-up course was launched in 2013–14. The lessons are solely in the hands of the native-speaker language teacher, already in-service and teaching in English (or not as the case may be). The course is built around lecturers' specific requirements as they begin to operate in the realities of EMI. The curriculum emerges from an informal needs analysis so that 'Lecturing in English II', attended on a voluntary basis with no financial incentive at stake, evolves in response to participants' real needs. Practical issues such as assessment literacy and assessment types offered on an English-taught programme are discussed in addition to other pertinent topics such as materials design and development, improving classroom interaction, dealing with large classes, reformulation and paraphrasing strategies, and less concrete concerns such as the meeting of student needs and expectations and the new challenges of the multi-cultural classroom. Given the flexible nature of this

second course, teacher-fronted lessons are supplemented by seminars given by guest speakers. These invited speakers could be language teaching experts, course participants themselves reporting on their post-training EMI teaching experiences or colleagues illustrating experiences gained on sabbatical exchanges in Anglophone universities. Possibly the strength of this phase of the Lecturing in English journey is the chance to exchange opinions and experiences with colleagues in other departments on the practical execution of their courses in English. Again, the Moodle platform is used both as an archive of course materials and as a means of facilitating interaction through online tasks and discussion tools.

'Lecturing in English III' – Language improvement and accuracy

The third phase of the cycle, introduced in 2016, also proved successful as part of ongoing professional development for in-service professors and lecturers in English and other motivated departmental members. 'Language improvement and accuracy' was established after being specifically requested by participants who had taken 'Lecturing in English I' and/or II as a means of improving language proficiency, without a specific pedagogical focus.

These sessions could be described as conventional English language lessons with an academic bias. The lessons focus on grammatical structure (with practice) and attention to specific pronunciation issues in addition to listening and reading comprehension tasks. Everyday English for academic encounters is also addressed such as the language required in an academic tutorial and the conventions of written academic correspondence in emails. This course is delivered by another native-speaker English language teacher from the university language centre and has been well received. It appears that the traditional language lesson, where structures and rules are introduced and/or revisited, is stimulating and reassuring. It allows participants to be language students, safe in the hands of a language expert as they gain confidence and competence in the spoken language. It is a particularly important course for participants who may have to teach in English but have weaker language skills, and is appealing as a means of maintaining existing language skills, enhancing other skill areas and boosting confidence in using another language in the workplace.

The three-pronged approach to EMI teacher education at UNIMORE outlined above therefore evolved in response to participants' needs and their enthusiasm for attending courses: first a core co-taught module, a second course emerging from practical teaching needs, and a third to improve language skills. Teaching resources for course provision in this context were sourced from experienced researchers and language teaching staff from the university language centre in collaboration with the internationalisation office. This illustrates how the institution itself has been responsive to the emerging needs of the teaching demands of EMI.

Participant reactions to 'Lecturing in English' courses

Positive reception to the three phases of courses has allowed 'Lecturing in English' professional development programmes to become firmly established in the UNIMORE context. It is however important to consider the impact of courses on the participants themselves. Guarda and Helm's qualitative study (2016), conducted at the University of Padova (also in Italy), is useful in providing insights into participant reaction following teacher training programmes. Padova's LEAP (Learning English for Academic Purposes) Project established in 2013–14 offered a range of teacher training options to academic staff such as residential summer courses, overseas intensive courses

and blended options at home. Analysing data from course feedback and participant interviews, their research focuses on the impact that courses have had on participants' perceptions and approaches to teaching in English. Several of the themes that emerge from their findings are echoed in some of the informal reactions obtained at UNIMORE in emails from course participants on receiving their final assessment feedback from the tutors. One theme that is highlighted in the Padova study is the appreciation of the course content and delivery. This is evident from comments made by a course participant in Modena (all comments are unedited to maintain authenticity):

> 'Many thanks to both of you for your efforts in building this unique course! I would like to express my general satisfaction for my results. I know I can improve my English and I'll try to do it'.
> (Lecturing in English I, 2017)

Similarly, another participant appreciated the methodological input on the UNIMORE course:

> 'I am aware to be a good teacher … in my mother tongue … and applying some teaching strategies I am able to annul some gaps in my English teaching. However, by studying and attending CLA [Centro Linguistico dell' Ateneo, the University Language Centre of University of Modena and Reggio Emilia] courses, with the help of persons like you, I hope I can do it'.
> (Lecturing in English I, 2016)

Other soundbites expressing 'appreciation' and didactic enrichment mention the word 'tricks'. This would appear to refer to strategies and techniques learned on courses in integrating 'tricks of the craft into my repertoire', and how it was useful to 'use all the tricks I've learned in our class.' While not embracing a huge pedagogical shift, they do acknowledge a need to modify teaching practice.

Another point raised in Guarda and Helm's findings (2016) is the awareness of a common interest in working together as course participants and in creating a community of practice. This is repeated in Modena's feedback, for example:

> 'I also found the course very interesting because it allows/forces people from different departments to work side by side thus stimulating cross-fertilization'.
> (Lecturing in English I, 2017)

> 'I really enjoyed attending your class. Perhaps, from my "learner" perspective, the small number of attendees was a good point, since this increased the chance to interact with you and with the other colleagues'.
> (Lecturing in English, II, 2017)

On completion of 'Lecturing in English' courses, some participants have voiced the need to have individual English lessons to improve language proficiency or one-to-one tutorials to review course programmes and materials in English. Overwhelmingly, lecturers and professors have signalled a desire for the opportunity to continue with courses, either with a methodological component or a language improvement focus. A final point in common with the above-mentioned research is the desire expressed for continued 'support and guidance' (Guarda and Helm 2016:903), which concurs with the Padova findings. A further two quotes from UNIMORE illustrate this:

> 'It was my pleasure to take the class […] I do hope to have similar opportunities in the years to come'.
> (Lecturing in English II, 2016)

> 'I really hope to have new occasions for sharing teaching experiences with you and especially for being again your student, given that I fill the need of improving my English. I really hope that our University will be able to replay and also enlarge the experience of English teaching for professors and teachers'.
> (Lecturing in English I, 2017)

Comments emerging from UNIMORE course participants, together with findings from Guarda and Helm's study, help course providers understand the common concerns of their lecturers and professors throughout their EMI training as well as gauging the impact of the courses. One theme to emerge from UNIMORE though, is a lingering sense of insecurity regarding language proficiency that may only be overcome by continuing to participate in ongoing professional development courses to instil more self-confidence in teaching content through language.

Informal feedback is useful for informing the course tutors on how to proceed and in providing impetus for expanding these professional development programmes; however, implementing a formal course feedback mechanism would be highly beneficial.

What is the 'lingo' of the teacher trainer? Reflections on professional identity

Teacher education initiatives appear not to be widespread in the Italian higher education sector, although at the current time there is a clear demand to address this need as EMI grows apace. It is evident that 'special training is important when new pedagogies have to be implemented, as is the case with the integration of content and language' (Fontanet-Gòmez 2013:166), and universities such as Modena and Reggio Emilia and the universities of Padova, Urbino and Siena have been active in developing ongoing professional development programmes and services (Costa 2015:132). On a wider scale, institutions such as the British Council offer Academic Teaching Excellence courses worldwide, in collaboration with the University of Oxford, and teacher trainers delivering such courses undergo specialist in-house training. Increasingly, online training options are becoming widespread, eliminating the physical presence of the teacher trainer or engaging them as external collaborators or online facilitators. The Cambridge English Certificate in EMI Skills consists of purely online training modules (with optional face-to-face seminar sessions) for EMI practitioners. This suggests that online and blended courses may become the most cost-effective and practical solution for higher education institutions in the future.

As mentioned previously, the concept of a 'lecturing lingo' in the title of this study not only refers to the obvious challenge of language involved in the multilingual higher education teaching and learning environment; it is evident that there is another strand or narrative to the 'lingo' involved in this field, that of the EMI teacher trainer in higher education, a relatively new teacher training profile. While in any institution there will be variables regarding funding available for teaching resources and institutional language policy, we may assume a desirable skill set for those involved in lecturer training. In Italy, institutional issues concerning hierarchy may prevent a native-speaker language teacher from being involved in lecturer training. As such, it is not uncommon for experienced academic staff members or external training consultants to be engaged to provide pedagogical seminars or input sessions in the native language rather than involving a language teacher. Since there is little pedagogical training available for Italian academics, offering courses in pedagogy in the Italian language may be regarded as a short-term solution.

However, it could be argued that the task of guiding higher education teaching staff through the EMI 'lingo' into a new linguistic and pedagogic dimension may be more successful if experienced language tutors are involved. Given the challenges of EMI contexts, there may be certain optimal teacher trainer credentials required to perform this role. A native or non-native-speaking teacher trainer should be an experienced teaching practitioner in a multilingual setting, ideally with teacher training experience, and possibly with an awareness of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) methodology (Coyle, Hood and Marsh 2010). An understanding of the rigour of the academic community would be key, and while not necessarily expert in any content area outside language

teaching, the trainer should be aware of the diverse nature of pure and applied academic disciplines and the discourses therein.

From an English language teaching perspective, one avenue would be to harness the experience of qualified teacher trainers in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) and apply it to EMI training contexts. As the demand to train English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers grows worldwide, so does the need to equip trainers with TEFL training qualifications from institutions such as Cambridge University for courses leading to the Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA) and the more advanced Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (DELTA). These CELTA and DELTA trainers are experienced EFL teachers and have considerable knowledge of language teaching methodology and the skills required to manage the communicative language classroom. EMI teachers in universities could harness this training expertise. Additionally, the trainer's skills need to encompass the intricacies of any local higher education setting as well as international higher education models. Not only should they be aware of conventions and protocols of academic language, other skills such as curriculum design, materials development and assessment literacy need to be part of the skill set. More recently, with the increase in use of virtual learning environments (VLEs) and the adoption of multimedia tools in teaching and learning, the ideal EMI teacher trainer will need to embrace online teaching and moderating, be competent in using multimedia applications, act as a communicative model, and above all be able to show sensitivity, tact, flexibility and empathy. What is fundamental is that teacher trainers support their EMI students and obtain feedback on training courses in order to negotiate a safe middle ground and avoid 'methodological culture clashes' (Harmer 2001:70).

One experienced CELTA, DELTA and EMI teacher trainer, Brigid Nugent, remarked that it is vital to assess 'the university's goals, the professors' goals and the trainers' goals – many don't reflect real immediate needs and there is the temptation for the trainer to give quick fixes' (personal communication, 2017). Clearly more reflection is needed on the role of the EMI teacher trainer in the foreseeable future on a local and international level. On a local level, UNIMORE, as seen from this brief study, has drawn on in-house expertise from language teachers and research experts in developing their professional development courses, but any higher education context must seriously assess the needs of their academic teaching staff in the internationalisation of curricula, and offer appropriate teacher development programmes according to their budget and available resources.

Conclusions and future directions

The University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, as an expanding higher education institution in northern Italy, is undergoing an ambitious internationalisation programme. The language centre, together with the internationalisation office, are attempting to meet the needs of a growing number of academic staff who are teaching their content through English with a series of teacher training courses entitled 'Lecturing in English', which have met with considerable success since their launch in 2011. Future initiatives to extend the teacher development programme include an annual residential summer school for lecturers, and a help desk to provide ongoing institutional support and encourage a community of practice. The Department of Engineering at UNIMORE has set up an action research project on the English-taught degree in Electronic Engineering, where lecturers take part in a peer-observation initiative designed to promote inter-departmental reflection on teaching practice and to instil a community of practice.

It is a challenge to offer any methodological course that meets all linguistic needs, and suits teacher beliefs and multi-disciplinary contexts. However, it is clear that university students as stakeholders are demanding high-quality teaching and strong language skills from their lecturers in an increasingly international classroom – as well as

transparency and fairness of assessment and good course organisation (Long 2015). It is hoped therefore that with our 'Lecturing in English' programme, UNIMORE is making some headway in mastering the 'lecturing lingo', although there is still some way to go.

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Resources

British Council Academic Teaching Excellence (ATE)
www.britishcouncil.si/en/teach/academic-teaching-excellence

Cambridge Assessment English Certificate in EMI Skills
www.cambridgeenglish.org/teaching-english/teaching-qualifications/certificate-in-emi-skills

Cambridge Assessment English CELTA
www.cambridgeenglish.org/teaching-english/teaching-qualifications/celta

Cambridge Assessment English DELTA
www.cambridgeenglish.org/teaching-english/teaching-qualifications/delta

MICASE
quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/c/corpus/corpus?c=micase;page=simple

Is Assessment Fair?

Isabel Nisbet - University of Cambridge
Stuart Shaw - Cambridge Assessment

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This book will be of interest to anyone with a professional or academic interest in educational assessment, to education policymakers and to all who are working to make assessment fair.

Table of Contents
Chapter 1: Introducing fairness
Chapter 2: Fair assessment viewed through the lenses of measurement theory
Chapter 3: Fair assessment viewed through the lenses of professional standards, guidelines and procedures
Chapter 4: Fair assessment viewed through the lenses of the law
Chapter 5: Fair assessment viewed through the lenses of philosophy
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Chapter 7: Conclusions, challenges and a template for fairness

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