

update

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 1

FEBRUARY 2006

I would like to welcome you all to our first edition of Northumbria Learning's newsletter.

There have been a lot of recent developments here at Northumbria Learning, such as the announcement that we are beginning to work with both Edexcel and the JCQ on plagiarism prevention and detection strategies. We have also launched a new pricing scheme for our hosted Moodle and support services – which is already proving a success.

We are continuing to expand our services to academic institutions throughout Europe. Our recent attendance and exhibition at Online Educa in Berlin, 30 November – 2 December 2005, further indicates our growing presence in Europe.

Looking forward to 2006, we have a very busy schedule planned. In the summer we are launching a Plagiarism Training Course and a publication called Plagiarism: Could you credit it. We are already

preparing the second International Plagiarism Conference which will be held on 19–21 June 2006 at The Sage Gateshead. The Conference is organised through the Plagiarism Advisory Service, which we manage in the UK on behalf of JISC. The last International Plagiarism Conference was a great success and we are hoping that the second conference will highlight the issues of plagiarism to an even wider audience.

On behalf of the Northumbria Learning team, I would like to wish you a prosperous new year.

Kindest regards,
Professor Tony Dickson
Chairman Northumbria Learning
(Deputy Vice-Chancellor Northumbria University)



Online Educa Conference

Northumbria Learning recently exhibited at the Online Educa conference 30 November to 2 December at the Hotel InterContinental in Berlin.

It is the world's largest international e-learning conference, attracting over 1,700 exhibitors from over 66 countries and was the first European exhibition that Northumbria Learning attended, confirming our continued expansion throughout Europe.

Our exhibition focused on the benefits that our e-learning and advisory services offer as well as focusing on our plagiarism prevention and detection services. We were also the only exhibitor demonstrating plagiarism detection software at the conference.

Over 360 speakers from 37 countries attended Online Educa and the themes included: Transforming Traditional Universities with ICT; Open Source, Open Content and Online Learning; Future Technologies and their Applications; Understanding e-Learning and its Role in Society and Policy Issues and Large Scale Take-up of e-Learning, to name but a few.

The plenary speakers at the conference included: Prof. Riccardo Petrella, President of the Group of Lisbon, Economist and Political Scientist; Dr Brandon Hall, author, e-learning expert and CEO of brandon-hall.com; Dr Richard Straub, Director of Learning Solutions IBM Europe, Middle-East and Africa; Prof. Wim Veen, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands; Prof. Barbara Wasson, University of Bergen, Norway & Kaleidoscope Network of Excellence and Umberto Paolucci, Senior Chairman, Microsoft EMEA, Vice President for Corporate and Government Strategy, Microsoft Corporation, Italy.

Will Murray, CEO at Northumbria Learning, commented: "This is the first time that Northumbria Learning has attended Online Educa and we were delighted to be exhibiting at such a prestigious event. E-learning is a major

aspect of Northumbria Learning's work and therefore we felt our presence at this conference was essential. Plagiarism in particular, can be a complex and sometimes contentious issue which is why we want to highlight our position in this field.

Online Educa was an ideal opportunity to expand our products and services into the European market and to demonstrate the benefits our services and products can bring to a variety of institutions".

Malcolm Bell, Academic Advisor at Northumbria Learning also presented a paper at the conference entitled: "Changing Practice – Key Factors in the Successful Implementation of an Enterprise MLE at Northumbria University".

The presentation reported on the areas of large-scale take-up, the process of change and faculty take-up and support, which illustrates how the technological innovation represented by the implementation of a Managed Learning Environment (MLE) has changed Northumbria University.

Northumbria Learning's Chairman, Prof. Tony Dickson and Will Murray, CEO, were also invited to attend the official launch ceremony of the Knowledge Exchange which was held at the conference. Knowledge Exchange (KE) is a cooperation pact between prominent European national organisations engaged in the development of ICT infrastructure and ICT services for HE and research. Organisations involved in KE include the UK's Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), SURF Foundation based in the Netherlands, DEF (Denmark's Electronic Research Library) in Denmark and the DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) (German Research Foundation), based in Germany.

Plagiarism Study with the JCQ

Northumbria Learning and the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), in conjunction with the Association of Colleges (AoC), are currently undertaking a pilot study to assess the potential of a preventative approach to plagiarism through the use of detection software and associated activity.

Ten colleges have already indicated their willingness to take part in the trial and, in addition, Northumbria Learning are currently in negotiations with three awarding bodies to determine the relevance of the software for the assessment of plagiarism and collusion in work submitted electronically for moderation.

The main objectives of the study are to evaluate the use of plagiarism detection software in the specific context of the pilot colleges, to evaluate the use of detection software in the specific context of GCSE and A Level awards and the benefits for staff and students of incorporating detection software in an holistic approach to plagiarism in a FE setting.

The study will also provide a template for this approach that will be applicable across the sector, evaluating the impact of the approach from the perspectives of both examining Centres and Awarding bodies and establishing benchmarks of practice for the sector.

Will Murray, CEO at Northumbria Learning, commented: "We are delighted to be working with the JCQ on this significant pilot study. Northumbria Learning has vast experience in the subject of plagiarism and provides a range of plagiarism services including consultancy, advice and detection software which help education providers tackle the growing problem of student plagiarism. Whilst research on the topic has been primarily confined to the issues faced by higher education providers, there is increasing evidence to suggest that effective prevention and detection strategies require the acknowledgement of the issues and possible solutions by secondary and further education providers".

A spokesperson of the JCQ also commented: "Recently there has been considerable public debate regarding the authenticity of coursework being submitted as part of the examinations process. Work is currently in progress which includes a series of projects that introduce piloting of different methods for detecting and identifying work that is either plagiarised or has been previously submitted. These pilots will help reduce the potential to use and re-use work produced by other people. These pilots are being run by Northumbria Learning and will include the piloting of plagiarism detection software Turnitin".

2nd International Plagiarism Conference



The Plagiarism Advisory Service (PAS), which is managed by Northumbria Learning, is to hold its second International Plagiarism Conference on 19–21 June 2006 at The Sage Gateshead, UK.

The conference will provide a balanced view on the complex areas surrounding plagiarism, and will also discuss and explore the development of good academic practice within institutions.

Themes which will be covered during the conference include managing change in institutional plagiarism practice and policy, embedding plagiarism detection software into practice and policy, addressing plagiarism in academic practice, plagiarism and institutional risk management and ethics in teaching learning and assessment.

The conference follows the success of the first international 'Plagiarism: Prevention, Practice & Policy Conference' in 2004, which was held on the 28–30 June in Newcastle upon Tyne. The conference included 38 speakers and attracted over 145 delegates, representing leading opinion from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Hong Kong, the USA, Ireland as well as the UK.

Professor Donald McCabe and Baroness Ruth Deech have already been confirmed as keynote speakers at the 2006 conference.

Donald McCabe is a Professor of Organisation Management at Rutgers University. Over the last 15 years he has done extensive research on college cheating, surveying over 100,000 students at more than 140 colleges and universities in the US and Canada. He has also surveyed over 18,000 high school students in the US during the last 5 years. His work has been published widely in business, education and sociology journals and he is founding president of the Center for Academic Integrity, a consortium of over 400 colleges and universities based at Duke University. The consortium aims to promote academic integrity among college and university students.

Donald McCabe has a BA in Chemistry from Princeton University

(1966), an MBA in Marketing from Seton Hall University (1970), and a PhD in Management from New York University (1985). He worked for over 20 years in the corporate world before joining Rutgers in 1988. His last corporate position was Vice President of Sales & Marketing for Devro, Inc., a Johnson & Johnson company.

Ruth Deech taught law at Oxford University and abroad from 1968 until 1991, when she was elected Principal of St Anne's College, Oxford, until 2004. She then took up her present position as the first Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education. At Oxford she chaired the Admissions Committee and the Staff Grievance Panel; she served as Senior Proctor, as a member of Hebdomadal Council and as Pro Vice-Chancellor. Ruth Deech was called to the Bar and is an honorary Bencher of the Inner Temple. From 1994–2002 she chaired the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority, which regulates and monitors all IVF treatment and embryo research. Since 2002 she has been a Governor of the BBC. Ruth Deech is also a Mandela-Rhodes Trustee. In 2002 she was created Dame and in 2005 was appointed to a life peerage, and sits on the crossbenches of the House of Lords.

Will Murray, CEO at Northumbria Learning, who manage the PAS, said: "Our first International Plagiarism Conference was a huge success and highlighted many issues to a very broad and varying audience. We are very pleased to be holding the second conference in June and we are delighted to have such prestigious and highly respected figures as Professor Donald McCabe and Baroness Ruth Deech speaking at the conference".

Closing dates for the conference papers are as follows: research papers 24 February 2006, demonstration, symposia and workshops 6 April 2006 and the submission date for posters is 4 May 2006.

Visit www.jiscpas.ac.uk for further details and booking information.

Conference Proceedings now available

The Plagiarism Advisory Services' (PAS) Plagiarism: Prevention, Practice & Policy Conference, which was held 28–30 June 2004 in Newcastle upon Tyne, explored and provided a balanced view of the complex issues surrounding plagiarism, set within the context of developing good academic practice in institutions.

The Proceedings from the conference, edited by Andy Peden Smith and Dr Fiona Duggan, containing papers, keynote papers and workshop presentations which were delivered at the conference, is now available to purchase.

The Conference was the first international conference to be held by the PAS and included 38 speakers, presenting to 145 delegates, representing leading opinion from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Hong Kong, the USA, Ireland and the UK.

Key speakers at the conference included Russell Hunt from St Thomas University, Canada, Ranald Macdonald from Sheffield Hallam University, UK, John Barrie from US software developers iParadigms, Betty Leask from the University of South Australia, Australia, Jude Carroll from Oxford Brookes University, UK and Mike Hammond from Dudley College, UK.

The conference covered a vast range of themes including the impact of technology on plagiarism prevention and detection, implementing electronic detection into academic policies and procedures and using innovative assessment techniques and strategies to prevent and deter plagiarism.

It also addressed cultural diversity when informing students about plagiarism, incorporating the student perspective on plagiarism and incorporating best practice into academic policies and procedures.

The Proceedings are priced at £37.50 per copy and are available by contacting the sales team at Northumbria Learning on +44 (0) 191 243 7470 or by emailing publishing@northumbrialearning.co.uk.



New JISC and QCA publication makes sense of e-assessment



The immense possibilities offered by e-Assessment are recognised in all sectors of education and are supported by the DfES as fundamental to the future success of learners. As more software suppliers and developers become involved in producing e-assessment products the language of e-assessment has become increasingly complex.

A new publication, developed jointly by the JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) and QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority), unravels the e-assessment vocabulary and standardises terms. As awarding bodies, administrators, software developers and suppliers, teachers, lecturers and learners become increasingly involved in computerised forms of e-assessment, the e-Assessment Glossary will grow to provide an explanation to learners about how to achieve a positive, personalised learning experience.

Endorsed by all the UK qualifications and curriculum authorities, the glossary is aimed at a wide range of education professionals who may not have specialist knowledge of e-assessment but who need an understanding of terms they come across in their day-to-day work.

Speaking at the official launch of the glossary at the BETT Conference at Olympia, JISC Programme Manager Malcolm Batchelor said: "e-assessment has rapidly become one of the key areas in which institutions and individual practitioners need support and guidance. This glossary fills a gap in the available provision of support, and provides professionals in all sectors with a vital point of reference for all matters relating to e-assessment. The JISC is delighted to have worked with the QCA to develop this resource".

Martin Ripley, Head of QCA's e-Strategy, said: "e-Assessment is becoming a major driving force in education. It offers learners freedom and choice and the ability to control their own learning. This new publication provides vital information and guidance".

To access the glossary, please go to:
<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/assessment.html>

Chinese Learners and Plagiarism: Westernisation or Easternisation?

By Dr Chris Shei, University of Wales, Swansea

The recent debate between Sowden (2005) and Liu (2005) is a timely reminder of how difficult it is for the issue of plagiarism to even begin to be considered. In his well-rounded essay, Sowden largely attributes the plagiarising behaviour associated with Chinese learners to cultural background. Liu, however, would have none of it, and insists plagiarising in a second language is purely a linguistic matter. In a recent pilot study, I compared the academic misconduct history between 37 British undergraduate students (level two) and 21 Chinese students recently beginning their MA studies in the UK. 30% of British students confessed that they have cheated 1-10 times so far in their academic life; while 70% said they are clean. In comparison, only about 30% of Chinese students said they never cheated, around 50% said they cheated 1-10 times, and an amazing proportion of 20% confessed they had cheated more than 10 times. As for plagiarism, around 20% of British students confessed that they had plagiarised in submitting their written work; while 50% of Chinese students had done so in their academic life. Although studies on a larger scale are required to establish the significance of this kind of finding, this is enough for one to question Liu's strong position that plagiarism stems entirely from linguistic difficulties. For one thing, what I tapped was the history of cheating/plagiarising of these new arrivals in the UK, presumably involving exams and essay submissions conducted mostly in the students' first language (i.e. Chinese).

I am more inclined to agree with Sowden's position, that culture is a factor in students' plagiarising behaviour. I also want to endorse and

elaborate on Sowden's suggestion that cultural differences are not a factor to be condemned and dismissed. My position has always been that there are plenty of merits in the Chinese cultural system — in this context, how they learn and how they view intellectual properties such as text ownership. The example I like to use to illustrate the soundness of the Chinese learning style is Tai Ji. In learning Tai Ji one need not be creative or critical. One simply follows the movements of the master and then practice and practice the forms until they become automatic. After years of practicing the same routine, one will be gradually transformed and upgraded in physics and mentality altogether. In copying texts from some academic masters, the Chinese student is learning from an authority in the field with the ultimate refinement of his writing skills or acquisition of knowledge in mind, without paying attention to the triviality of citation, or harbouring the intention of deceiving. In using texts without quotation, the student is simply allowing the master to "take over" him and speak for him. There is a sense of transcendence in it and some form of learning is going on, which is evident from the simple fact that the student knows where to put the transplanted text.

This is not to say that plagiarism-like behaviours are taught or encouraged in the Chinese academic world. As Liu correctly points out, this is simply not true. How students learn to write depends on how Westernised their teachers (and perhaps their general school environment) are, and there are plenty of varieties here. It is perfectly likely that a Chinese student at the age of 18 has learned how to write and quote in the Western manner, thanks to his composition teacher

who has an MA degree from Oxford University. No matter at which point the student stands on the Westernisation scale, however, beyond the writing classroom, there is always the big socio-cultural environment which influences the student's conceptualisation of literacy and learning. The deep philosophy of Chinese-style learning will have its influence, and will surface mistakenly as plagiarism with bad intentions. Whether you look at it maliciously or benignly, indeed, depends on how Easternised you are.

In short, my feelings are that Chinese students' cases of genuine plagiarism may be as many as those of British students, or just slightly more. But some cases which are construed to be plagiarism may only be unwitting behaviours based on students' educational background or cultural socialisation experiences. What remains to be decided is whether British universities are going to Westernise students or Easternise themselves. Those Westerners who have managed to learn Tai Ji from a Chinese master and benefited from it may have the best answer.

References

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All about plagiarism

In each issue of the newsletter, we will focus on a different aspect of plagiarism. With this issue, Will Murray, CEO at Northumbria Learning, provides some useful points on what tutors can do to reduce plagiarism.

Where is a good starting point?

- Ensure you (as a tutor) are familiar with institution policy and referencing (WPA, 2003).
- Encourage your institution to publish policies on the web (WPA, 2003).

How can I encourage students to undertake original individual work?

- Ask the students to submit work in progress;
 - Review notes, drafts, revisions or
 - Viva the students to examine their work in progress and provide support or
 - Require the students to provide a written review of their sources in their assignment.
- Add a context to the assignment to encourage original work;
 - Ask students to draw on their own experience
 - Allow students to select an appropriate research topic within a theme
 - Place the assignment within a specific framework.

How can I discourage downloading or sharing of stock answers?

- Don't use the same assignment year on year
- Specify a date range or start date for research sources to encourage new research.

How can I create a supportive environment and not a policing environment?

- Make sure students understand what you require of them with clear assignment objectives
- Ensure institutional plagiarism regulations have been communicated to all students
- Communicate the expected institutional standards for citation and attribution
- Students should know that genuine mistakes in attribution are expected as part of the process of learning good academic practice in early academic work (WPA, 2003)
- Demonstrate the tools you can use to help monitor attribution and the feedback students can expect.

How can I motivate the students to act with integrity and respect the purpose of the assessment?

- Design assignments to help achieve/measure learning objectives not just to generate a grade
- Describe the purpose and learning opportunity presented by the assessment (WPA, 2003)
- Emphasise the value placed on analysing and understanding sources not just finding them
- Encourage concise considered answers rather than volume where possible
- Discuss the positive benefits of crediting the work of others (Ashworth, Bannister & Thorne, 1997)
- Discuss academic integrity and honesty with students (WPA, 2003)
- Telling the students that you expect honesty can reduce cheating (Kerkvliet & Sigmund, 1999)
- Consider the use of an honor code (WPA, 2003).

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JCQ 'Plagiarism in examinations'. Available at: http://www.jcq.org.uk/qualifications/exam_documents/information_documents/?contentID=57 (Accessed: 16 January 2006).

QCA Task Force

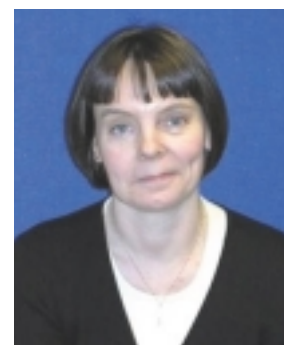
In response to the recent report on coursework in GCE and GCSE awards (QCA, 2005) a Coursework Task Force has been established to develop guidance for teachers and others involved in authenticating coursework.

In recognition of the Plagiarism Advisory Service's unique experience in this area, Dr Fiona Duggan was invited to join representatives of the various awarding bodies, QCA departments, secondary school subject specialists and others at the first meeting of the Task Force in December 2005.

Presentations by the QCA team responsible for the coursework study and the Director of Regulations and Standards at QCA set out the nature and scope of the issues highlighted by the study, which the Task Force was established to address. The need for practical, succinct guidelines was impressed upon the Task Force members, who are currently engaged in developing a final version of the guidance leaflet for their next meeting in February 2006. Although the timescale is extremely tight it was considered vital by all that the guidance from the group should be made available in plenty of time for all individuals involved in authenticating coursework in the Summer 2006 assessments.

The Plagiarism Advisory Service is pleased to be contributing to the work of the QCA Task Force and looks forward to working closely with the QCA on any similar projects in the future.

Reference: QCA (2005), *A review of GCE and GCSE coursework arrangements*. Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.



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DIGITAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Northumbria Learning provides digital solutions, consultancy, support and training in all areas of plagiarism and eLearning to the education sector across Europe.

We have a dedicated team at Northumbria Learning, which comprises of experts within the field of plagiarism and eLearning, technologists, developers, researchers, academic advisors and business professionals.

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- Hosted eLearning – Moodle and Blackboard
- eLearning support
- Publications
- Training and workshops

New products launching soon from Northumbria Learning...

Credit it

Students in all levels of education now have access to a wide range of resources when searching for information for coursework and projects. Whilst most students are confident about their abilities to find relevant information, there is some confusion about how to incorporate the results of their research into their own work. 'Credit it' is a guide written specifically for secondary and further education students, which aims to provide them with the basic information they need to correctly incorporate material from various sources in coursework assignments. The guide outlines the reasons why sources should be referenced and explains in straightforward language how to include references in coursework submissions. It also includes some useful examples.

Record it

'Record it' is a reference sheet in the form of a notepad, which helps students to reference quotations from a number of common sources of information, e.g. books, newspaper articles, chapters from a book, etc. It is a useful and practical resource for students when working on their coursework submissions.

Document it

'Document it' is a tool which helps students' manage citations. It is a Microsoft Word application which allows citations, both bibliographic and reference, to be stored inside the document as a footnote, endnote or inline citation. The citation database is local to the document and fully editable from a simple scrolling list. When work is complete, a full citations list can be added to the document. Lists can also be separated as bibliographic or reference, as the system keeps track of which citations have been inserted, and which are simply added to the database as reference material.

For further information on these new products, contact our sales team on + (0) 44 191 243 7470 or email sales@northumbrialearning.co.uk

Shibboleth – the way forward

There are many Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) initiatives looking into online services for education. One important element of these is looking into how the services that are being provided can be rolled out and made available to the end users. The main problem has always been the issue of user account authentication.

The JISC has set about looking into this middleware issue by initially investigating an authentication mechanism. Shibboleth was highlighted as the way forward.

Northumbria Learning is now looking into setting up the Plagiarism Detection Service, Turnitin UK, as a Shibboleth enabled online application. This will enable institutions who are adopting Shibboleth authentication, to gain easy access to the Plagiarism Detection Service.

The Plagiarism Detection Service already has Athens authentication, but over the next few years this authentication mechanism will be phased out for the new Shibboleth infrastructure. It is Northumbria Learning's intent to have the service ready ahead of the change-over.

Asia Pacific Conference

The second Asia-Pacific Educational Integrity (APEI) Conference was held at the University of Newcastle, Australia from 1–3 December 2005. Newcastle University, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary, played host to speakers from all over the world, who gathered to discuss and debate the nature of educational integrity in tertiary education.

The conference also hosted the launch of the new *International Journal for Educational Integrity* (IJEI), which aims to disseminate current research on the relevant issues to an international audience of policymakers and practitioners.

Jude Carroll, of Oxford Brookes University and a member of the Plagiarism Advisory Service Steering Board, and Fiona Duggan, Advisor for the Plagiarism Advisory Service, managed by Northumbria Learning, presented a paper at the conference on their recent research into institutional change and the essential elements of an

holistic approach to student plagiarism. The study involved interviews with individuals in nine HE and FE institutions in the UK.

Fiona Duggan explained: "Our analysis of the interview data highlighted that whilst individuals could often identify a specific event or incident that sparked recognition of the need for change in an institution's approach, adoption of the changed approach was most successful when a number of elements were integrated in the process. A high profile incident, such as that experienced in Newcastle University, the host institution for the conference, can highlight the need for change, but effective, sustained change requires the convergence of senior management buy-in, institution-wide ownership, evidence-based research, enthusiasm and patience".

Published research on institutional practice is rare so this conference paper will make an important contribution not only to the discussion and debate at the APEI Conference but also in the UK research community.

The paper will be available on the Plagiarism Advisory Service website at www.jiscpas.ac.uk

Electronic Detection

In each issue of the newsletter, we will explore different aspects of electronic detection. This edition we look at two areas; a quick snapshot of how electronic detection can help institutions and then a user review of Turnitin. In this issue, Dr Nathan Abrams, a Lecturer in History at the University of Aberdeen, reviews Grademark, one of the Turnitin modules.

How can electronic detection help?

- It can assist as part of a well-defined plagiarism prevention strategy by
 - Allowing tutors to easily monitor and teach about correct attribution
 - Working as a quality check for screening assignments
 - Operating as a catalyst to raise the profile of correct attribution with staff and students
 - Producing evidence of malpractice in extreme cases.
- Detection software can be a great way to put the issues of plagiarism on the agenda and make it clear that an institution is taking this issue seriously. One of the reasons JQC give for the rise is that "...candidates plagiarise the work of others because they think their production of coursework during the course will not be monitored."
- In the UK 60% of Universities use the Turnitin plagiarism detection solution.

JQC (no date) *Plagiarism in examinations..*

Grademark Review

By Dr Nathan Abrams, Lecturer in History at the University of Aberdeen.

"Grademark is a tool provided by Turnitin which allows essays submitted for plagiarism detection to be marked and returned electronically.

By using Grademark our tutors can insert a series of coloured tabs (currently red, blue and green) anywhere on a student's essay. This then brings up a dialogue box in which comments can be inserted. In addition there is also a range of preset rubrics which cover common errors in students' essays such as punctuation, argument and style.

Furthermore, our tutors can create their own range of rubrics tailored to the needs of the students on their course thus allowing the tutor to change and amend their comments quickly and efficiently without messy scribbling out.

Once the paper has been marked, the student can then view their grade and comments (which appear instantly following the marking) online. Alternatively, they can print out the marked and graded work which reveals the coloured tabs, which are numbered. A cover sheet showing the tutors comments is also printed out explaining each number. Grademark facilitates the provision of quick, time-saving and legible feedback.

So far the response from students has been very positive. They found the program both easy to use and navigate. They also found the system less stressful as there was no rush to submit a paper copy to the departmental office by deadline and no need for cover sheets – and the essay can be submitted from anywhere with internet access (i.e. the student does not have to be on campus). It is also easier for students to get back a marked version of their essay.

Overall, Grademark is a system that is extremely easy to learn and use by both tutor and student and it facilitates the provision of good practice in marking".

A Successful Bid for Funding

Northumbria Learning, in collaboration with Northumbria University, has been successful in a joint bid for Minerva funding to take part in BlendXL. BlendXL is a 3 year project which will look at blending learning with large student groups.

The EC funded project is initiated and led by Delft University of Technology and in conjunction with the Academy of Humanities and Economics in Lodz, RWTH Aachen University and University of Zilina in Zilina.

The idea behind the project is that large scale education can be made more motivating and more personal through the effective use of ICT. The project focuses on the design of useful pedagogical models for learning situations in which face-to-face activities are mixed with online activities, often referred to as 'blended learning'.

Each partner in BlendXL will bring a case into the project and will use an action research methodology to create a blended learning setting for their large groups of students. A model for blended learning with large student groups will then be developed based upon their experiences and outcomes.

The output of this project will comprise five blended courses, an educational design model, scenarios and cases from educational practice and a toolkit with existing usable software. It will also include a digital handbook for teachers, a virtual centre of expertise and publications.

Northumbria Learning will take the lead on two key project areas, the inventory of existing practices and dissemination as well as offering a case study.

Malcolm Bell, Academic Advisor at Northumbria Learning and project lead for BlendXL, commented: "This is a great opportunity for Northumbria Learning and Northumbria University to work with partners across Europe on a project that will result in a set of resources and guidance to facilitate blended learning with large student cohorts, which can be applied across Europe".

At a Glance



GradeMark™ Turnitin's Digital Markup Solution

Features	Benefits
Original format of document retained	There is no change in format from the originally submitted student essay so paragraphs, line spacing, special characters all remain the same.
Flexible and editable system for comments	Comments are not restricted in terms of length or the number of edits.
Quick and intuitive Interface	Marking with GradeMark™ is just as fast and instinctive as marking by hand.
Customisable Rubrics	Address common mistakes with personalised, in-depth, re-usable feedback.
Targeted Rubric Tracking	Allows you to identify and address key grammatical and compositional areas for a student, class or whole school.
An easy to use, flexible and fully web-based Interface	Without any software to install, you can begin using GradeMark™ immediately.

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