Exploiting feedback features in Turnitin to enhance academic literacy.

EARLE ABRAHAMSON PFHEA
SCHOOL OF HEALTH SPORT AND BIOSCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON
E.D.ABRAHAMSON@UEL.AC.UK

DR JONATHAN MANN SFHEA
CENTRE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS
UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON
J.MANN@UEL.AC.UK
Content

1. Contextualising the problem: theory and practice
2. Overview of the findings: student and tutor sentiment
3. Notable key comments
4. Recommendations
We have our own rules and conventions. We assume you just know them.
We never discussed this on the BTEC. Writing? But I’m no good at English (or speak it as a second language).

Wikipedia is so convenient. This lecturer is asking for too much. I already know this. Tell me how to get a first instead.

I want to build a robust argument. I want to keep that similarity score down.

I’m tired from my night shift and haven’t had time to eat yet. LOL! Another puppy picture on Facebook!

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Many students experience written assessments as a high-stakes activity.

‘students may be unprepared because of inadequate schooling experiences, competing family and work demands’ (Engstrom, 2008, cited in Chokwe, 2013)

‘students’ underprepared status often serves to compound their marginalisation and oppression’ (Sanchez and Paulson, 2008, cited in Chokwe, 2013)

‘academic under-preparedness inevitably leads to academic exclusion’ (Chokwe, 2013)
Students need to learn implicit academic rules

**Academic Literacy**

➔ ‘meaning making, identity, power, and authority … the institutional nature of what counts as knowledge’

**Academic Socialisation**

➔ ‘Students acquire the ways of talking, writing, thinking, and using literacy that typified members of a disciplinary or subject area community’

(Lea and Street, 2006)
Listening to our students: Narratives and negotiation

- How do our students receive and interpret feedback?
- How can we use Turnitin to enhance feedback so that it becomes meaningful to our students?
- Do we question the intention and purpose of feedback?
- Are students inducted into receiving and understanding feedback?

Feedback is a partnership between tutor and student.
Students and tutors: general sentiments

The feedback “partnership” seems to be imbalanced.

- Disparities between student and tutor opinion
- More positive sentiments from students than tutors
- More negative sentiment from tutors than students
- This does not reveal much about academic usefulness, though

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I have noticed that even though I have put a lot of effort in, I only get like one sentence back in feedback ... to me, I don't think that gives you room to improve. I'd need to have a few more sentences telling me exactly what it went wrong like which paragraph [or] was it which line was it.

I really don't know where I went wrong, so I'm going to have to just fix up on my sentence structures. Make my own feedback, basically.

I think with our class in particular, some people have taken a lot of time out of education before they have come to uni. I've been out of education years before uni, and ... before this, well, I hadn't [written] a paragraph in God knows how many years. It's a massive step.

I don't feel as though Turnitin helps at all with academic writing. I feel like the formatives, they help us improve, but I don't know how it helps.

Feedback should be anchored in and aligned with genre type.
Notable key students comments: trust in the partnership?

I have one problem with Turnitin ... it said I had plagiarised it [the phrases 'A1, A2, and A3'] when I hadn't ... it said that I had plagiarised it from a maths website but I never did that ...

Feedback is a conversation between people not simply a statement in learning.

We're not statistics ... Turnitin is a statistic ... They're trying to turn everything now - students, lecturers, work, everything - into a number. They're not humanising things anymore. There's no interaction between people.

Also, what I am upset about ... I was told that I paraphrase too much. Well, how am I going to come [up] with my own ideas when I'm being scientific or medical? ... [As a solution] I'll probably just have to paraphrase it and kind of just simplify. I don't know. Is that a solution? I don't know.

Turnitin can be a barrier to learning and thinking.
... is Turnitin a plagiarism tool or is it a development tool?

I think in a sense you might have given students a way to check *have I cheated well enough, or have I been caught?*

The fact that we change from using it as a staff tool for catching people to one in a sense to give students the tools to self-regulate was a good hope.

Students view it as plagiarism detection ... Whether it has a secondary value as a feedback mechanism ... depends on the [kind of] student they are ... the people who possibly do need it, don't use it.

Different views about the purpose and value of feedback.
Expectation vs. experience

Descriptive

“Big language”

Students

Sometimes poles apart

Staff

Critical

Clarity

“Avoid plagiarism”

Prove hypothesis

Experience ← Expectation

Feedback should be developmental.

EA 12/13
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>User Type</strong></th>
<th><strong>Change request</strong></th>
<th><strong>Outcome</strong></th>
<th><strong>Related Study</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tutor</td>
<td>Have an option where tutors can receive qualitative and quantitative feedback from the student, which assesses and comments upon the feedback that the tutor originally made.</td>
<td>Make the feedback process truly circular, so as to understand how to constantly improve my own feedback practices.</td>
<td>Yorke (2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student</td>
<td>Check other students’ ratings of the feedback they have received. This feature allows students to see the general rating that has been provided by their peer group.</td>
<td>Check feedback-ratings and opinions of tutors' feedback against those of the peer groups.</td>
<td>Yorke (2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student</td>
<td>Be able to view an example text that is similar in purpose and content to the one students have to write, but is not an exact match.</td>
<td>Understand how other people write these sorts of texts successfully, and easily access it through the submission/feedback window.</td>
<td>Yang (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tutor</td>
<td>Be able to highlight any area of a student's text, and label it in accordance with a feedback category marker from predetermined series relating to the conventions of that academic writing genre.</td>
<td>Students can, over time, identify how they have developed specific aspects of their writing practice.</td>
<td>Bhatia (2010)</td>
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Thank you. Any feedback?
References


