Managing Academic Reading in the First Year: What are the challenges?

academic act al **arrests** bcs brookman burglars **burglary** career cars

commit completed couple **crime** criminal cybercrime dutton et farrington **genocide**

group hate home **homicide** http johnson journal **offences**

offender partner police prejudice **seminar** **shoplifting**

ssas stolen student **study terrorism terrorist** tfmv **theft** turnitin uk

vehicle victim violence violent wales work

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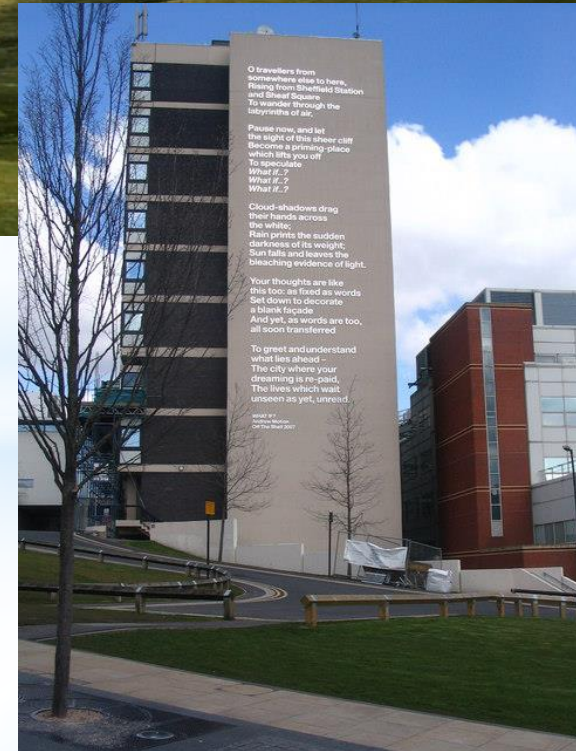
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6th largest in UK
31,500 students

*Overview

- Academic Reading in the First Year: the Challenges

- Background - my challenge
- Preliminary Research - First year Student Practices & Attainment
- Linguistic audit
- Volume
- Corpus Analysis
  - How to…
  - Keyness (Activity)
  - Concordancing
- Evaluation
  - Student
  - Staff
  - Development

The Context

Staff Dev 1 ---Mod Lead 2------- Staff 20 ---Students 300

The need to challenge some widely held student and staff beliefs about the first year:

"What are they worrying about -The first year doesn't really matter -
it doesn't count"
"Perhaps - for some of them - they should reconsider their choices"
"University is not for everyone"
"They just need to read more - they need to apply themselves"
"But they don't need to read all of it"

1/ Student Practices Survey appendix 1
2/ Staff Survey
3/ Reading Questionnaire (Barnett et al 2012)

	Completely True	Partially True	Untrue	Completely untrue
I am working to the best of my ability.	47%	44%	7%	
I am managing to do pre-reading before each lecture and seminar.	27%	50%	23%	
I have begun to tackle my reading lists.	30%	51%	17%	
I am learning a lot from the reading this year.	43%	48%	10%	
Referencing. I am confident I can do it properly.	11%	59%	21%	
Looked around the library and found where my course resources are.	48%	40%	11%	

* First Year Student Practices Survey 2014 (Foster 2013)

Students who read in detail to understand an issue in depth achieve higher grades

These students are also more likely to:

* only read material directly relevant to an assessment
* manage the amount of reading they have to do
* understand what they read
* read broadly to gain an overview of a new topic
* retain the information they read
* include material they read in assignments without plagiarising
* synthesize information from across modules

* # Comparing student attainment and student practices (based on self report)

*Managing academic reading in the first year is related to higher attainment.

Staff are certain students are not reading enough.

However, students are confident "they are working to the best of their ability" (94% student survey Jan 2015)

This amounts to less than 7 hours reading a week.

Many have not begun to tackle their reading lists (NB surveyed in Jan.).

Confirms the notion students know they are expected to be independent, but not exactly sure what that means in practice (Thomas 2015)

* Mismatch expectations concerning academic reading

* *"Students who are more clear about challenging 'goals and standards' are likely to learn more and to take a deep approach rather than a surface approach, and less likely to be confused and disengaged."* *Gibbs, 2014*

* How do I engage a staff group in supporting reading development for first year students?

* "The issue is the reading…"

* Why ?
* A linguistic component underpins the curriculum and assessment. While tacit and unacknowledged this privileges students from certain backgrounds. We need clarity as to the challenges facing our students (at word, sentence and discourse level) in order to support the whole cohort.

* What I looked at…

Receptive Demands: *What do they have to read and understand?*

* **Volume**: *How much do they have to read?*
* **Corpus analysis** - *word level - discourse features*
* **Readability**

* Linguistic Audit

* 180,000 words of content for 2 modules
* This is a high volume of reading, which is appropriate for a social science course.

Implications Need to develop strategies to manage this

* **Ac Reading** - Reading for gist, skim reading (get the idea)
* **Ac Reading** - Scanning high volume of material (yellow pages)
* **Deep learning** - evolution of 'big picture' "Why am I reading this? How does it add to my understanding?"
* **Self regulation** - Being able to select material independently- managing this process digitally -constant "Do I read on?"
* **Self regulation & Time Management-** Manage reading independently - sustaining a work rate through the semester.

*Volume

* created corpus of Forms of Crime readings (97,000) words & newspaper readings (8,000) words (mini corpora)

* This represents the material students are required to process

* Tribble (98) "quick & dirty" corpora analysis

* used simple to use online programmes (Antconc + LIWC + Cohmetrix)to assess keywords, lexis and readability

* Corpus Analysis
unpacking the linguistic challenge

* Make a wordlist of the target corpus
* Make a word list of a **reference corpus**
  * I used BAWE (British Academic Written English corpus) as a reference corpus - significantly larger than target corpus
* Compare the frequency of each item in the two wordlists to extract **keywords** – this is done automatically

* How to…

* **Why Key words**
* They reflect the 'aboutness' (Scott 1999) of a particular text or corpus
    * Contents analysis, discourse analysis
* Also reveal the salient features which are functionally related to a particular genre (Xiao and McEnery 2005)
    * Genre analysis, stylistic analysis
* Keywords are those words whose frequency is exceptionally high (positive keywords) in comparison with a reference corpus

* Keyness

Concordances

* Cluster analysis of 'violence' showing compound nouns and how they are layered - feature of academic English

| Concordance | Concordance Plot | File View | Clusters | Collocates | Word List | Keyword List |

Hit	KWIC	File
1	y other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a personal characteristic. * In recent	Crim comple
2	, and (b)he makes a disclosure which is likely to prejudice any investigation which might be conducted follow	Crim comple
3	ior because of different lifestyles or because of prejudice or discrimination (Klemke, 1992). Cameron (1964)	Crim comple
4	DC: Washington Institute for Near-East Policy. Prejudice and hatred The various definitions of hate crime	Crim comple
5	about hate, but rather it is predominantly about prejudice, of which hate is just a small part. It follows t	Crim comple
6	hate crime then we must understand the nature of prejudice Fortunately for us, as Stangor (2000) points out,	Crim comple
7	rests of social psychologists as much as those of prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination. This, he suggest	Crim comple
8	r, Jacobs and Potter (1998) point out that whilst prejudice has long been an object for study, sociologists a	Crim comple
9	of knowledge concerning the nature and origins of prejudice, and by doing so to highlight the inherent comple	Crim comple
10	lties this presents for understanding hate crime. Prejudice and discrimination Before we can explore the vari	Crim comple
11	ns of hatred, namely the psychological concept of prejudice, and its relationship to discriminatory behaviour	Crim comple
12	efore is to provide an appropriate definition of prejudice and discrimination, and to distinguish between	Crim comple
13	, and to distinguish between the two. The terms prejudice and discrimination are often used interchangea	Crim comple
14	ut the difference between them. For our purposes, prejudice can be described as a type of attitude towards me	Crim comple
15	up. In other words discrimination is essentially prejudice in action (Baron and Byrne, 1994). As a separate	Crim comple
16	clude forms of aggression and violence. The word prejudice is derived from the Latin noun praejudicium, mea	Crim comple
17	llport, 1954). According to one early definition, prejudice is: A pattern of hostility in interpersonal rela	Crim comple
18	n this subject, disagreed with the assertion that prejudice always holds some form of irrational function for	Crim comple
19	ction for the bearer. Instead Allport argued that prejudice often has a functional significance, but neverthe	Crim comple
20	ce whatsoever for the bearer). As such he defines prejudice as: An antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexib	Crim comple
21	e he is a member of that group. The net effect of prejudice, thus defined, is to place the object of prejudic	Crim comple
22	rejudice, thus defined, is to place the object of prejudice at some disadvantage not merited by his own condu	Crim comple
23	r her erroneous judgement. According to Allport a prejudice is actively resistant to all evidence that would	Crim comple
24	the difference between ordinary prejudgements and prejudice is that one can discuss and rectify a prejudgemen	Crim comple
25	cribed knowledge, Brown suggests that to think of prejudice as being impervious to change or as having no rat	Crim comple
26	ppreciate the variety and complexity of the forms prejudice can take, and its tendency to be unstable in its	Crim comple
27	account of these issues, Brown (1995: 8) defines prejudice as: The holding of derogatory social attitudes o	Crim comple
28	d more simply, Baron and Byrne (1994: 218) define prejudice as: An attitude (usually negative) toward the me	Crim comple
29	ple process information about the object of their prejudice differently from that about groups towards whom h	Crim comple
30	in the absence of strong contradictory evidence, prejudice becomes a cognitive loop that grows stronger an	Crim comple
31	ger and more deep-seated over time. Consequently, prejudice as an attitude can then move beyond a simple eval	Crim comple
32	ry behaviours directed towards the objects of the prejudice, although it is important to note that prejudicia	Crim comple
33	orm into discriminatory behaviour. The origins of prejudice and discrimination There are numerous competing p	Crim comple

* Prejudice concordance
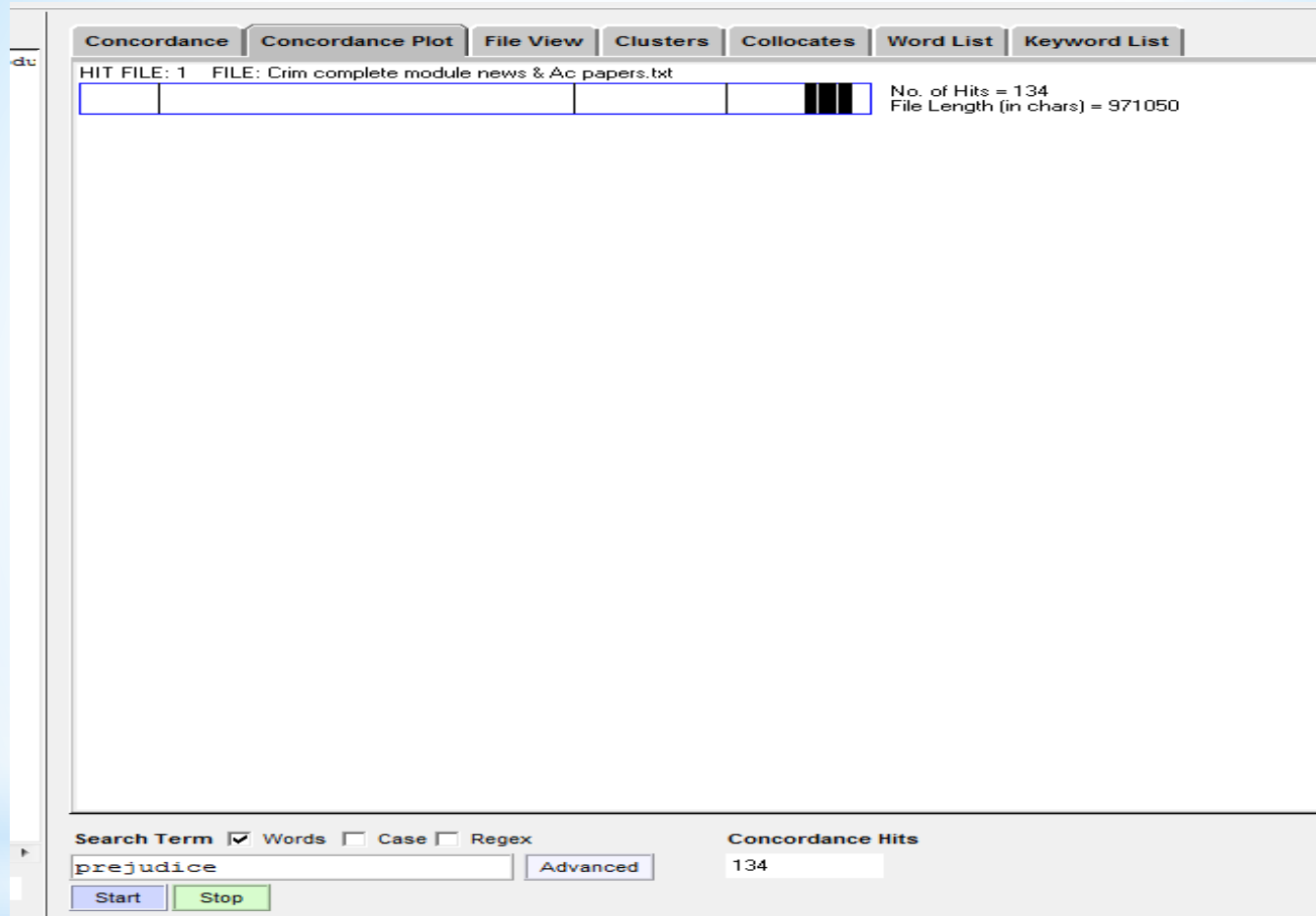
* Concordance plot prejudice

These measures are used by teachers to grade texts for their students (by US grade level)
Cohmetrix looks at

a) narrativity
b) syntactic simplicity
c) concreteness
d) referential cohesion
e) deep cohesion

Flesch-Kincaid US grade index

* Readability

What does it tell us about Criminological Academic Reading?
Why might students have difficulty with this?
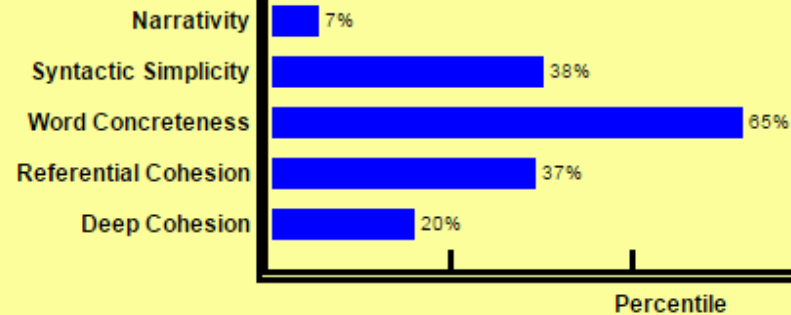Where could/ should we target support/ attention?

* Cohmetrix Text Easability Assessor
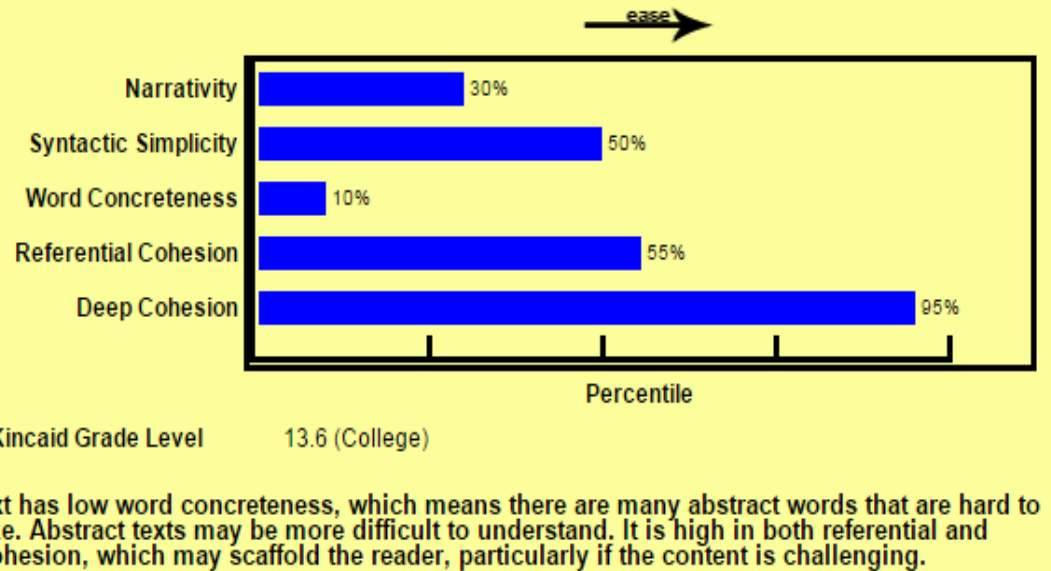
Text Easability Assessor

* The reading material from Forms of Crime tends to have;

* **low narrativity** - Criminology relies on other discourses such as expository writing. What text types? What discourses? *These, the students must learn to decipher and navigate.*

* Pitched neutrally - little explicit emotion,

  How do we get students to understand the position, the stance of the author?

* a lot of big words (abstract rather than concrete)

  This slows reading speed.

  How do we support learning of new subject based vocabulary?

* Combined with little referential cohesion this becomes particularly challenging.

* If there is little explicit referential cohesion are authors relying on a mutual understanding of field and discourse (text type) to communicate to insider audience?

* What are the implications for first year learning ?

* and teaching?

* # Forms of Crime reading material

The challenge facing first years is concrete and measurable, and evident at;

* word level -new vocabulary to acquire, familiar lexis used in new combinations -this will slow processing
* paragraph level - tone and structure, cohesion
* text types understanding and navigating new text types

* This contradicts the notion that the first year doesn't matter, there is a very definite skill development and language curriculum for the students to master.

* Two of the key features in readability refer to discourse (low narrativity and referential cohesion)
* Need to address discourse explicitly

* ## The First Year Academic Reading Challenge

* In terms of altering practices student self report of "How their reading habits have changed since starting university?" indicate that reading strategies are one the map for themselves and the staff;

* "skim read"
* "read all more academic pieces "
* "reading more and gained better reading skills "
* "I learnt how to skim read "
* "Can summarise what I've read in each paragraph or section quickly"
* "perspectives and questioning what I read"
* "Don't read anything other than criminology books"
* "reading academic articles"
* "I've learnt how to skim read successfully"
* "tend to read more and make notes"

* sample comments student survey

* Evaluation student perspective

* From student comments the development of reading skills and strategies to manage this appear to have become an explicit part of the curriculum.

* "I am much more comfortable with asking students to take part (*with reading in class*) and getting them to try new ways of reading - even if it's not what they are used to. The reading circles are much better this year - You altered my practice."

  * staff feedback - notes from conversation

* Evaluation Staff Perspective

* These tools provide a means to evidence the linguistic challenge facing the first year students.

* Staff are used to evaluating research, this detail involves them in the discussion, specific to their subject.

* It establishes a dialogue from which we can move to collaborative curriculum design.

* Evaluation Development

* Barnett et al (2012) Academic reading at Loughborough University: exploring decision making, choices and influences last accessed online 5 April 2016 http://www.lboro.ac.uk/media/wwwlboroacuk/content/library/downloads/surveyresults/Academic%20reading%20at%20Loughborough%20University%20(2012).pdf

* Gibbs G. (2014) 53 Powerful Ideas All Teachers Should Know About Idea Number 2 :"Students respond to clear and high expectations" SEDA paper available http://www.seda.ac.uk/resources/files/publications_146_2%20Students%20respond%20to%20clear%20and%20high%20expectations.pdf

* Thomas L (2015) Independent Learning Report HEA York

* Tribble C.(97) Improvising Corpora for ELT; Quick and dirty ways of developing corpora for Language Teaching   in Blewandowska- Tomaszayk + PJ Melia(eds) PALC 99 Practical Applications in Language Corpora p106-17 Lodz Lodz University Press

* Xiao and McEnery (2005) Two Approaches to Genre Analysis Three Genres in Modern American EnglishJournal of English Linguistics, Vol. 33 / No. 1, March 2005 62-82

*References

*Appendix 1

	Statement	Completely agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Completely disagree
	I am working to the best of my ability.					
	I turning up for all lectures, seminars and tutorials					
	I join in the discussion in seminars.					
	I can check my timetable on line.					
	I check my student email account regularly.					
	I know how to find my way round the module sites on blackboard					
	I am well organised, both in terms of time management (deadlines and day to day)and organising my workspace, bag etc.					
	I have found other students I could set up a study group with.					
	I am glad I know senior students on my course who I can approach and ask questions.					
	I have had a good look around the library and found where my course resources are.					
	I can find journals and articles on line through library Gateway.					
	Referencing. I am confident I can do it properly.					
	I am taking notes in lectures and seminars.					
	I re-read and tidy up my notes after lectures and seminars.					
	I am managing to do pre-reading before each lecture and seminar.					
	I am learning a lot from the reading this year.					
	I have begun to tackle my reading lists.					
	I can find my way to and from EIS easily now.					
	I have submitted my first assignment.					
	I know how and when to contact my academic advisor in case I have a problem.					

*Thank you