



Academic acculturation for international students: how can we help?

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Issues

- Internationalisation – what is it?
- Graduate attributes
- Good Practice Principles for English Language Proficiency for international students in Australian universities (DEEWR, 2009)

Good Practice Principles for English Language proficiency

DEEWR 2009 (AUQA audited)

1. Universities are responsible for ensuring that their students are sufficiently competent in the English language to participate effectively in their studies.
7. Students' English language development needs are diagnosed early in their studies and addressed, with ongoing opportunities for self-assessment.

Graduate attributes

Problem-solving Skills

Graduates will be effective problem-solvers, capable of applying logical, critical and creative thinking to a range of problems

Global Perspective

Graduates will be able to demonstrate a global perspective and inter-cultural competence in their professional lives

A framework for staff and student development of international perspectives

Teacher as intercultural learner	Students as intercultural learners
Teaching as an intercultural conversation	Learning as an intercultural conversation
Teacher as manager of the intercultural learning environment	Students as managers of their own intercultural learning

Leask (2004)

Academic values

- Teacher-learner relationship
- Independent learning
- Educational integrity
 - ownership of knowledge – plagiarism – referencing
- Value of texts, reading and research
- Research skills, information literacy
- Critical thinking and analysis
- Conventions of argument in the Socratic tradition

Academic acculturation

- Changed educational expectations
- Lack of background knowledge/embedded cultural knowledge in unit materials
- Limited contact with the wider community
- Challenges of studying in a second or additional language **with all its complexities**

Pass me the red, please.

Pass me the red, please.

- Function (communicative purpose)
- Lexis (vocabulary)
- Grammar
- Phonology (pronunciation – the sound system)

Pass me the red, please.

- Context
 - What is the setting?
 - Who are the participants?

Discussion topic:
Compulsory military service

Compulsory military service

Content

- Knowledge
 - of topic
 - of task
- Experience
- Interest level
- Motivation
- Need

Sociolinguistic factors

- What is it appropriate to say?
- Can I initiate the conversation?
- Can I interrupt? How?
- Can I disagree? How?
- Are there conventions I don't know about? Politeness? Power relations?

Leading to a recognition that...

language is inseparable from context



language and academic skills are best taught
within the discipline



'academic socialisation'

- Assignment task 1

Essay: Critically analyse the concept of institutional racism in policing and evaluate policy responses to it.

- Assignment task 2

Evaluative Report – Should we adopt Extreme Programming? (3,000 word report)

Written assignments

What's involved for the student?

- Understanding the question
- Understanding the rationale for the task
- Research, reading, selecting relevant material
- Note-taking, summarising, paraphrasing
- Getting ideas, taking a position, critical analysis
- Synthesising sources with own voice, managing citations and references
- Organising the material into a conventional structure
 - Adopting the language of the discipline

Written assignments: inclusive task-setting

1. Keep it simple – unpack it

- Consider using questions that break down the steps of critical engagement
 - *wh*- questions

Written assignments: inclusive task-setting

- What are the reasons for this situation?
- Why is it important?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses?
- What are the problems, what are possible solutions?
- What different points of view are there about this topic? Compare them.
- What is the underlying assumption or way of thinking?
- What options are available?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of these options?
- What are the consequences of each option?

Written assignments: inclusive task-setting

'A scientific reform of English spelling is a thing much desired by all who have studied the subject.' **Critically assess** this statement.

In your answer you must **outline and evaluate** views from a range of **stakeholders** in relation to the above statement. You will need to ensure that your essay moves beyond simply describing the views of others, so you need to **engage critically** with the arguments on each side of the debate.

As you do your research, you will find a lot of information. Don't get **bogged down** by trying to read every word of every article. Skim read, looking for the ideas and arguments that keep **popping up**.

•What is meant by spelling reform?

• What are the arguments for and against changing the way the English language is spelt?

• What are the strengths and weaknesses of each side of the debate?

Written assignments: inclusive task-setting

2. Provide a gloss

Analyse

Break the material into component parts and comment on the content of each part separately.

Critically evaluate

Express your considered judgment about the merit or truth of factors, views or theories mentioned. First discuss them, noting strengths and weaknesses, then conclude with your own judgment. (Although a critical evaluation requires your informed opinion, do not use first person unless you are told to do so.)

Describe

Recall facts, processes or events. You are not called to explain or interpret. Be as thorough as the word limit will allow, making sure you concentrate on the most important points.

Written assignments: inclusive task-setting

3. Set up a preparation activity

that allows students to make sure they fully understand what is required before starting their research. For example:

- a discussion activity (face-to-face or online) where students work together towards an understanding of the requirements of an assignment
- a 'paraphrase the question' activity
- an activity where students receive feedback on essay plans or argument maps before submitting the completed essay

Written assignments: inclusive task-setting

3. preparation activity – example 1

Student 1: This essay topic is about divorce in Western countries. I would look in detail at statistics for divorce in various countries. I would then focus on the **effects of divorce**, as discussed by various sociologists. I would describe the effects divorce is thought to have on parents and on children. Then I would consider what **social policy solutions** there are for the problems arising from divorce.

- Does this seem a reasonable interpretation? Yes/ No

Student 2: For this essay I would focus on **why rates of divorce have increased in Western countries**. To answer this question, I would give **my own critical explanation**, focusing on what I know from experience are the reasons why couples choose to divorce. I would then **interview** a number of divorced people I know asking them what the reasons were for the breakdown of their marriage. I would then consider **current social policies** relating to divorce and find out how well the people I interview have coped since they were divorced.

- Does this seem a reasonable interpretation? Yes /No

Student 3: This topic states that divorce has risen in Western countries. First I would want to find out **if this is the case** by looking at statistics from a number of countries. Assuming that the proposition is true, I would then look at a variety of **accounts given by sociologists** for this increase. For each of these, I would consider how **adequate** an explanation it is. The topic seems to imply that rising divorce is a phenomenon that needs to be addressed by policy makers. I would then think about what sort of **social policy positions** might follow on from each explanation.

- Does this seem a reasonable interpretation? Yes /No
- **In your opinion, which seems the 'most' reasonable interpretation?**

Written assignments: inclusive task-setting

3. preparation activity – example 2

	Source 1 Reference details:	Source 2 Reference details:	Source 3 Reference details:
Research question 1			
Research question 2			

Written assignments: inclusive task-setting

3. preparation activity – example 2

	Kessler, B 2003, 'Is English spelling chaotic? Misconceptions concerning its irregularity', <i>Reading Psychology</i> , vol. 24 no. 3, pp. 267 – 289.	Crystal, D 2006, <i>How Language Works</i> , Penguin Books, London.	Source 3 Reference details:
What are the arguments in favour of reforming English spelling?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children save time learning to read • benefits to non-native learners • cost savings 	
What are the arguments against reforming English spelling?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K says reform unnecessary, as spelling system not as irregular as people think. Teach spelling better, instead of reform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loss of continuity • necessary to reprint classics in new spelling • costs of teaching and learning new system 	

Written assignments: inclusive task-setting

4. Use a clear assessment rubric

- Have transparent assessment criteria in simple language
- Teach the skills and processes required to fulfill the assessment criteria

Kift (2009)

Written assignments: inclusive task-setting

criteria	HD (High Distinction)	DN (Distinction)	CR (Credit)	PP (Pass)	NN (Fail)
	In your essay, you:	In your essay, you:	In your essay, you:	In your essay, you:	In your essay, you:
Apply the principles of culturally safe nursing care weighting 1/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consistently and correctly applied the principles of culturally safe nursing care by: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consistently and correctly, for the most part, applied the principles of culturally safe nursing care by: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> correctly applied the principles of culturally safe nursing care by: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> took account of some principles of culturally safe nursing care by: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> used stereotypical examples about cultural groups
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thoroughly analysing and evaluating personal factors that could cause difficulties in nursing care, supported by relevant examples three important systemic factors supported by relevant examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thoroughly analysing and evaluating personal factors that could cause difficulties in nursing care, supported by relevant examples three important systemic factors supported by relevant examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analysing and evaluating personal factors that could cause difficulties in nursing care, supported by relevant examples three systemic factors supported by relevant examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> making broad generalisations about personal factors supported by some examples systemic factors supported by some examples 	

First year Nursing unit, NSB113 Diversity & Health: An Introduction to Indigenous & Multicultural Perspectives: essay
Developed by Dr Leonie Cox and Moira Cordiner

Written assignments: inclusive task-setting

5. Show models of successful writing in your subject area

You could ask students to

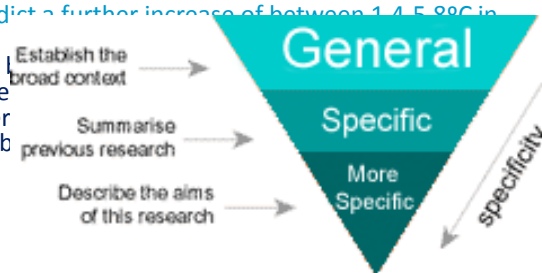
- note the differences between an expert and a poor example
- match sections of a sample essay with functions such as 'definition' or 'description'
- mark a sample essay against the assessment criteria

Written assignments: inclusive task-setting

5. a model

A certain level of greenhouse gas occurs naturally and is essential for a sustainable climate. Greenhouse gases retain heat in the atmosphere so that the earth's surface is an average of 15°, thus providing an inhabitable temperature range for life as we know it. Greenhouse gas concentrations have risen beyond natural bounds primarily through the combustion of Fossil fuels releasing CO₂ as a by-product. Consumption of these carbon-based fuels has increased with increasing global population. Carbon dioxide now make up half the human induced emission of greenhouse gases, the other comprising methane, nitrous oxide and CFC's. Atmospheric temperatures have risen by about 0-6° since the industrial revolution and computer aided models predict a further increase of between 1.4-5.8°C in the next century.

There is a strong correlation between sea-surface temperature and sea-surface levels, the unwelting processes and global ecosystems.



Written assignments: inclusive task-setting

6. Provide a checklist of the requirements

1. Does the essay directly address the question(s)?
2. Does the essay have a clear, logical structure?
3. Does it cover the main facts, ideas, viewpoints and debates relevant to the topic?
4. Is there irrelevant or repetitive material in the essay?
5. Are arguments clear, logically developed and supported by evidence?
6. Is the essay more than a descriptive account of what others have written?
7. Has a wide variety of source material been read and used effectively?
8. Is expression clear and correct? Are ideas presented simply and without undue emotion?
9. Does the essay have an introduction which clearly sets out the essay topic, and provides a thesis statement?
10. Is referencing full and correct?
11. Does the title page include the correct Unit name and number, your name and student number, marker's name, date submitted, assignment question and essay title?

Written assignments: inclusive task-setting

7. Identify steps in the process

Stage	Completion Date
1) Read the question, define the key terms	
2) Paraphrase the question	
3) Research	
4) Brainstorm	
5) Plan a structure	
6) First draft	
7) First revision	
8) Second draft	
9) Second revision and proofreading	
10) Submission copy	

Written assignments: inclusive task-setting

8. Group assignments

Reflective Presentation Assignment

- You are encouraged to consider ways of working as a group . . . rather than giving a series of mini-presentations where each person describes their individual response.
- What are the commonalities?
- How were your processes similar/different?
- What have you learnt from each other?

Assignment 3: ESH100 Thinking and Writing at University

Summing up

Successful writing tasks

- Have a clear aim, rationale and instructions
- Scaffold the steps of assignment writing
- Provide constructive feedback early
- Provide models of successful answers and opportunities for in-class discussion
- Limit idiomatic language and Australian content not covered in the course
- Have transparent assessment criteria
- Teach the skills and processes required to fulfill the assessment criteria

Summing up

Successful discussion tasks

- A clear framework, clear aims
- Short instructions in standard English
- Task before text
- Planning time
- Assigned roles or tasks
- Specific topics or information to feed the general topic
- A pyramid approach, ie pair and compare before general discussion
- Attention to seating arrangements

Internationalising the Curriculum

Initiatives focusing on internationalisation should be

- Part of a culture of international education
- Part of "regular" tertiary education, not "help" mode initiatives
- Embedded and integrated into the formal curriculum
- Explicitly designed and promoted to benefit all students

Volet (2003)

For follow-up

- Individual consultations
- Speaking and Grammar workshops
- Weekly workshops throughout the semester
- Workshops for particular units

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References

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