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The Student Writing and Tutor Assessment project

Aim
SWaTAP aims to compare student writing and tutor marking in a distance learning setting across **four qualifications** in different disciplines:

BA Hons Business Management



B Eng Engineering

BA Hons Childhood Studies

BA Hons History

Phase 1: creation of 1) a student writing corpus & 2) a tutor feedback corpus

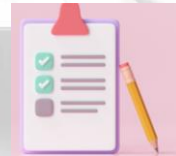
2,500+ Undergraduate assignments across three levels of study



Marks and tutor feedback on those assignments



Demographic data on Student writers e.g. carer status, disability, prior quals, socioeconomic status



Key RQ
 What can a **combination** of research using **corpus linguistic** methodology and **tutor interviews** reveal about student writing and assessment practices in a distance learning context?

Rationale

- Existing student writing corpora such as BAWE (Nesi & Gardner, 2018) do not focus on assessed writing in distance learning contexts or include tutor feedback comments.
- A corpus of student writing has potential to yield insights into disciplinary differences and, given large numbers, the impact of students' membership of social categories on their writing and how it is assessed.
- This should inform student writing support tailored to level, discipline and student need in the context of a large institution with over 140,000 undergraduate students.
- Potential to improve retention and achievement for all students, as well as to narrow awarding gaps.

Phase 2: tutor interviews across disciplines

Interview data from 8+ recorded online interviews with tutor assessors, based on corpus findings and on tutor perspectives on student texts shared at interview.



Student Writing Corpus

Disciplines	No. students	No. assignments	No. words
Business	50	542	1,523,586
Childhood	49	535	1,870,875
Engineering	48	667	2,796,970
History	47	798	1,879,851
Total	194	2,542	8,071,282

Tutor Feedback Corpus

Disciplines	No. students	No. comments	No. words
Business	50	511	208,568
Childhood	49	483	204,692
Engineering	43	240	103,755
History	47	617	177,802
Total	189	1,851	694,817

Tutor interviews (ongoing)

'students have a tendency to write great big long quotes.' [History]
 'It's also it's about avoiding narrative. This is a word that comes up so much in history, and students really struggle with it.' [History]
 'Personality is very important when it comes to good relationship to students and tutors, and because we're working in [...] this distance learning, it's so much more difficult to get personality across. [...] So the way I communicate my personality is through my feedback' [Business]
 'I'm more than happy to see bullet points because word counts are very limited' [Business]



The project team:
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- Reference: Nesi, H. and S. Gardner (2018). "The BAWE corpus and genre families classification of assessed student writing." *Assessing Writing* 38: 51-55
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