

## Case Study 1: Manchester My Learning Essentials (MLE) Proofreading Workshop Student Team Story.

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As part of the University of Manchester Library's Student Team (UMLST), I play a role in supporting the award-winning My Learning Essentials (MLE) programme the Library's programme of workshops and resources open to all students and staff created to support academic skills (see Blake & Illingworth, 2015). The UMLST are a group of (currently 23) students from all degree disciplines and backgrounds who are paid staff members (University of Manchester, 2023). We support many projects across the Library and wider University initiatives, especially the MLE programme, where we support the delivery and planning of workshops and the creation of teaching and learning resources. The UMLST are seen as equal partners with other members of the Library's Teaching, Learning and Students team and are represented at all stages throughout projects to create and refresh workshop plans and online resources (for more on the UMLST as equal partners, see Grayson et al., 2018; Blake et al., 2020).

I have been in the Student Team for nearly three years alongside my PhD History studies. I have been able to apply my academic experience to my UMLST role by offering the student perspective in refreshing several MLE workshops- where a group, including at least one UMLST member, review existing sessions to ensure they remain as up-to-date and beneficial for students as possible. This includes our 'Proofreading: the Final Stage Before Submission' workshop, which I carried out alongside a fellow UMLST member and two Learning Developers.

When thinking about our priorities for the workshop, we wanted students to leave with something practical that they could follow when proofreading their own work. This resulted in us designing activities which work towards the creation of a tailored self-proofreading checklist.

In the first activity, two versions of the same article are presented- one proofread and one with errors. Students are asked to compare these before they have a go at proofreading the article with errors. What is important here is that trainers frame the activity firstly in terms of what students notice generally about the difference between the articles, so they can see for themselves the benefits that polished work can have for making a positive first impression on the reader and making a piece more engaging and easier to follow. Secondly, whilst students will naturally spot errors, it is stressed that this activity is not a competition to find the most mistakes. This is because the point of the activity is to make participants aware of their own proofreading strengths as well as the nature of the errors that they didn't spot, which can then be used later when creating their checklist.

After this, students are presented with a version of the article where the different errors are pointed out. The mistakes that we included were carefully planned so every different type of error that should be looked out for was included. From this, students can see which errors they spotted and which they didn't and use this to begin to build their personalised proofreading checklist. Here, it is again emphasised that students should not be disheartened if there are errors that they missed, as this can instead be seen as a positive as it made them aware of the areas they need to pay attention to which they otherwise wouldn't be conscious of.

We also present an example style guide that students can follow to create their checklist to ensure that all aspects are covered, but students are encouraged to format their guide in whichever style is most helpful for them. Students are prompted to consider not only the areas that the activities highlighted they might need to be more conscious of but also particular aspects that they should be looking out for that are specific to their degree programme, to guarantee that their checklist will be as helpful as possible in ensuring the quality and rigour of their future proofreading. Students are then able to leave the workshop with a personal resource that they can utilise for all their future assignments, improving their confidence in the efficiency of their self-proofreading.

This case study was written by Lily Pearson, PhD candidate, University of Manchester.

#### Bibliography:

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