



Turn it in or Turn it off? A Pilot Project for Turnitin and Grademark Experience

Project Report

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1. Acknowledgements

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- **Dr Trevor Price** - Senior Lecturer of Environmental Technology, Construction & Management, Faculty of Advanced Technology (AT)
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- **Kim Blakey** - Senior Lecturer in Career Education, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)



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2. Executive Summary (Project Aim, Objectives and Approach)

The aim of this project is to investigate the technology enhanced learning and teaching experiences at the University of Glamorgan. This is a collaborative project of 6 academics from 4 faculties, which provide experience sharing and critical analysis of the pedagogical and technological impact of Turnitin and GradeMark. Turnitin is an online submission and text matching system which integrated with the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Blackboard. It allows lecturers and students to check submitted coursework for potential plagiarism by comparing it against continuously updated databases and sources. GradeMark is an online grading tool developed by Turnitin which allows lecturers to give students valuable and time sensitive feedback (TurnitinUK, 2010).

Taking a small group of the Glamorgan's lecturers and their students from different disciplines (more usage of technology versus less usage of technology in learning and teaching), the project responds to the needs of the online submission and assessment agenda at Glamorgan with the following objectives:

- a.) To identify both the academics' and students' confirming and disconfirming experiences on Turnitin and GradeMark – the online submission, plagiarism detection, feedback and grading tool.
- b.) To discover academics' perceptions and experiences of the impact brought by GradeMark (underpinned by Vygotsky's educational theory).
- c.) To produce a series of good case studies and a video based on the findings from (a) and (b) to promote blended learning, teaching, assessment and feedback.

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected by an online questionnaire and video interviews. 104 students responded to the online questionnaire, and 6 lecturers and 6 students were video interviewed. The comparative findings of this project demonstrate evidence-based data across different disciplines in the University of Glamorgan. For instance, top ten positive experiences and top ten disconfirming experiences. List of recommendations is suggested to nLearning and lecturers for potential future enhancement of the system and practice. The



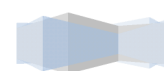
project also provides case studies of pedagogically good practices with the use of Turnitin and GradeMark that can be referenced by other colleagues within the institution and across the UK.

3. Methodology and Project Plan

This project is a further work of a broader PhD study. Thus, the groundwork such as the literature review on educational theories and their impact on technology enhanced learning and methodology (such as interview protocol and questionnaire design) have been carried out from 2006 to 2008. According to Adelman (1980), case study methodology can be used to identify and evaluate the flexibility of reality especially in the variety and complexity of educational purposes and environments. Taking the University of Glamorgan as a case study, all project collaborators (Glamorgan's lecturers) set up Turnitin online submission links in their Blackboard modules and requested their students to submit the coursework through the online Turnitin submission links. The lecturers marked and provided feedback to those online submissions using GradeMark. To maximise the experience findings in this case study, a range of formal and informal data collection instruments were used. These included video recorded face-to-face interviews with lecturers and students, an online questionnaire and site visits to individual lecturer's office for support and observation. Most of the questions were designed in a way to capture openly both lectures' and students' experiences. The below table shows the project work plan and deliverables:

Table 1. Project Schedule

Work Plan Outlines	Start	End	Outputs / Deliverables
Phase I: Preparation and Planning			
1. Plan and analyse project requirements	Sept 09	Nov 09	- Project website and outline of the project plan - Project collaborators set up Turnitin submission - First project group meeting
2. Design interview/ focus group protocol and a short online questionnaire about experiences with Turnitin	Nov 09	Jan 09	- Project collaborators mark coursework using GradeMark - Video interview questions - A short online questionnaire designed
Phase II: Data Collection			
3. Conduct video interviews with lecturers, an online questionnaire and video interview with students	Jan 09	Mar 10	- Qualitative data from recorded interviews - Quantitative data from the online questionnaire
Phase III: Analysis and Evaluation			
4. Transcribe interviews, edit the recorded video and analyse the transcripts	Feb 09	Mar 10	Findings will be analysed and reviewed
Phase IV: Project Dissemination and Final Output			
6. Report the findings: - Compile Final Report - Write up for research paper	Mar 10	April 10	- Project report - Videos for awareness raising



- Edit video(s)			
After the project end: - Presentation at the Plagiarism Conference (June) and Turnitin User group - Presentation at International Conference and CELT seminar to academics across educational institutions in Wales. - Possible journal paper.			

4. Project Implementation and Ethical Considerations

Based on the project methodology and work plan, the project collaborators from 4 faculties were gathered to discuss the project plan and their learning and teaching experiences with Turnitin and GradeMark. Please see Appendix F for all meeting agendas. Their views and experience sharing were captured by video interviews. An online questionnaire was sent out to their students for an overall review and experience sharing (see Appendix A). 6 students out of the total online questionnaire respondents were short-listed for video interview. The selection criteria was based on the respondents' disciplinary nature and a mixture of home students and international students.

Please see Appendix B and D for the interview questions used with academic staff and students. Research and ethical issues were taken into consideration during the project implementation. Project aim and objectives were explained clearly during the process of data collection. Appendix C and E describe such research ethical consent for video interviews. Please also see the Appendix G for further details of all project group meetings and interviews.

5. Findings and Recommendations

5.1 Students' Experiences

104 students across 4 faculties responded to the online questionnaires. 38 students out of the 104 students expressed an interest to be further video interviewed. 6 of them were short-listed and have been interviewed to gather in-depth views on their experiences on video. The student participants of the project came from various subject disciplines such as engineering, education, police sciences and business studies. 69% of students came from social science-based discipline and 31% from science-based disciplines.





Figure 1. Subject disciplines for the student respondents

A. Confirming Experiences and Disconfirming Experiences for Turnitin

In the online questionnaire, there is a question about students' top 2 confirming and disconfirming experiences of Turnitin. The 104 students' responses were aggregated and summarised as follows:

Top 10 confirming (positive) experiences with Turnitin

- 1 **Convenient and quick coursework submission** – fast, flexible and can be done at anytime and from anywhere
- 2 **Promote academic writing** – prevents plagiarism and teaches how to reference properly with a powerful text matching tool
- 3 **Easy to use** - simple procedure with user friendly system and layout (tried first time with no issues)
- 4 Useful and prompt feedback - getting feedback on referencing more easily
- 5 Immediate confirmation of submission with digital receipt - less room for human error such as the lost of hard copies by members of faculty office or lecturers
- 6 Saves cost and time - no need to print out or look around for printer, no need to travel to campus
- 7 Chance(s) given to avoid unintentional plagiarism by reviewing coursework before due date
- 8 A strong secure and reliable system
- 9 Punctuality of coursework submission – encourages students to submit coursework in advance
- 10 Detailed report with all information and options needed

Top 10 disconfirming (negative) experiences with Turnitin

- 1 **Confusion with the originality report** - slightly confused at first, misleading report, was not explained clearly how to interpret it (about 25 % of the respondents)
- 2 **Waited too long for the 24 hour delay** for resubmissions
- 3 The originality report picks up on referenced materials or common sentences
- 4 The system is quite complicated and hard to use - need more ICT skills to pick up
- 5 Poor preview layout - bad layout for formatting and does not recognise tables and charts
- 6 Double the work as some lecturers still ask for hard copies submission
- 7 Technical problem such as Internet down or network issues
- 8 Leads to negative emotion (Students used some words to describe the negative emotion such as “it's scary”, “makes me feel guilty”, “more tension”, “stressful”, “worrying” and “panic”)
- 9 Consistency of the use by lecturers, such as allow multiple submissions or the first submission is the final, not all lecturers use Turnitin; different submission time for online and hard copies
- 10 Is not compatible with some browsers such as Google Chrome



The above findings clearly show that (1) convenient coursework submission, (2) promote of academic writing by preventing plagiarism and (3) easy of use are the top three positive experiences of using Turnitin. These add more evidence to the research carried out by various researchers concerning to the benefits of Turnitin (Biggam and McCann, 2010; Rowell and Trayhurn, 2007; Haigh and Meddings, 2007).

Some interesting students' comments about these confirming experiences are described next:

"It is very simple to use, very very easy. It is just as easy of typing up on a Microsoft Word; it is just as easy as copying a CD or anything else you do on the computer. There is no difference really."

"The snow did not delay my submission."

"It saves my time running around looking for printers to make hard copies for submission. Turnitin is highly convenient because I am able to submit while at home."

"No paper needed, I can save the earth!"

"I have got a 4 year old child at home and sometimes I have got trouble get into the university for the 4pm deadline. With Turnitin, it gives lecturers and students more flexibility for the submission as you don't have to be physically at the university. Turnitin is much better for the convenience that I am able to turn it in at home."

"Being a single mother and a student, Turnitin has solved my problem with coursework submission. If something happen to my little boy, I can just turn it in my work online and there is a receipt as evidence. I am really happy with this way of submission."

"It pushes me to understand academic requirements, thus writing in my own words."

"It assists me against plagiarism!"

"I think it is a very positive tool that enhances my learning experience. It shouldn't be used for checking students' work whether they plagiarise or not. It should be used for the purposes of developing, learning and how to write assignments in a proper way. I found it a very useful tool to see where I am wrong and anything I could correct...it is a very good tool for student to learn how to progress and develop, in terms of making citation and references."

Only 8 students (7.7% of the total respondents), on the other hand, perceived that Turnitin is complicated or hard to use. Some of the negative experiences (i.e. item 2, 5, 7 and 10 on the top disconfirming list) were technical issues whereas some of the disconfirming experiences (i.e. item 1, 3, 6, 8 and 9) were caused by the students' lack of understanding towards how the originality report works and pedagogical practices of individual lecturers:

"Still had to hand in a hard copy... pointless!"

"Submission setting is different for every tutor, e.g. some allow several submissions before the due date, others only allow one submission."

"Confusion about the hand in times, tutors saying one time and Turnitin saying another..."

"I don't even know what the % originality means as this has not been clearly explained and there is a lack of guidance on blackboard."

"Shows similarities with coursework from institutions I have never contacted!"

"The focus on archiving a low percent in similarity index could sometimes move us from the main purpose of the coursework."

"It would be nice to see the originality report..."

It is recommended that more support and explanation from lecturers, student support centres and TurnitinUK about how to interpret the originality report is a must to prevent such confusion. Another main confusion was that the preview screen before the submission is untidy. Students may be confused as the preview screen has no formatting and diagrams.



Perhaps a little note above the preview screen for explanation would be helpful. Some students would like to have clearer instruction on the submission process and shorter waiting time for the consequent submissions:

“When you upload a file, it looks completely different at the preview screen, it looks a complete mess and you would start panicking - oh my God! It doesn’t look anything like what I wanted to submit. But once you have submitted and downloaded it, it is the right file. The preview looks a bit messy!”

“It would be nice to have more instructions on the initial page...a clear instruction of what exactly is going to happen, if this doesn’t happen for a second just refresh the page etc. when I came to my second assignment it was quite relaxing...but for the first time a little aid would be really helpful as I am a bit technophobic, it’s just a reassurance of what I am doing is right.”

“I found the idea of 24 hours wait is a bit too long as that just takes one day from our submission date, so we have one day left to submit our assignment really...and I found it a bit weird because the first time I submitted my assignment, the report came back immediately and then I had to wait another 24 hours for the consequent submissions. I found that inconsistent. I think a shorter waiting time would be appreciated.”

There are also different views and known debates about whether lecturers should allow students to see the originality report. In this project, 4 lecturers allowed their students to see the originality report and 2 lecturers did not allow their students to see the originality report. The following are several students’ comments in response to the debates:

“The only disconfirming experience is that when the originality report shows that you have 55% plagiarism which you didn’t. It has a bad effect on the student as the student tried to do hard work by himself but...”

“Turnitin can really scare the daylights out of a student by showing a high percentage of plagiarism, especially for the quoted material used in the text including references.”

“I was quite worried about the similarity index at the beginning but later I realised that I included the actual questions of the assignment which would be the same as my other fellow classmates. But having the breakdown and seeing the details, I think that is very helpful. I amended those which looked familiar and I could see majority were just small instances where people from other universities have used that specific text, or the phrase was similar to something else...”

“I think it is a very positive tool that enhances student learning. It shouldn’t be used for checking students’ work whether they plagiarise or not. It should be used for the purposes of developing, learning and how to write assignments in a proper way. I found it a very useful tool to see where I am going wrong and anything I could correct... it is a very good tool for students to learn how to progress and develop, in making citation and references.”

“I am more likely to read the feedback on the originality report rather than going to see a tutor about feedback”

In summary, 63% of the students confirmed that the originality report encourages academic writing and discourages plagiarism. They learnt to reference properly by using a powerful text matching tool. 15% of the students had disconfirming experiences or felt annoyed when the originality reports pick up properly referenced material or common sentences. 6% out of the 104 respondents felt that the reports lead to negative emotions such as “it’s scary”, “makes me feel guilty”, “more tension”, “stressful”, “worrying and “panic”). Thus, a careful explanation and significant “education” is necessary to clarify how Turnitin works and how to interpret the originality report. Sufficient support and guidance about the process are also essential.

B. Confirming Experiences and Disconfirming Experiences for GradeMark

It is pleasing to know that 77% of the student respondents like GradeMark as shown in the following graph:



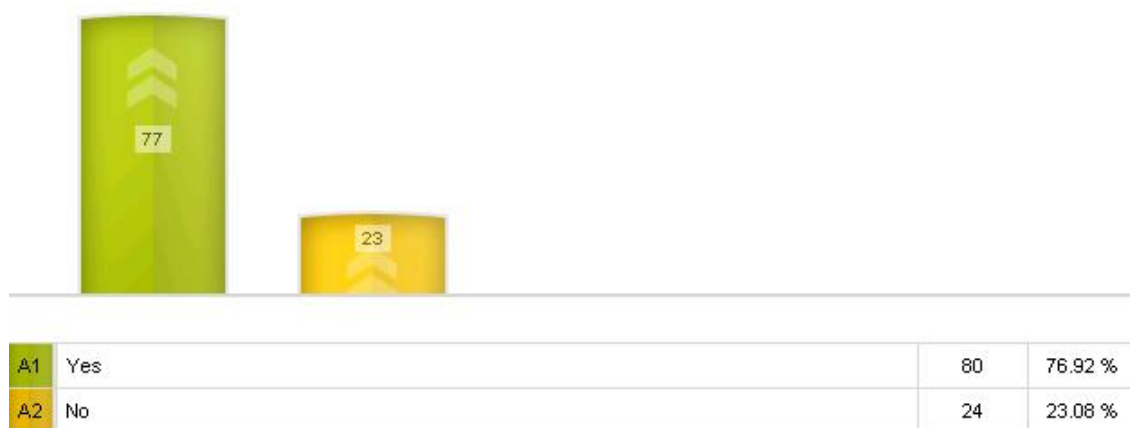


Figure 2. Student responses to Question, “Do you like GradeMark?”

In this project, the majority of students liked GradeMark and confirmed that it enhanced their learning experience at Glamorgan due to many benefits. The top three benefits they have reported are: (1) the feedback through GradeMark is better, richer, helpful, more detailed, specific in the content area than merely general feedback; (2) GradeMark provides clear and legible feedback which is better than hand-written feedback. It is easy to understand and the black and white feedback is always there, can always revisit to improve the next assignment; (3) GradeMark provides promptly, reliable, easy access and paperless feedback. No paper feedback clutter that can be sometimes lost. The following students expressed these positive experiences with firm convictions:

“In my 4 years in Glamorgan, I think the most useful feedback was via Turnitin GradeMark!”

“Quick and easy feedback...I wished all tutors used it!”

“I am very pleased with the system as it is a useful tool. I think every university should have it. I would like to see all tutors use this and all students use this as well!”

“Much better for interpreting feedback - symbols are placed in the relevant part of my essay. I am now actually reading the feedback!”

“The feedback I have got from the old way is very very little. With GradeMark, I can actually see what’s going on, the actual part of the assignment, which part goes wrong, which part goes right...it enhances my learning experience...it should be very good for students if everybody use it”

“Everything is black and white, so the feedback is as clear as it can be and this can be helpful in the future.”

“I am more likely to use the feedback and work on it for other assignments as it is easy to use and is always there for you to refer back to.”

“It was easy to understand what the tutor had said about work, sometime I find it difficult to read handwriting.”

“It is very good as when you go to the next piece of the assignment, you could refer it straight away and you don’t have to dig it out, it’s always there. The feedback is line-by-line and very detailed. With GradeMark, tutors can actually pick a line out and give comment rather than just a little note or tick at the end of a paragraph in the old way. You would get much better feedback with GradeMark. The feedback sometimes is more important than the mark itself as that is how you improve your next piece of work!”

Some international students may be shy and lacking in confidence. The private feedback and private mark are surely one of the strengths of GradeMark in enhancing international students’ experiences at Glamorgan. A few international students in the project described their confirming learning experience with GradeMark:



“I am an international student...so at first everything was new for me...the way of teaching, the way of writing essays, almost everything... so the first assignment I did - the content was right but the structure and referencing was wrong, so through the online grade marking the tutor clearly explained my mistakes and told me how to do it right. And this online grade system is its private - if one doesn't get good marks he or she doesn't get embarrassed in front of everyone!”

“I love the fact that I can use it all over the world as long as I have an access to the Internet. It's crucial, especially for the students from abroad.”

“Normally our tutors will get our hard copies and provide a general comment and feedback, such as the structure is not good or the references are not enough. But after I used the GradeMark, the feedback is much better, such as this sentence has grammar problem or that paragraph is not detailed. The tutors add more comments and detailed feedback. In that case I can learn, what exactly the tutors asked us to do. It really helps me to improve my assignment and improve my other assignments. I think that is really beneficial to me”

“We were using the digital dropbox on Blackboard and they never give feedback online. The feedback I have got from the old way is very very little. With GradeMark, you can actually see what's going on, actual part of the assignment, which part goes wrong, which part goes right. So that is main positive thing and it enhances my experience of learning.”

One interesting view is that Turnitin and GradeMark directly shape the learning experience at Glamorgan by encouraging students to visit the student portal as a daily routine:

“Turnitin and GradeMark encourage me to access Glamlife more and it becomes my routine since then...”

On the other hand, there is a question to students about their top 2 disconfirming experiences with GradeMark. 55% (57 students) of the total responses expressed no disconfirming experiences with GradeMark. 47 students expressed some disconfirming experiences and Figure 3 shows the overall responses for such disconfirming experiences.



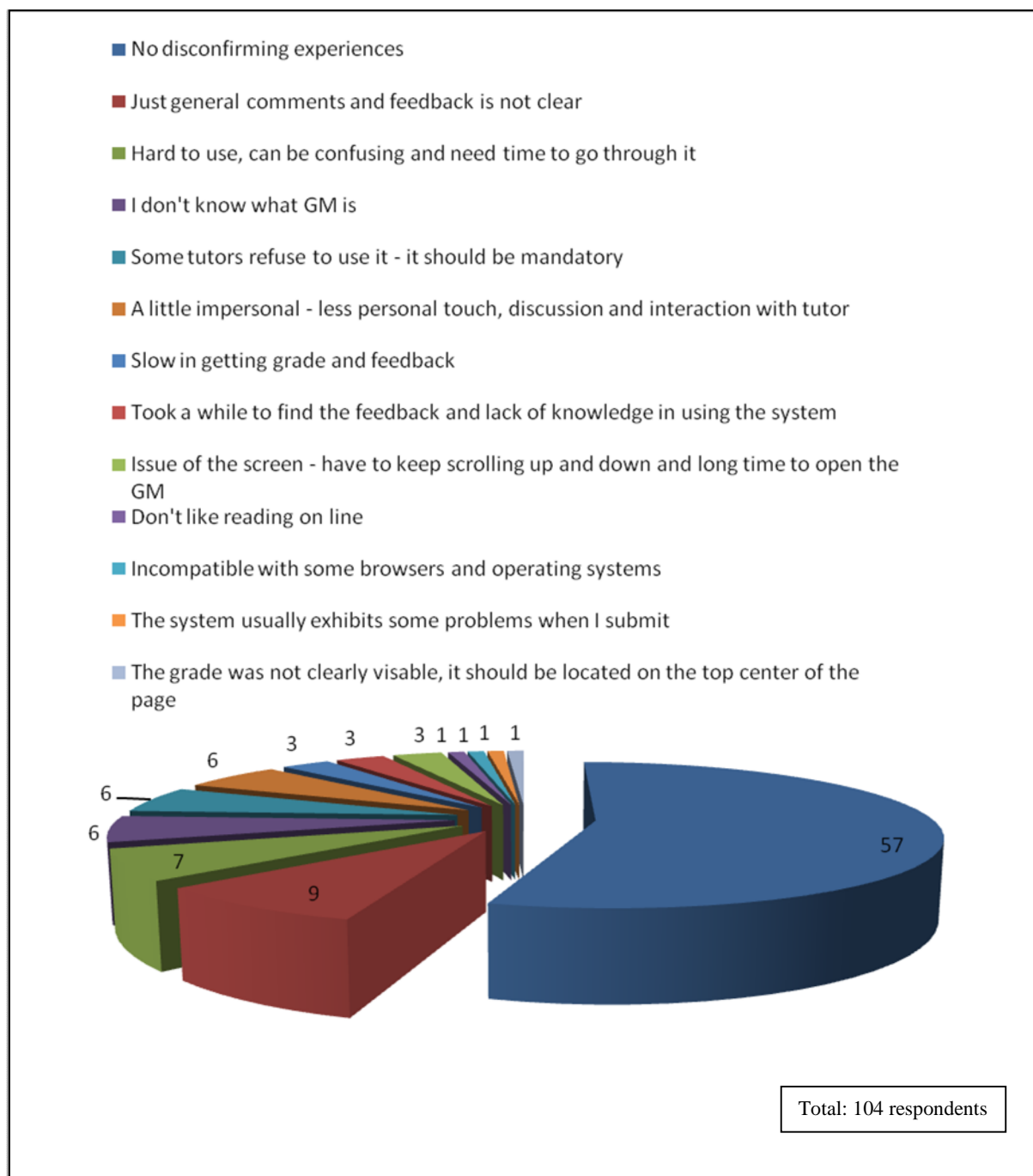


Figure 3. Top disconfirming experiences with GradeMark

Below are some views as evidence of such disconfirming experience:

“I took a while to find the feedback...”

“Hard to use, can be confusing and need time to go through it; it was difficult at first to navigate the feedback and match it to the document!”

“Takes away the personal touch with your tutor.”

“Some tutors will only give general comments. Therefore I won't be able to see which areas that I should to improve on.”



“...I really hope that I can download GradeMark to my computer and read it. It’s easier for me to go through it.”

Surprisingly, some students perceived that “not all lecturers use GradeMark” was a top disconfirming experience:

“Not used by all tutors - very annoying, it should be mandatory!”

“Only one module has used it fully... only one module has given feedback via GradeMark...”

“Not used consistently for marking across the faculty...”

“The fact that some lecturers simply refuse to use the facility, this is very poor in my opinion. I have actually heard one lecturer say that he/she will not use it as it is only there to serve the lack of trust the faculty has in its students, I wonder if it is more a case that this individual give such poor feedback that he/she does not wish to be found wanting in this department.”

5.2 Lecturers’ Experiences

A. *Confirming Experiences for GradeMark*

The findings of the project confirm that all of the academic project collaborators gave very positive views towards GradeMark. Apart from the technical difficulties and learning curve, they acknowledged the benefits and enhancement brought to their students’ learning experience especially the aspects of **interesting, easy access and individualised assessment feedback**:

“Students are really really happy and excited about Turnitin and GradeMark...We make sure that the balloons are not just the balloons, we use those icons such as smiley and star. Students seems to like it especially the undergraduates - I notice that they like it very much... week after week they are anxiously waiting for the apple to turn red so that they can know the mark and feedback!” ~ Instructor C

“I find it quite easy to do. I think it’s flexible and students enjoy it. The feedback I have got from students is that they are more than happy to use Turnitin and GradeMark... they particularly like the feedback I gave and I think it is a positive tool!” ~Instructor F

“From what I have heard, students are really really happy. They feel that it is a much more individualised way of submitting their work to tutors as they have got wonderful support from Turnitin in terms of the comparative report where they may need to improve their work, and the feedback is instantaneous from the tutor; whereas in the past they took much longer to get their feedback - from that perspective, this system is very very good.” ~Instructor B

This finding aligns with the student responses showed in Figure 2 – 77% of students liked GradeMark. GradeMark also provides useful tools such as the in-text clipboard and rubric scorecard to enhance the learning, teaching and assessment experience for both students and lecturers, especially in terms of **prompt, more detailed, better quality and richer feedback compared with paper-based feedback**:

“I use everything, from Clipboards to general comments and rubric scorecards, I use them all. All of them are useful! We have to give feedback almost line by line – from grammar to actual content, from the thought process to critical analysis... it is unbelievable, we really have done that and GradeMark does help!” ~Instructor B

“Looking from the students’ point of view, I think I have given more feedback than I probably would have done in a paper method with a pencil because the clipboard was there, the information was there and the comments were there. The final general comments would be the same as I always do but within



the work itself, the bubbles and additional comments, I would tend to put more feedback. Before, I would probably put a tick to indicate it is on the right track. But putting a bubble and comments through GradeMark obviously gave more feedback. ” ~Instructor A

“All of them are useful as the general comments give them an overview and summary of positives and negatives. The rubric gives them the exact quantitative grade and criteria that I mark against. The little clipboard is very useful as you could go into the text, what is good and what is not so good...highlight them... so I use all of them and I like them all! ” ~Instructor C

“I quite like the facility where you could review the comments at the bottom and you can glance at the comment list. I think this is a really good tool because if you were writing on paper, you can look back at what you have written but you probably don’t review it as well as on the electronic screen. When you come to the final comment, it informs it. You can see the flavour of what you have been saying, the tone of it and where you have made similar comments quite a few times and you are summarising the comments. So I think students get quite good feedback from us.” ~Instructor D

GradeMark also speeds up the marking process and provide a flexible marking space – lecturers could mark students’ assignments from anywhere. The below outlines the lectures’ positive comments about how GradeMark eliminates the trouble of carrying bulky hard copies and uncollected or unread assignment feedback:

“It speeds up my marking. I love the fact that I can mark online from anywhere as long as I have got Internet access, such as home, Cardiff Central Library and on the train - that’s the main benefit for me. Marking online with the bank of feedback is also very helpful. In my group I have a hundred of students and I love the fact that I don’t have to write the same whole thing 30 or 40 times so that customised feedback bank was really helpful. ” ~Instructor E

“...you don’t have to carry papers back home... ...I don’t like carrying the hard copies.” ~Instructor B

“I am not tied to carry a hundred of printed assignments. I am not going to carry them back home...I am not tied to my office desk, and also the feedback is instant.” ~Instructor E

“It is positive because I don’t have to carry lots of assignments and I don’t have to have them in the office and knowing that students are never going to collect them because most don’t but in this way they do, they get the feedback as it is online, it is there!” ~Instructor C

One lecturer felt that his students’ overall performance has been improved after using Turnitin and GradeMark:

“From my learner’s point of view, I found two great things. I have got no empirical evidence but I feel it improves the performance of my learners because I allow them to submit as many times as they want before the due date so that they could get feedback from the originality report. I think that really makes them aware that (a) I was really using the plagiarism prevention system and (b) enhances their learning experience just by getting the feedback from Turnitin almost immediately from anywhere as long as they have got the Internet connection and a PC. I think it boosted the pass rate...because I have a hundred students and I only have had one failure compared with last time, there was significantly more in the past.” ~Instructor E

Crudely speaking, academic and research life may be isolated. Academic is usually stay in individual rooms and busy themselves with class preparation, marking and research. Individuals may have very distinct views, practices and debates about the same subject in the academic world. Pedagogically, community of learning and practice are essential. Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) indicates a simple but powerful educational principle - the quality of individuals’ thinking and performance is much better if they were aided by more skilful and knowledgeable individuals rather than working independently (Alexander, 2006). Vygotsky recognises this kind of community or peer-assistance is needed to help



individuals develop new or better skills and practices within their ZPD. Interestingly, two experienced lectures from different faculties experienced this after using Turnitin and GradeMark:

“Although the rubric didn’t work out, we had a really good discussion and spent time on what we were looking for in it. So that was good for the students. When you have a team of people marking work, you all have a common agreement about what you are looking for. I think that’s an advantage. ”
~Instructor D

“We also get the support from our office mates and our colleagues. I felt that everybody here is working towards implementing GradeMark and not just Turnitin...so that kind of peer support, discussion and debates are more since introducing GradeMark.” ~Instructor B

B. Disconfirming Experiences for GradeMark

The following are the top 5 disconfirming experiences raised by lecturers:

(1) Initial learning curve and not feeling comfortable with the technological constraints

“At the beginning I was thinking oh...how am I going to manage this? The first few assignment were not comprehensive because of the GradeMark clipboard issues...I have to say that at the initial stage I was almost resistance to use this system.” ~Instructor C

“During the Christmas period, I typed up my Rubric and it disappeared! So the conversation [discussion with another instructor who teaches the same course] and the typing up of the Rubric meant I lost a day really. Rather than losing time doing it again, we modified the way we used GradeMark by using the clipboard.” ~Instructor A

“It is difficult initially I must admit. It is positive in the sense that once you have done a couple of scripts and you would get used to it. ” ~Instructor B

“At the beginning students were a bit of fearful and that came across in class, psychologically...or their brain, both consciously and unconsciously, they thought that this thing is going to ‘catch’ them! But slowly through a lot of us explaining this tool is not to ‘catch’ them at all but a tool to actually support them in their learning experience of how they referenced and how they actually use materials and information in writing their assignments...and since then they were much more positive and they like it!” ~Instructor C

(2) Stability of the network connection or slower network service provider – caused the loss of comments or marked work and slowed down the marking process

“Most of my marking is done at home but unfortunately the Internet network in the UK is very slow...the pages take very long to load and sometimes we can’t even get it loaded because of network is really so slow...a couple of weeks ago I was in Portugal for a weekend and I marked on that weekend and the network provider in Porto allowed me to do three times more than when I was marking in the UK. The network there is so much faster! ” ~Instructor B

“Slightly annoying is that while I was marking, GradeMark disconnected. So I was marking on screen and it disconnected and all my marking on that paper was lost. It’s not a big deal but you have to remark it and spend another 20-30 minutes...” ~Instructor E

“Sometimes it kept reloading while you are marking...with the message ‘GradeMark is reloading...’ and then you would lose a few comments.” ~Instructor A

“It depends on where you were working as well and maybe the time of the day when the Internet connection wasn’t good...I certainly ended up obsessively saving after every time I did a comment



because I didn't want to redo it...just to make sure that the comment wasn't going to disappear and I would have to retype it." ~Instructor D

(3) GradeMark interface is too small and not resizable:

"The window that we use for adding comments, the clipboard area and the rubric scorecards and all the pop up windows are very small...the rubric scorecard, we cannot make it big." ~Instructor B

"Everything is very small... you have a big screen with a lot of information, the first top part is about Turnitin and GradeMark but they are the information which we actually don't need it, the part where you actually work is only three quarter of the screen and it's really very small. That's something I really find quite difficult to get used to." ~Instructor C

(4) Confusion with the terminology on Turnitin and GradeMark:

"What students find confusing and certainly I find confusing is the date system that is used in Turnitin. There is some confusion for the 'start date, due date and post date'. Several students have told me that they don't know what it means! ...maybe that needs to be looked at in terms of clarity for the terminology." ~Instructor F

(5) Pedagogical practices – it is difficult to compare two student assignments side-by-side and the clipboard comment list is not in alphabetical order:

"Sometimes, I like to glance through the assignments of a cohort to get a feel of the cohort. You can do that on paper but it is difficult to do electronically. And if you have something that someone has said that is interesting and a similar thing said by another, you want to look at them together, that is difficult to do on GradeMark." ~Instructor D

"I was really frustrated because of the feedback bank wasn't in alphabetical order. I spent a lot of time building up about 50 comments in that feedback bank and going through the long list of feedback is very frustrating. By having alphabetical listings would be very helpful to even speed up my marking." ~Instructor E

There are also some other technical issues such as inconsistency of the system:

"The marks on GradeMark did not appear immediately on the Turnitin assignment inbox – it isn't consistent, sometimes it appeared immediately but sometimes a few hours or a day later." ~Instructor A

"It is the vehicle that we use – Blackboard which we use for delivery. Sometimes it doesn't live up to the expectation of it. The technology that we use (Turnitin and GradeMark) is fine but the support system, Blackboard, seems to be lagging behind a little bit." ~Instructor F

However, the lecturers across the faculties overcame the above issues by seeing the student-driven benefits of GradeMark. GradeMark not only brought the enhancement of assessment feedback for students, it also enhanced the individual teaching experience by eliminating other administrative hassles. Such commitment to enhance learning, teaching and assessment experiences led to the individual's persistency and patience. These are described next:

"I was quite pleased with the way it worked actually although it was not what we intended to do due to the technical difficulties, but in the end I think the feedback worked quite well anyway." ~Instructor A

"...students are more than happy to use Turnitin and GradeMark once they have got over the initial 'shock' of using technology to do this... I still want to use the system but just have to be patient." ~Instructor F

"We are just persistent!" ~Instructor C

"I tell you why we are persistent – because I don't live near to the campus, I can't carry everything with me, I don't like carrying the hard copies." ~Instructor B



“We made a commitment to the students that we were going to use it and once you say you are going to use it, you have to stand by that in a way. And we made a commitment to CELT and Turnitin that we were going to use it, so we stuck with it (smile...)... we don’t easily give up!” ~Instructor A

“I would continue to use GradeMark as it speeds up my marking and I could do it remotely. I am not tied to carry a hundred of printed assignments. I am not going to carry them back home...I am not tied to my office desk, and also the feedback is instant. The whole process...from the student submitting their work wherever they want, checking their work doing it remotely...we had the snow day. That’s the big issue and students have no excuse to say ‘I can’t come to campus to hand in my assignment.’ That reason has gone out of the window for Turnitin. So that’s the big plus. And the students have the receipts and I have the list. I know exactly who has handed in who hasn’t...it gets rid of all administrative hassles.” ~Instructor E

Besides, being tolerant of the new system and the technical limitations, and being flexible to try out or switch to different methods are the positive attitudes to confront the disconfirming experiences:

“...when I came to the second assignment, I didn’t even consider the Rubric (which brought disconfirming experience). I actually went straight to the fallback system which was the clipboard. I don’t know why that happened but I think I was comfortable using it.” ~Instructor A

“The one about the sorting feedback, I just browse through the list and it was annoying...I tried to use the QuickMark palette as much as possible... and I didn’t really do anything to get the hang of the system. I just turned it off and then came back ten minutes later. There was nothing more I could do...” ~Instructor E

“We backed up all rubrics and comments in ‘Microsoft Word’... and I obsessively hit the save button!” ~Instructor D

Friendly and constant support from both CELT personnel and Turnitin developers are also two main strands which help to drive the academics to overcome both pedagogical and technical issues:

“You are the biggest support to help us to continue to use the system. To be honest, I went to three of your training and refresher sessions...even at that stage when we had some queries that we had, immediately you actually came to our office and that kind of personal with dedicated support, I think that made us persistent, and then we manage now!” ~Instructor C

“In that persistence, we have to really thank you as you really engaged with us...I had to say, you did provide us a lot of support, the moral support and hands-on support with many little issues we had...like in January, I couldn’t see any of my students’ assignments, you immediately looked into that and immediately reassured me that it was a technical problem and had been taken into repair process and within a week it was absolutely working fine.” ~Instructor B

“The support is great...” ~Instructor F

“The support from TurnitinUK (nLearning) and TurnitinUS (iParadigm) developers is beyond excellent. They usually reply to my queries within a day and try their best to resolve all kinds of technical issues with professional ethos. If there is a rating system, I would rate their support and service as 5 star or A+!” ~Instructor G

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings discussed in section 5.2, the following are some recommendations regarding Turnitin, from students and instructors:



A. Top recommendations from students to Turnitin (nLearning):

1. More title explanation for all buttons and sections, such as what the colours represent? What the similarity index means? What is the post date? Brief information using mouse over, hover box or pop up window would do.
2. Email notification of when grades are online (on the post date)
3. Prompt originality report - without having to wait 24 hours for the second original report. Would it be possible to decrease the 24 hours turnaround time?
4. Enhance the layout of the preview during students' submission. Or to give an explanation that the preview page would remove all tables, formatting and pictures to prevent panicking or worrying of losing work from students' perspective.
5. Would it be possible for Turnitin and GradeMark to be compatible for a wider range of web browsers such as Google Chrome and Safari?
6. Would it be possible to give students an option of comments during the submission, e.g. a comment box on the submission/preview page. For instance if for a reason one submitted a few minutes late because of failure of the internet or otherwise the student may like giving a comment about that to the instructor.

B. Recommendation from instructors to Turnitin (nLearning):

1. **Downloadable GradeMark** – for external examiners and to allow opening multiple GradeMark papers for side-by-side comparison.
2. Spell check facilities on GradeMark.
3. Sorting facility for clipboard comments (ideally customised by instructors).
4. Track students' view times and view counts on GradeMark – for instructors to get a sense of how many and how long the students read the feedback and grade.
5. Explanation of the “start date, due date and post date”, and insert titles/explanation for buttons and links when mouse over.
6. Having a column for students to enter comments in the instructor's feedback – some sort of reflection and feedback to the feedback from instructors.
7. Some sort of view for a second marker.
8. A video demonstration on how student should interpret the originality report and access GradeMark.
9. A bigger help button or virtual tutor, i.e. MS agent
10. It is recommended that Turnitin should be used for all essay-type coursework submissions (not limited to text-based) due to its vast benefits to students and lecturers.

A number of recommendations were developed to address some of the concerns raised in interviews. Some suggestions may be debatable and are attributable to the individual's practices and preferences. Those relating to the use of Turnitin and GradeMark pedagogically are listed below:



C. Top 5 recommendations from students to lecturers according to votes:

1. More guidance and instructions for new users, e.g. how to interpret the report and how student access marking and feedback.
2. Clearer, positive and varied feedback. Preferably specific instructions on how to improve future assignments.
3. Make all the courses available for Turnitin and GradeMark or make them mandatory. Advice all other lecturers to use it on their modules. Some assertions from students are as follow:

“Force all lecturers to use it!”

“If all tutors marked through GradeMark, it would work a lot better”

“...I wished all tutors used it!”

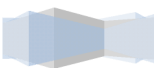
“Turnitin should be the only submission medium.”

4. Stop lecturers asking for hardcopies.
5. Students would like to have the opportunity to view the originality report.

D. Some good practices shared in the project:

1. GradeMark is a very useful tool to enhance the learning, teaching and assessment experience at Glamorgan. Both staff and students in the pilot project recommend the continuous usage of such excellent tool, with the pedagogical and technical support in place.
2. It is a must to provide clear guides and more support for students who use Turnitin, especially for the first timers. Clear explanation on how to interpret the originality report to prevent student confusion and emotional responses such as “scary”, “stressful” and “panic”. Some notes beside the similarity index or a one-page guide for students such as what the originality report is and what it is not would be helpful. Attaching user guides for students before the Turnitin submission link is recommended.
3. It is recommended to highlight that Turnitin is not intended as a tool to penalise or “catch students for plagiarism” but a tool to encourage students for academic writing – similar to the role of Microsoft Spelling and Grammar Check. Turnitin is a self-checking tool, which provides some sort of formative assessment and feedback. A tool to help, not to use for penalisation. Therefore, the options of “allowing multiple submission before the due date” and “allowing student to view the originality report” are recommended:

“Because we allow multiple submissions for students before the final submission on the due date and allow them to access their originality report, students really found that useful and they really thank us in the sense that it isn’t an one off thing but a real learning experience for



everybody to understand that Turnitin is not there to point a finger to student...” ~ Instructor B

4. During the Turnitin assignment setup, it is recommended to exclude the bibliography and quoted text to prevent a high similarity index and confusion of the originality report. Unless the instructor would like to see everything and has explained very clearly to his/her students about the choice.
5. It is highly recommended to have standardisation and consistency that needs to be discussed within the divisional or faculty level, i.e. interpretation of the originality report; setting of the Turnitin assignment (first is the final, allow to overwrite until due date; allow students to see the report); and is it mandatory for everyone to use it to prevent students’ confusion and comparative learning experience.

6. Conclusions and Implications

In conclusion, the Turn it in or turn it off project achieved all aims and objectives listed in section 2 (page 3). Taking lecturers and students across 4 faculties in the University of Glamorgan, the project successfully identified, both technologically and pedagogically, the perception, confirming and disconfirming experiences for blending Turnitin and GradeMark in student learning and teaching from September 2009 to February 2010. The project also delivered an evidence-based “top ten list”, recommendations and good practices to enhance the learning and teaching experience with Turnitin and GradeMark. A series of good case studies and video interviews were captured and disseminated to promote blended learning, teaching, assessment and feedback.

In higher education, technological innovations impact on traditional face-to-face and paper-based learning, teaching and assessment experiences, and are often perceived as “catalyst for change”. Such change may lead to either “enhancement of learning and teaching” or “technological frustration”. One key result derived from this project is that the technology, Turnitin and GradeMark did enhance the learning and teaching experiences for both students and lecturers at Glamorgan, especially towards the aspects of assessment and feedback. Easy and flexible assessment and feedback is of great importance; and prompt, more detailed, better quality and richer feedback compared with paper-based feedback is the main enhancement brought by GradeMark. The pre-condition for such enhancement is the persistence and commitment of Glamorgan academics to enhance the students’ experiences and the institutional support for all technical and pedagogical issues which arose along the way.

Findings of this research indicate that, as long as lecturers and students went over the initial learning curve with positive attitudes towards all sorts of technological issues, regardless of the disciplines they are from, such integrated practice (learning and teaching with Turnitin and GradeMark) would lead them to “technology enhanced learning experience”. Taylor (2009) asserted that educational values should be driving technology development, not the other way round. In this project, there is a strong message from the lecturers’ involved that Turnitin and GradeMark have more benefits and advantages over the “frustrating and annoying moments”, as long as lecturers prioritise the benefits of student-centered learning experiences. Professional and educational ethos is essential above all else.



In closing, the project leader has committed to bid for potential funding for the three possible future directions:

1. Turn it in or turn it off phase II - GradeMark experience with different student cohorts (such as international students and home students; postgraduate students and 1st year students); and different instructors across the faculties.
2. Pilot project for PeerMark (GradeMark) in the next academic year.
3. Comparative learners' experience project – the audio feedback or written feedback with GradeMark?

The project team has committed to the following dissemination after the end of the project:

- a.) A conference abstract and video presentation at the 4th Plagiarism Conference in 21st-23rd June 2010.
- b.) A short video to be published on CELT and TurnitinUK user group
- c.) Video presentations and experience sharing at the CELT seminars held at the University of Glamorgan in the next academic year.
- d.) Collaborated journal or conference paper(s)

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Appendixes

A – Online Questionnaire for Students (using surveypirate.com)

Turn it in or Turn it off?

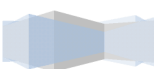
A Short Survey for Turnitin/Grademark - Students' Experience at Glamorgan (be closed on the 19th Feb 2010)
Your valuable contribution is much appreciated



1. What is your subject discipline?
 (1) Science-based (pure science such as biology, physics, medical and etc or applied science such as engineering, computing and etc) (2) Social Science-based (humanities, psychology, business and etc)
☐ Science-based discipline
☐ Social science-based discipline
2. What are your top confirming (positive) experiences for using Turnitin (the online submission system and the originality report)?
 Please give top 2 positive experiences
3. What are your top disconfirming (negative) experiences for using Turnitin?
 Please give top 2 negative experiences
4. Do you like GradeMark?
 GradeMark is the online grading and feedback system (the red apple)
☐ Yes
☐ No
5. Do you think that GradeMark enhanced your learning experience in overall?
 GradeMark is the online grading and feedback system (the red apple)
☐ Yes
☐ No
6. If your answer is Yes for the previous question, how GradeMark enhances your learning experiences at Glamorgan?
7. What are your top disconfirming (negative) experiences for GradeMark?
 Type no if you have no negative experiences
8. Any suggestion or recommendation on how Turnitin or GradeMark can further enhance your learning experiences?
 List 3 suggestions
9. Do you have any other comment?
10. Would you like to be interviewed for further details of your experience on Turnitin /GradeMark in the near future? (a short video interview with an incentive of £30)
☐ Yes
☐ No
11. If your answer is yes, please fill in your (1) email and (2) faculty. You may be contacted by the researcher (depending on the responses of this questionnaire)

B – Questions for the Video Interview with Staff

1. How long have you used Turnitin and GradeMark?



2. Did you use any other similar online submission, plagiarism detection tools and online grading system? (If Yes, please provide the name(s) of the tool and comparative experiences)

3. What are your top positive experiences with Turnitin and GradeMark?
 - i. Do you think that Turnitin and GradeMark enhanced your teaching experience / your students' learning experience and how?)
 - ii. Any differences or enhancement for the "before and after"?

4. What are your top constructive experiences with Turnitin and GradeMark if there is any?
 - i. How they brought hassles to your teaching experience / your students' learning experience or made you frustrated?
 - ii. How you overcome these issues?
 - iii. What areas of development or improvement for Turnitin and GradeMark would you like to see?

5. What are the overall students' engagement and responses on Turnitin and GradeMark? (your perception)

6. How about the support from TurnitinUK or CELT?

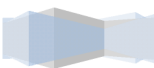
7. Any other thing you would like to share or to highlight?

C – Consent Form for Research Interviews with Staff

Title of Project: 'Turn it in or Turn it off? A Collaborative Pilot Project for Turnitin/GradeMark Experience'

Project Aims: Taking a small group of Glamorgan Academics and their students from different faculties, the collaborative project responds with the following objectives:

- a.) To identify both the academics' and students' confirming and disconfirming experiences on Turnitin – the online submission, plagiarism detection, feedback and grading tool.



- b.) To discover academics' perceptions and experience of the impact brought by GradeMark
 - c.) To produce a series of good case studies and a video based on the finding from (a) and (b) to promote blended assessment and feedback.
-

1. The purpose and nature of the interview has been explained to me, and I have read the project information sheet as provided in September 2009.
2. The interview was digitally-recorded, both audio and video, and I have given a chance to review the video and project report in March 2010. I confirm I have freely agreed that the recorded interview or extracts from it may be used as case studies on the CELT website and to be presented in conference(s) or published in journal paper(s).
3. Circle a), b) or c) for the usage of your interview content:
 - a. **Onymous** - I agree that my name may be used in any form of presentation or publication, such as video(s) and paper(s); OR
 - b. **Partially anonymous** - I agree that my name may be used for the video presentation only and not for academic publication; OR
 - c. **Completely anonymous** - I do not wish my name to be used or cited, or my identity otherwise disclosed, in both video and publication.

Print Name of interviewee: _____

Signature of interviewee: _____

Date: _____

I have explained the project and the implications of being interviewed to the interviewee and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

Print Name of interviewer: _____ Dr. Eysin Chew _____

Signature of interviewer: _____

Date: _____

D – Questions for the Video Interview with Student

1. How long have you used Turnitin and GradeMark?



2. Did you use any other similar online submission, plagiarism detection tools and online grading system? (If Yes, please provide the name(s) of the tool and comparative experiences)
3. What are your top positive experiences with Turnitin and GradeMark?
 - i. Do you think that Turnitin and GradeMark enhanced your learning experience and how?)
 - ii. Any differences or enhancement for the “before and after”?
4. What are your top constructive experiences with Turnitin and GradeMark if there is any?
 - i. How they brought hassles to your learning experience or made you frustrated?
 - ii. How you overcome these issues?
 - iii. What areas of development or improvement for Turnitin and GradeMark would you like to see?
5. Any other thing you would like to share or to highlight?

E – Consent Form for Research Interviews with Student

Title of Project: ‘Turn it in or Turn it off? A Collaborative Pilot Project for Turnitin/GradeMark Experience’

Project Aims: Taking a small group of Glamorgan Academics and their students from different faculties, the collaborative project responds with the following objectives:

- a.) To identify both the academics’ and students’ confirming and disconfirming experiences on Turnitin – the online submission, plagiarism detection, feedback and grading tool.



- b.) To discover academics' perceptions and experience of the impact brought by GradeMark
 - c.) To produce a series of good case studies and a video based on the finding from (a) and (b) to promote blended assessment and feedback.
-

- 4. The purpose and nature of the interview has been explained to me.
- 5. The interview was digitally-recorded, both audio and video. I confirm I have freely agreed that the recorded interview or extracts from it may be used as case studies on the CELT website and to be presented in conference(s) or published in journal paper(s).
- 6. Circle a), b) or c) for the usage of your interview content:
 - a. **Onymous** - I agree that my name may be used in any form of presentation or publication, such as video(s) and paper(s); OR
 - b. **Partially anonymous** - I agree that my name may be used for the video presentation only and not for academic publication; OR
 - c. **Completely anonymous** - I do not wish my name to be used or cited, or my identity otherwise disclosed, in both video and publication.
- 7. I have received the incentives of £30 for the video interview.

Print Name of interviewee: _____

Signature of interviewee: _____

Date: _____

I have explained the project and the implications of being interviewed to the interviewee and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

Print Name of interviewer: _____ Dr. Eysin Chew _____

Signature of interviewer: _____

Date: _____

F – Agenda for All Project Meetings

Agenda for the Project Group Meeting in September 2009

1. Welcome and introduction

- a. Name, role, department, teaching modules, experience on Turnitin/GradeMark
- b. Introduction to the project aims and schedule
- c. Contribution of the 6 project collaborators



- i. **Set up** at least 1 Turnitin assignment submission link for one of your course on BB and then use GradeMark to mark - email me the course name and number of students once you have decided (Sept).
 - ii. Share your confirming/disconfirming experiences on the **discussion forum** on **Turnitin wiki** (Nov) and in a 10 minutes **interview** (audio or video) with you (Dec).
 - iii. **Email a short online questionnaire** to your students who use Turnitin / GradeMark (Dec). Optional: Pass me 1-2 students' names.
 - iv. Provide feedback for the video, project report and research paper (Jan/Feb)
- d. Project leader's tasks:
 - i. Arrange meetings and order lunches for you
 - ii. "24/7" support you for any Turnitin/GradeMark query during the project period; provide student sessions for you if necessary.
 - iii. Conduct interview with students and you, edit and publish the video.
 - iv. Design, monitor and analyse the online questionnaires
 - v. Report and research paper writing
 - vi. Write bid(s) or obtain more funding

2. What's next?

- a) **Sept:** Email me the name/code of the course and number of students once you've decided
- b) Set up Turnitin assignment for the course(s)
- c) Suitable dates/time for next meeting and interview (Jan/Feb/March)

Agenda for the one-to-one/one-to-two video interviews in February and March 2010

- 1. Lunch
- 2. Video interview with project collaborators

Agenda and Brief Minutes for the Final Meeting on the 18th March 2010

- 1. **Lunch – watched the 4 videos (6 staff and 6 students) and discussed the project report**
- 2. **Discussion and feedback for the videos and report:**
 - a. The raw videos are about 15-30 minutes recording for each staff; 10-15 minutes recording for each student
 - b. The compiled 3 videos are about 10 minutes each; 1 video is about 6 minutes
 - c. They are good in general; provide interesting and valuable findings.
 - d. These compiled 4 videos are only the first draft of all important findings. Eysin will edit shorter version of video(s) (4-5 minutes each) for final presentation(s).
 - e. **Suggestions:**
 - i. Cut off the repetition of student's video (i.e. Ruth)
 - ii. Cut off the coughing and light off moment (i.e. CR)
 - iii. Cut off the staff confirming experience last 2 seconds (i.e. TP)
- 3. **Sign off the Consent Form for Research Interview**
- 4. **Output and dissemination of the project:**



- a. Project Report to TurnitinUK and CELT
 - i. Evidenced-based positive and negative experiences
 - ii. Evidence-based recommendations
 - b. A shorter version of video and 5 case studies to be published on CELT website
 - c. A shorter version of video to be presented at TurnitinUK user group
 - d. Publication (you will be informed once it has been accepted):
 - i. A poster abstract and video presentation at the 4th Plagiarism Conference in June 2010 (with all our names)
 - ii. A journal paper (with all our names)
 - e. Presentations at CELT seminars in Oct or Nov 2010? – **Yes for all attendees**
- 5. Are you interested in joining the potential future funded project(s):**
- a. GradeMark experience project with different student cohort?
 - **Yes for all attendees**
 - b. PeerMark (GradeMark) experience project?
 - **Yes – TP, AM, IM**
 - c. Compare audio feedback with GradeMark?
 - **Yes – TP**
 - **Under consideration – KB and NN**
- 6. Draw prize for student – (the 13th email from the student responses list: suggested by Kim and agreed by everyone)**
- 7. AOB –**
- a. Appreciation from the project leader: **thank all the project collaborators** for the valuable and excellent contribution to the project. Looking forward to the future potential funded project to work together.
 - b. Appreciation from the project collaborators to the project leader for all the hard work, support and food.

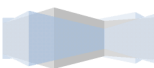
G – Date, Times and Venues for Project Meetings and Video Interviews

1. Project Group Meetings

- i. 22nd September, 2009, 12.00-14.00 (G612)
- ii. 30th September, 2009, 12.00-14.00 (J268)
- iii. 18th March 2010, 12.00-14.00 (J262)

2. Video Interviews with Lecturers from 4 faculties

- i. 10th February 2010, 12.00-14.00 (J265) – (HeSAS)
- ii. 11th February 2010, 11.00-12.30 (FH305) – (HASS)



- iii. 18th February 2010, 11.00-12.30 (J268) – (BUS)
- iv. 19th February 2010, 12.00-13.30 (J268) – (AT)

3. Video Interviews with Students

- i. 5th March 2010, 1.30-2.30pm at J268: (HASS)
- ii. 10th March 2010, 3.30-4pm at J113: (BUS)
- iii. 1st March 2010, 12.30-2pm at J268:
 - 12.30pm - (BUS)
 - 1.00pm - (BUS)
- iv. 12th March 2001, 2.30-3.30pm at J268:
 - 2.30pm –(AT)
 - 3.00pm - (HASS)

