

Making the invisible visible: learning from a corpus of student-generated texts

Megan Bruce & Simon Rees
Durham University Foundation Centre

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Overview

- Departmental profile
- Building the corpus: the FOCUS project
 - Criteria for text inclusion
 - Concordancer design
 - Functionality of FOCUS
- Teaching activities to use with FOCUS
- The next stage of the project...

Foundation Centre profile

Widening participation and access to Higher Education.

Individuals who would traditionally not have considered studying at University and lack the required formal qualifications.

Over 200 students based at Queen's and Durham City progressing on to a wide variety of subjects.

Building a corpus: FOCUS project

- We decided to build a corpus to help Foundation students improve their vocabulary because:
 - Our students did not have enough meta-language to benefit from explicit tuition on language errors, yet they were making significant errors;
 - Words need to be “noticed” 5-16 times in order to be learned;
 - “Noticing” needs to take place in authentic contexts;
 - DDL can allow the individual learner to make their own discoveries about language.

Aims of the FOCUS project

- To create a corpus of student-generated texts (UG/PG) to help Foundation students explore “good” writing in their subject discipline.
- To make the corpus accessible to all Foundation Centre students (and other departments who want to use it).
- To create some activities alongside the corpus that students can use for self-access to work on their language skills independently.

How the corpus was created

- HEA grant to explore existing online concordancing programmes.
- Durham “Enhancing the Student Learning Experience award” to fund the creation of a bespoke concordancing programme.
- HEA grant for development of concordancing activities based on these corpora to allow students to discover more about target vocabulary in context and improve their own writing.

Concordancer design

A concordancer:

- Finds all the instances of a particular item (word, phrase, morpheme) from a body of text and displays them in a way which allows rapid scanning and comparison
- Uses KWIC format
- Can refine searches by word to the left/right of the keyword to reveal more about the keyword
- **Makes the invisible visible** (Tribble 1990:11)

Which texts are included?

Criteria for inclusion:

- Written by a Durham student (UG or PG)
- Assessed at 60% or above (2:1 or First)

Students whose assignments fit this profile are contacted by the corpus-development team and asked to submit a copy of their assignment for inclusion.

Departments are approached one at a time. So far we have texts from Chemistry and Earth Science students. SASS are being targeted next.

Students are incentivised by being entered for a prize draw for a £100 Amazon voucher.

FOCUS functionality

A keyword search can be refined by:

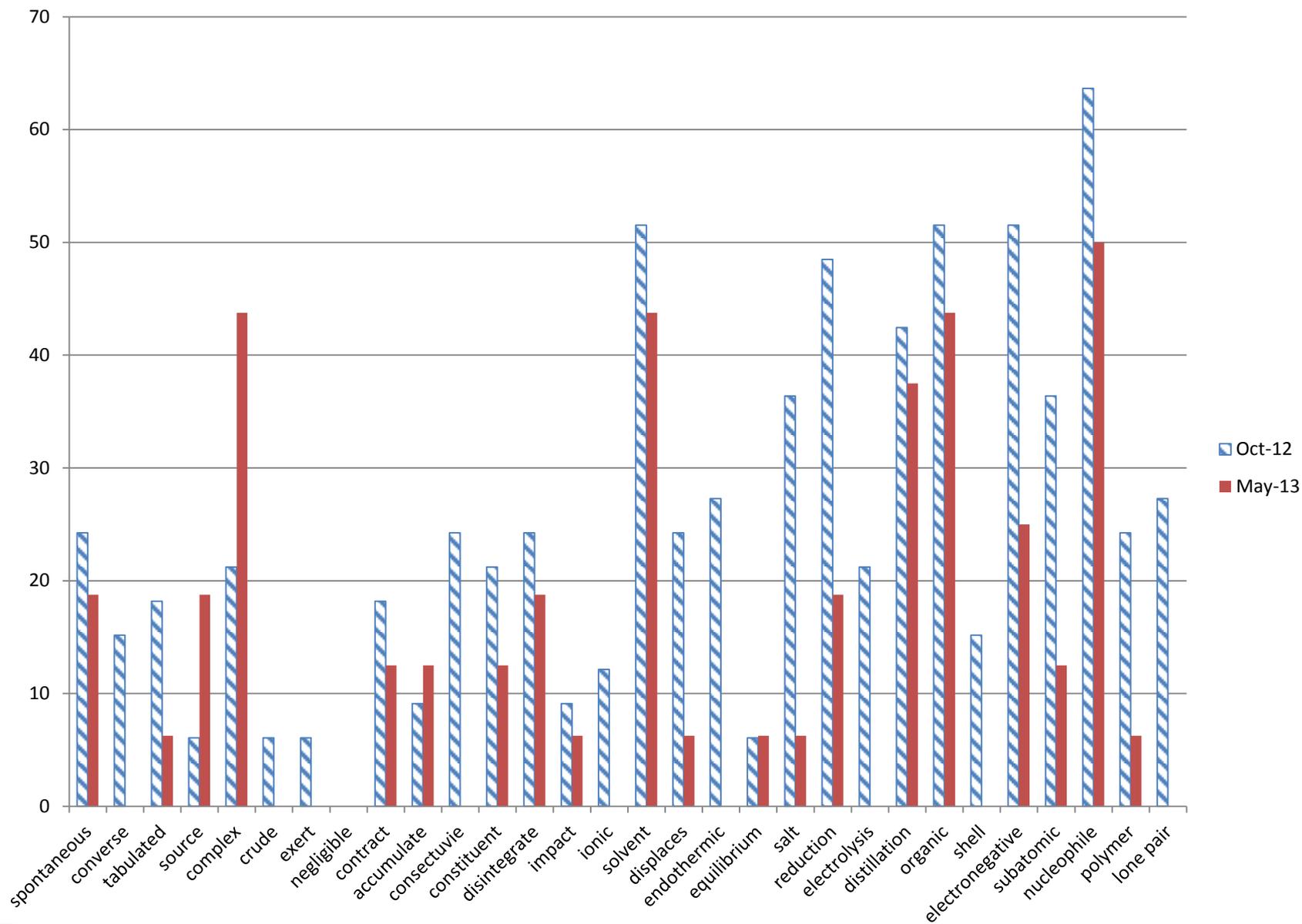
- Level (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, PhD)
- Text type (essay, dissertation, lab report, figure, etc)
- Department (Chemistry, Earth Science, soon there will be more)

Possible to arrange the words before/after a keyword search alphabetically to uncover common collocations

Keyword search only shows a text fragment so no dangers of plagiarism

Word cloud shows collocates to allow further exploration

Wildcard search (%) allows exploration of affixes, etc.



Word	Definition	Example Sentence (FOCUS search)
Spontaneous		
Exert		
Contract		

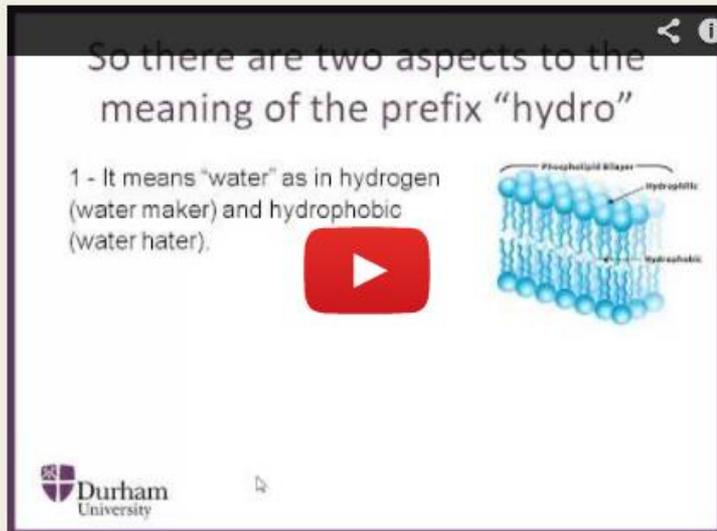
Affixes in Science

Affixes can be found at the beginning of a word (a prefix) or the end (a suffix) words.

By the end of this activity you should have a better understanding of:

- the meaning of some common affixes in science.
- common examples of words containing these affixes.

Click on the video below to start the activity.



The video player shows a slide with the following content:

So there are two aspects to the meaning of the prefix "hydro"

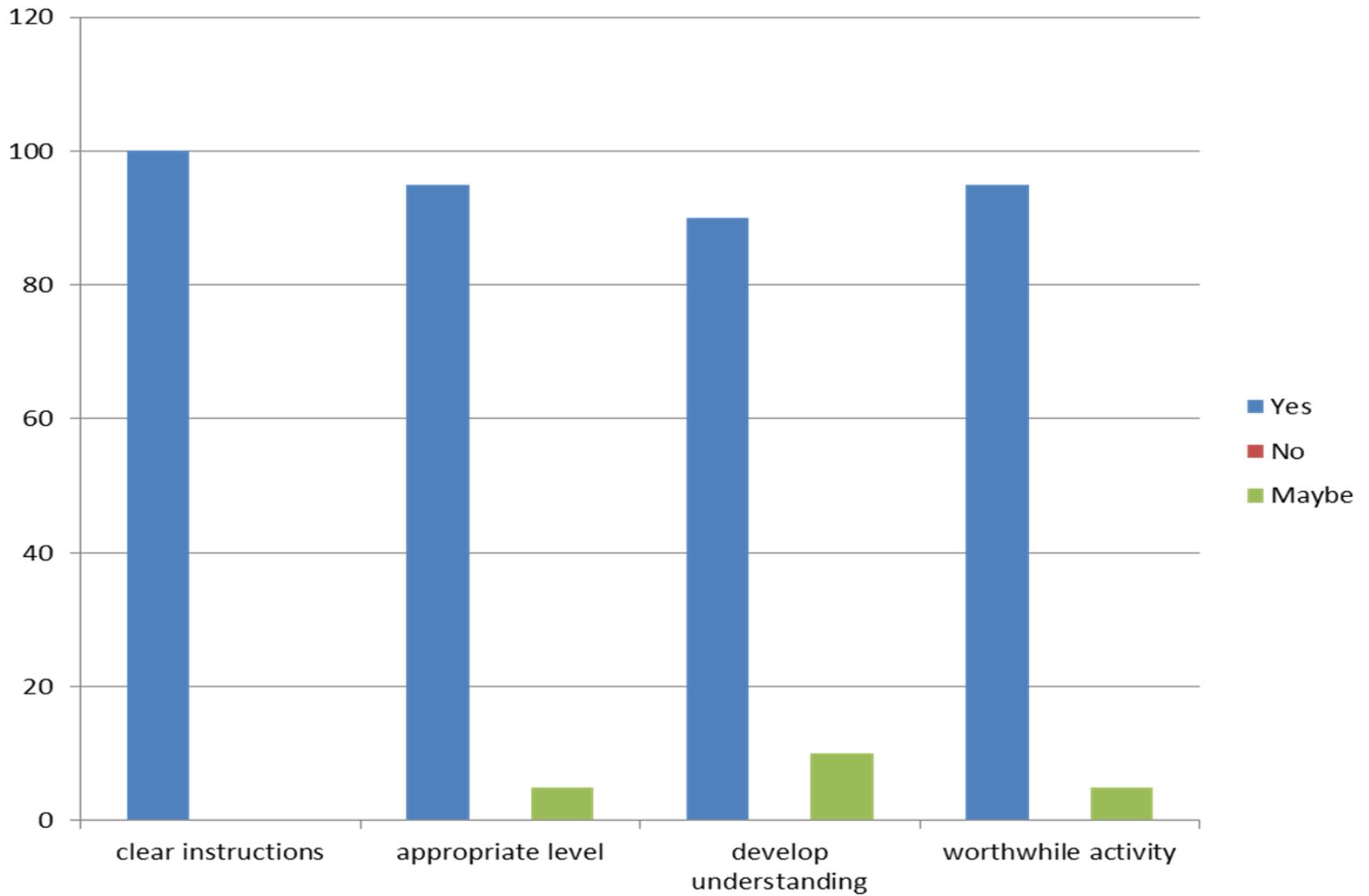
1 - It means "water" as in hydrogen (water maker) and hydrophobic (water hater).

The slide includes a red play button icon and a diagram of a phospholipid bilayer. The diagram is labeled "Phospholipid bilayer" and shows two layers of phospholipids. The outer surface is labeled "Hydrophilic" and the inner surface is labeled "Hydrophobic".

The Durham University logo is visible in the bottom left corner of the video player.

A series of self-study activities designed using wimba create.

Intended to develop a range of language skills in science such writing laboratory reports and scientific affixes.



Developing a student self-assessment tool

Can you match the Scientific Affixes?

created by focus

Like 0 Tweet 0 Reddit 0 Share 0

- Click the matching answer button below
- This quiz has not been verified by Sporcle

Popular trivia games today	
Pizzeria Logic Puzzle	10155
Missing 'L' Acronyms	4679
Criteria Countries (Europe)	1997
30 Second Math II	1511
Word Ladder: Ay, There's the Rub	1501
Cop Show Match	1439
Mis Quiz	1136
Find That Country: Hot or Cold I	1059
And more...	

Answers Remaining

10

Correct

0

Wrong

--

04:52

blood

loving

iron

Red

under

water

Cell

hating

salt

maker

-phobic

haem

sub-

-cyte

-gen

-philic

hydro-

Erythro-

halo-

ferro

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