

# A delicate balance: individual activity

**Collection:** Course design

**Resource:** Designing an English degree programme

## Approximate duration

One hour to 90 minutes

## Learning outcomes

This activity is designed to help you focus on the particulars of designing an English degree programme. After completing the activities you should have

1. acquired insight into the benefits of interrelating or segregating Literature, Language and Creative Writing in the curriculum;
2. acquired the confidence to propose and argue to colleagues for new module configurations within the degree;
3. acquired a critical understanding of curriculum and its constituent parts.

## Introduction

Some degrees include only English Literature modules, only English Language modules, or only Creative Writing modules. Most degrees in 'English', though, will combine elements of both language and literature, and an increasing number also build in creative writing. Commonly, a variety of degree combinations can be taken, placing more or less stress on each of the three main elements. This activity will help you think about the best ways for your programme to interrelate these key subject components.

## The activity

1. What different ways are there of building Language, Literature and Creative Writing into an 'English' degree? Watch Marion Wynne-Davies talk about the

approach taken by the University of Surrey, in the video below. We are very grateful to our colleagues for allowing us into their classrooms, lecture halls and offices to observe and discuss their teaching. As you work with these examples of teaching and course design please keep your commentary focused upon the activity and refrain from criticisms that would be unhelpful or unkind in a face-to-face encounter.

You may also like to watch another video, in which Marion talks about the overall structure of the Surrey degree:



Supplement the video by looking at the University of Surrey website describing the programme.

2. To find out about other degree programmes offering varied ways of balancing Creative Writing, Language and Literature on an English programme, look at the programme descriptions on the following websites:
  - [Birmingham City University](#)
  - [University of Newcastle](#)
3. Make a formal comparison of any of the various programmes that particularly interest you, including ones at your own institution, if you like. You can make the comparison in tabular form using headings of your own against which to evaluate each programme. Possible headings might include:
  - Intellectual coherence for students



- Effect on student choice
- Convenience for staff
- Administrative requirements

## Relationship to the Professional Standards Framework

- **Core Knowledge 2:** Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme
- **Professional Values 3:** Commitment to the development of learning communities
- **Professional Values 4:** Commitment to encouraging participation in higher education, acknowledging diversity and promoting equality of opportunity

More information about the Professional Standards Framework can be obtained from the summary factsheet in the *Subject & Pedagogy* collection in HumBox.

<http://humbox.ac.uk/2731/>

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## Resources in the Course design Collection

- Course design: introduction to the collection
- Designing an English degree programme: resource overview
  - Designing in employability: individual activity
  - Designing in employability: group activity
  - Managing transition from A Level: individual activity
  - A delicate balance: group activity
  - **A delicate balance: individual activity (\*you are here)**
- Designing an innovative English Literature module: resource overview
  - Location, location, location: individual activity
  - Location, location, location: group activity
  - Questions, questions
  - Integrating research into a module: individual activity
  - Integrating research into a module: group activity
- Filling the gaps: resource overview
  - Filling the gaps between sessions: individual activity



- Filling the gaps between sessions: group activity
- Adapting a module: resource overview
  - Adapting a Literature module: individual activity
  - Adapting a Literature module: group activity
  - Pacing it out: individual activity
  - Curriculum framing
- Mapping and applying desirable student attributes: resource overview
  - Imaginary modules: individual activity
  - Imaginary modules: group activity
- Designing a creative-critical module: resource overview
  - Thinking about modules: individual activity
  - Thinking about modules: group activity



**4 |** This resource is part of a set of professional development resources for Higher Education English (including English Literature, English Language & Creative Writing) called 'The Pool'. The resources were developed by the English Subject Centre in 2011 as part of a JISC/HEA Open Educational Resources (OER) Project.

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