

FOOTSTEPS

An on-line transition tool for international students

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with Shitong Xiong and Caroline Taylor

Today's talk

- * Background and motivation (SNK)
- * Implementation and demonstration (SNK/SX)
- * How we developed the resource (SX)
- * Mounting the resource, platforms and evaluation (SQ)

Background and Motivation

‘Developing an online transition tool to enhance the academic transition process for international students’

Sally-Anne Betteridge (December 2012)

A scoping project with literature survey, background, motivation and recommendations.

Strategy covers enhanced student experience and international students in EPS.

Background and Motivation

‘Developing an online transition tool to enhance the academic transition process for international students’

Sally-Anne Betteridge (December 2012)

Aim was ‘to create an online resource which manages expectations and begins to develop awareness and skills relevant to studying science and engineering in a UK institution, and at Birmingham in particular.’

This STEM project is to implement that vision within EPS.

Background and Motivation

‘Developing an online transition tool to enhance the academic transition process for international students’

Sally-Anne Betteridge (December 2012)

This scoping report was based on a literature survey encompassing national and international comparisons as well as student feedback and opinion from focus groups.

Key themes arising from the scoping report

- Speaking Up
- Accessing Support
- Understanding Assessments
- Independent Learning
- Lab Safety

Implementation

Two student interns full-time for 8 weeks this summer:

Shitong Xiong – 3rd year Mech Eng (direct-entry in year 2)

Caroline Taylor – 2nd year Sports and Materials Science

<http://info.eee.bham.ac.uk/pginfo/footsteps/story.html>

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How we developed the resource

by Shitong Xiong (& Caroline Taylor)

Focus Group & Surveys

- * Created a focus group and listened to what students wanted (both international and home students.)
- * Listened to what the staff said and changed our approaches.
- * Considered other similar website: skills4uni, prepare for success etc.

Focus Group & Survey

- * Following the results from the focus groups and surveys, we tried to improve the resource for better use of international students.
- * Some points strengthened, some changes made.

To strengthen: Call for students to access relevant resources

- * “It is a tool to introduce more information about helpful resources to students”
- * Students said “We never lack relevant services in the university, but we lack information about people who know about them.”

Links to useful resources

AS

ISAS

[ISAS](#) (International Student Advisory Service) gives support for almost everything from academics to everyday living.



WebObjects to influence browsing



Click on each link to read more and hear from a member of staff who offers that support

Welfare
tutor

Student
Reps

Religious
support
(Chaplaincy)

Student Services

The Student Services includes the main services that support our students to stay at the University, and deal with problems that may affect their learning. We the development of a high quality student experience and promotion of student across the University; we also provide expert advice in specialist areas to support aims.

Our services include:

- **Counselling Service**

We provide short-term professional, confidential counselling – face-to-face online - for students who are experiencing emotional or psychological problems whilst at university. We also run groups workshops open to all students such as Eating Issues, Bereavement, LGBT Support, and others.

- **Disability and Learning Support**

Experienced staff offer a wide range of specialist advice and support to students with disabilities, specific learning difficulties and other health conditions. We work with students and schools to develop the skills for independent living and effective learning whilst also enabling them to fully participate in all aspects of University life.

- **Wellbeing Service**

We offer a practical approach to coping with common issues faced by students.

Student
Services

Guild


Student
Mentors



To strengthen: Interaction

- * Interaction attracts students' attention, thus it makes FOOTSTEPS more effective;
- * We designed the questions for better interactions and also listed out the answers from people in both text and audio forms.

Here is a list of assessment types in the UK. Select any you have used before in your home country. Click on any of the assessment types to see a description.

- ☒ Exams
- ☒ Essays 
- ☐ Lab reports
- ☐ Online tasks
- ☐ Individual and group presentations
- ☐ Case studies
- ☐ Poster presentations
- ☐ Tutorial sheets

Essays are long pieces of writing (for example, 2000 words). You will be given a topic or short paragraph, then you write a long answer response to it. Essays might be set in an exam or as a piece of coursework.

Solving difficulties when speaking up

Write your solution to this problem in the boxes

I'd never done any group work in my home country. At first, it can be hard to know what to do

type your text here

Hint

If there is another student from my home country, sometimes we speak our own language

type your text here

Sometimes I am very quiet because I can't express myself and it is hard to think of the English words

type your text here

Hint

Tay Ko Wee: I would try my best to speak English as it is impolite to speak in a language the other members of the group don't understand



To strengthen: Interesting for students

- * Resources need to be interesting for better effects;
- * Develop more sources of media types as well as the style.

Chemistry

Chemical
Engineering

Civil
Engineering

Computer
Science

Mathematics

*Click on your school to receive a welcome from
the Head of School*

Electronic, Electrical and
Computer Engineering

Mechanical
Engineering

Metallurgy and
Materials

Physics and
Astronomy



What does independent learning mean to students?

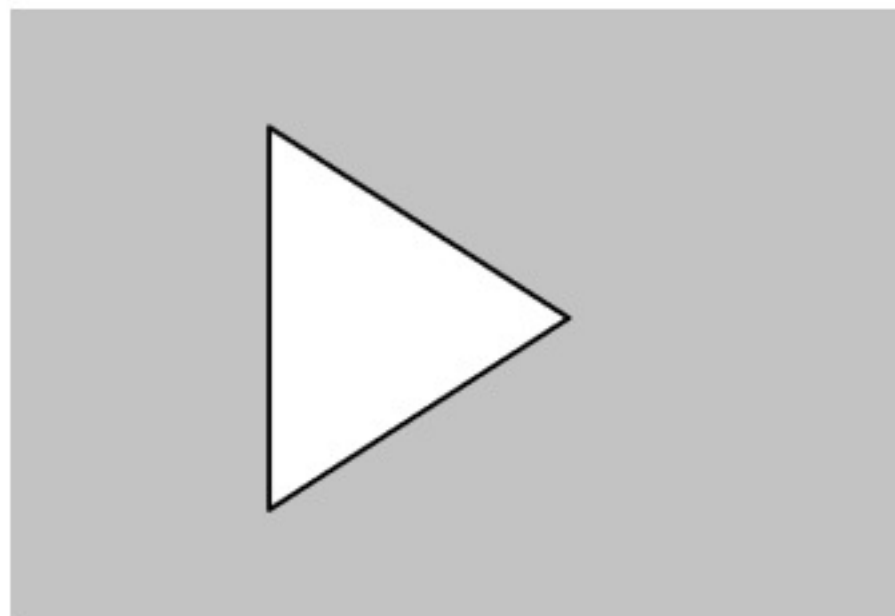
In lecture

Searching Sources

Group Discussion

Critical Thinking

Script

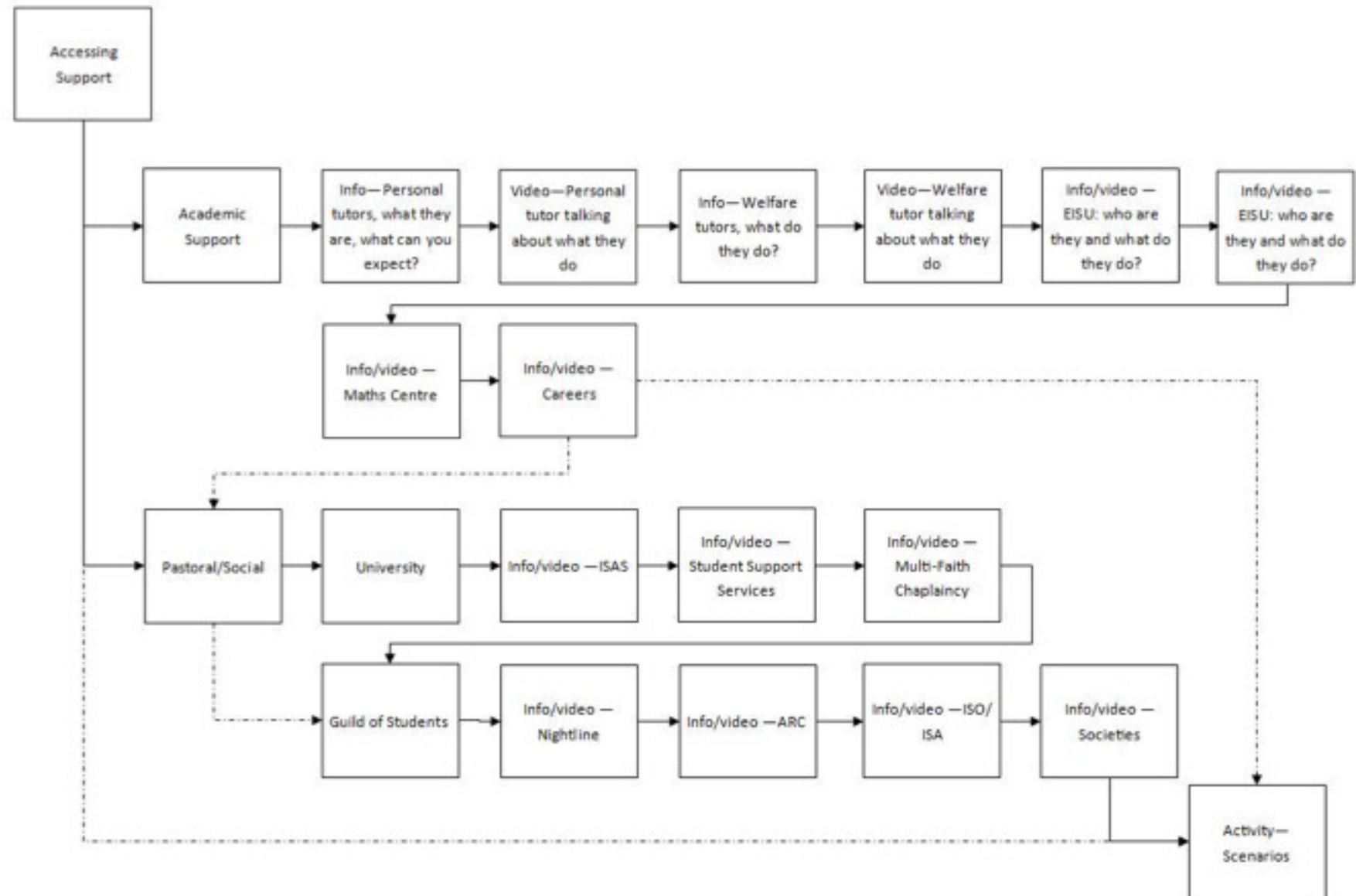


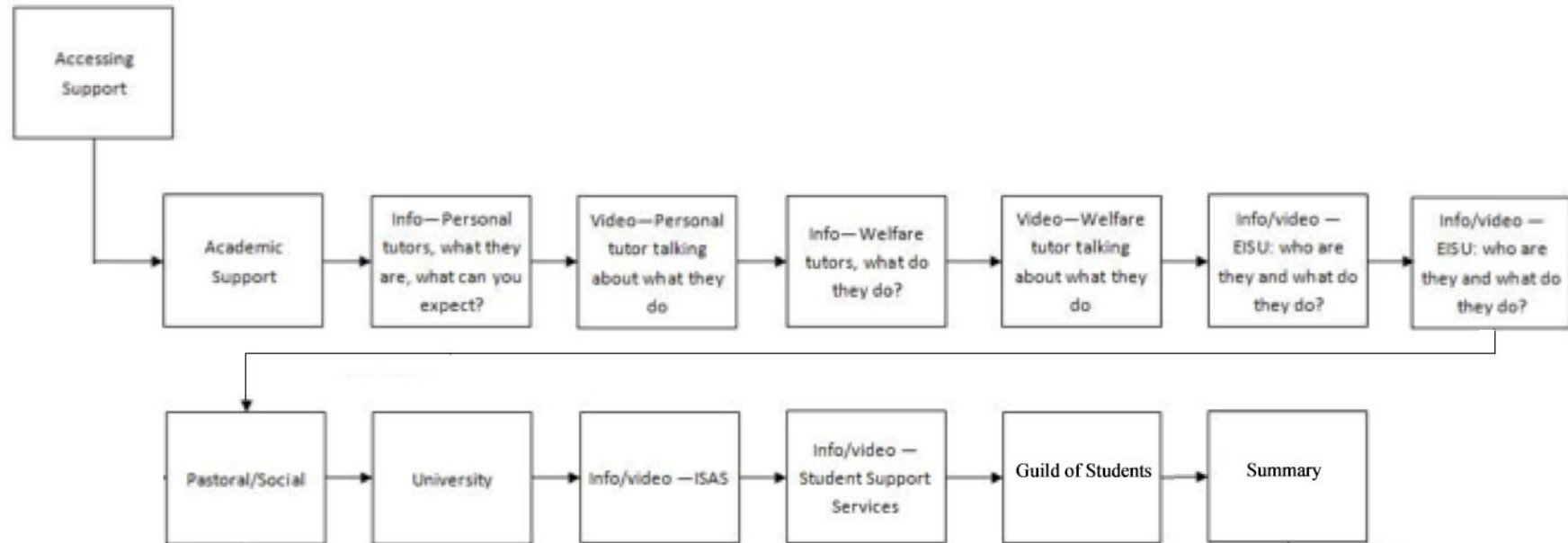
Audio
In lecture



Changes: simpler structure

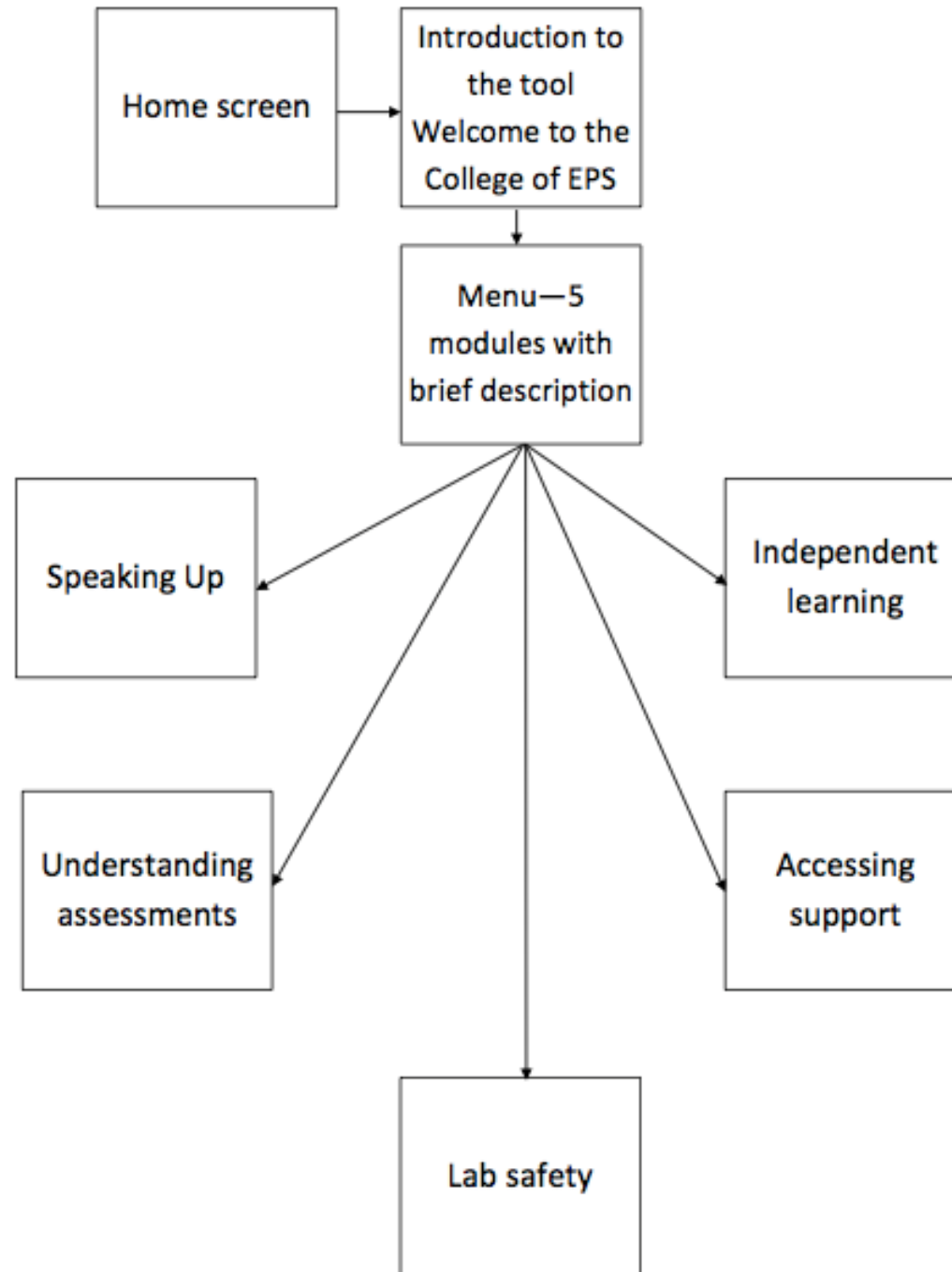
- * More students would like to have a simpler structure.
- * A simpler structure can quickly lead the student to the part they want.

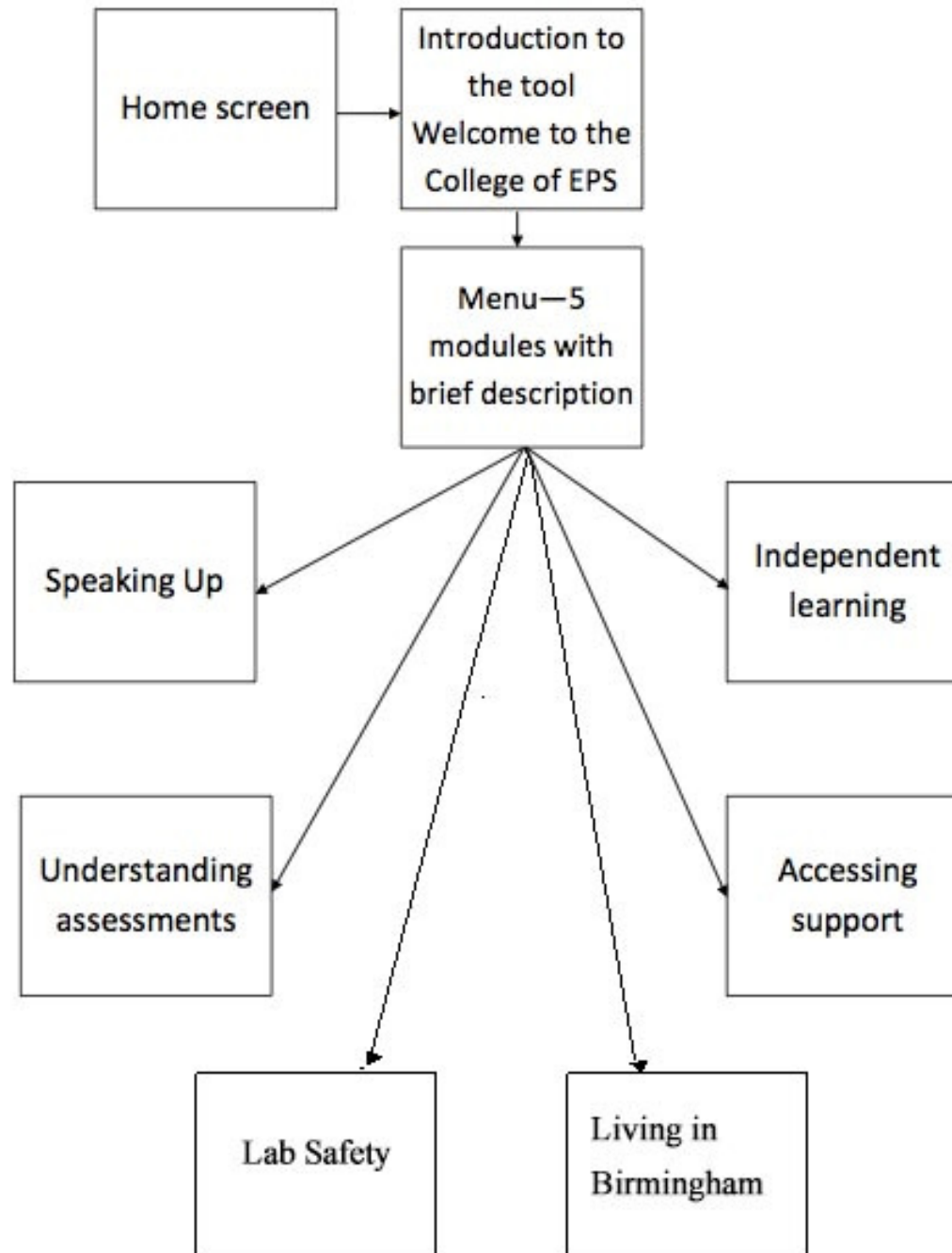




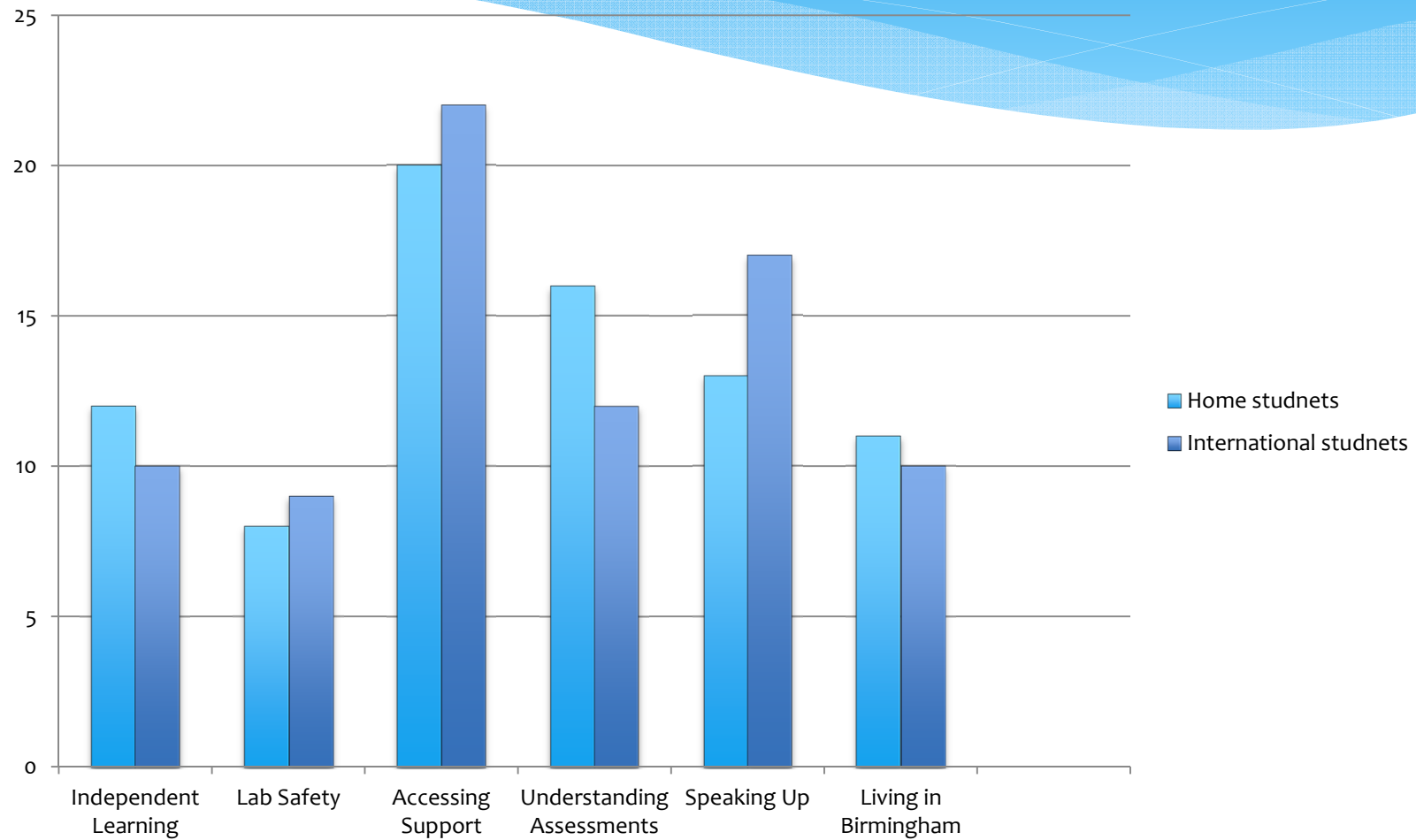
Changes: Suitable Contents

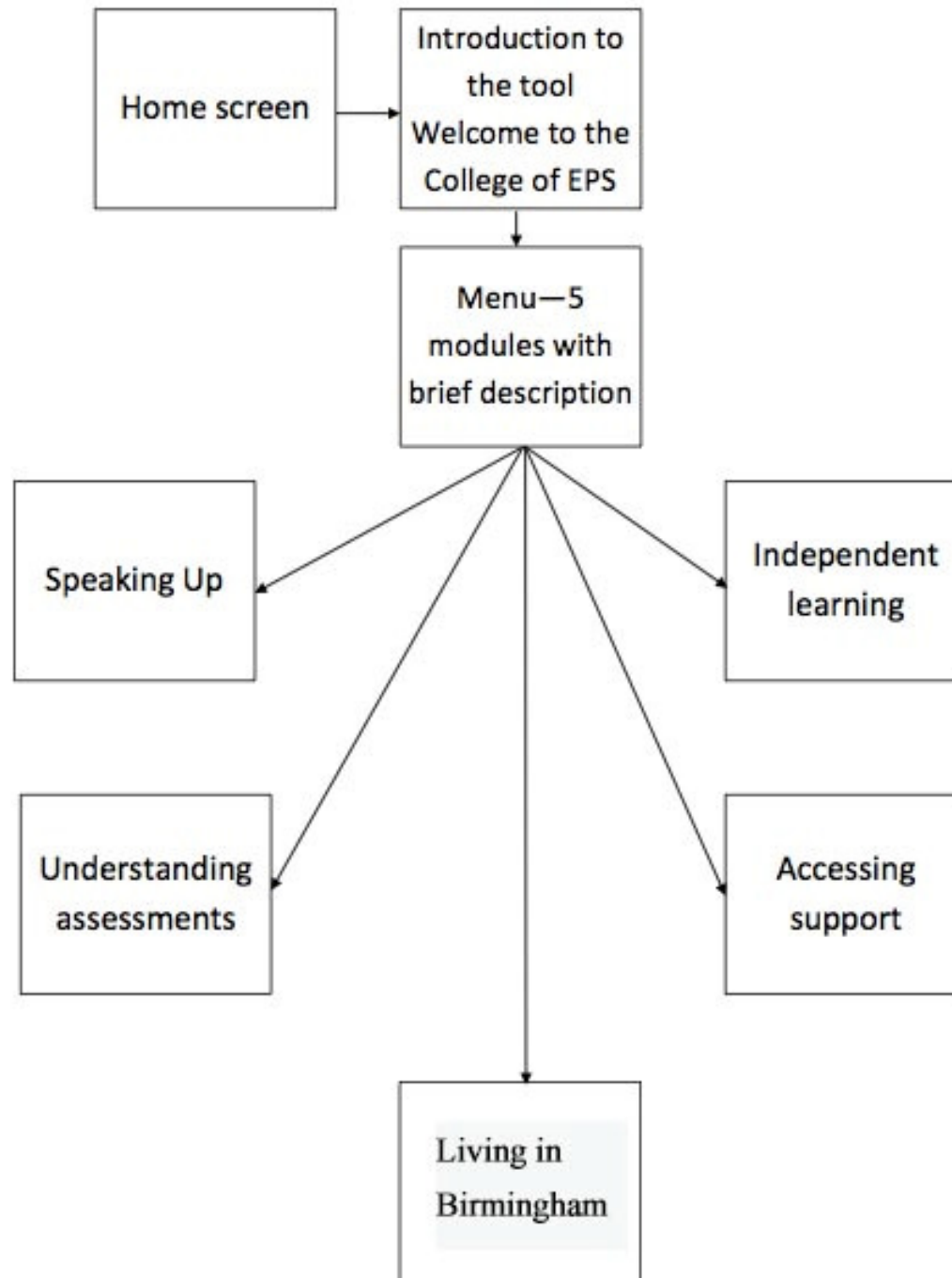
- * Contents should firmly meet what students really need.
- * Deleted and added different sections and sub-sections.





Section Marks





Deployment and Evaluation

- * Plan A:
 - * Mount on Canvas
 - * Use in welcome week computer induction labs for direct entry students
 - * Students do pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire
- * Canvas obscured navigation buttons in tool

Deployment and Evaluation

- * Plan B:
 - * Mount on the Intranet
 - * Students do pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire
- * There were delays getting the permissions altered
- * Deployment was late in week 3
- * Measurable student engagement was poor
 - * Not accessible off campus
 - * Students were busy when on campus

Deployment and Evaluation

- * Plan C
- * Mount on Internet with proper stat counting
- * Get feedback from students who have used the tool
- * Do study when students are not busy – Christmas vac
- * Do study in July on students who have accepted an offer for UoB

Evaluation

- * Pre-questionnaire
 - * General attitudes
 - * Knowledge of specific questions/scenarios

Evaluation

- I think studying in the UK will be different to studying in my own country. (agree/disagree)
- In what ways do you think it will be different? (free text)

* Pre-questionnaire

* General attitudes

* Knowledge of specific questions/scenarios

- What support is available if you want to improve your English?
- Who is generally the first point of contact if you have any problems?
- What degree classification does a mark of 62 correspond to?

Evaluation

- * Pre-questionnaire
 - * General attitudes
 - * Knowledge of specific questions/scenarios
- * Use tool
- * Post questionnaire (shortly afterwards)
- * Run some focus groups
- * Post questionnaire (months later)

Evaluation

We want to understand differences in different groups of students

- * Nationality/culture
- * Nationalities that large/small student populations
- * Direct entry/normal entry
- * BFA/Undergraduate/Master's

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**Focussing On Optimising Transitions for Students
in Engineering and Physical Sciences**

<http://info.eee.bham.ac.uk/pginfo/footsteps/story.html>