

Transforming feedback (Panel review session)

Making technology enhancement effective: what works?

A joint 'Transforming Assessment' and 'AHE' webinar, 17 July 2019



Chair: Sally Jordan (Open University, UK)

Host: Mathew Hillier (University of New South Wales, Australia)

Selected speakers from *Assessment in Higher Education* conference, 26 June 2019, Manchester, UK

Students and assessors in conversation about authentic multimodal assessment

Speaker: Mira Vogel, King's College London, United Kingdom

Responding to societal changes, research-based curricula tend to foreground students as authors and makers galvanised by potential audiences. At Lincoln the seminal 'Student as Producer' strategy (1) emphasised "the role of students as collaborators in the production of knowledge", while at UCL the 'Connected Curriculum' framework (2) envisaged "a catalyst for making better connections between academics, students and 'real world' communities". Consequently, what is recognised as an academically valid student 'essay' has expanded beyond the typed page and now encompasses emerging forms of academic communication. High camera phone ownership and an abundance of free web platforms for user-generated content have not only enabled this expansion, they have demanded it. In 1996 the New London Group (3) presciently called for 'multiliteracy pedagogies' which would promote students' "understanding and competent control of representational forms that are becoming increasingly significant in the overall communications environment, such as visual images and their relationship to the written word". Today's students are producing assessed work in a range of digital modes and voices, including blogs, videos, infographics, and podcasts.

This session shares findings from a 2016-17 UCL Connected Curriculum Fellowship project which explored digital multimodal assessment across disciplines. A literature review generated questions for semi-structured interviews which brought pairs or threes of students and their assessors together in video-recorded conversations. Transcripts were inductively analysed to yield themes addressing the following questions. How can this kind of work be both authentic and also academic? Working with new technologies in new forms, how can peers sustain each other to achieve more than each could alone? How can tutors guide students' efforts appropriately between form and content (4)? How can assessors come to judgments about diverse interpretations of the same assessment brief, often exhibiting diverse skills? How are assessment criteria evolving to recognise what is distinctively valuable in these emerging communication forms (5)?

The project report took the form of a series of thematic videos in which students and assessors shed light on these questions in their own words, illustrated with examples of their work (https://wiki.ucl.ac.uk/x/LUq_Aw).

References

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Online tools to enhance students experience: assessment and feedback

Speaker: Maria Rosaria Marsico, University of Exeter, United Kingdom.

A variety of technologies is essential to make the learning process more dynamic and interesting, and to engage the new generation of students in modern challenges in the Higher Education (Marsico 2015). However, teaching and learning with technology is not just about staying current on the latest tools. It is about how to successfully incorporate the best tools into teaching when and where it supports learning (Faculty Focus 2014; COLLABORATE 2011-13).

Using technology can translate into individualism (Buemi 2014) therefore it is vital to combine online learning tools with activities aiming at developing a collaborative learning environment; for instance by facilitating group/tutorial sessions or by moderating group discussions.

This work is about reflecting on and evaluating the effectiveness of in-house developed online tools to assess students' learning and to provide individual feedback. Online tools for formative and summative assessments were tested over five cycles and different programmes/modules. The in-house online tools have the following features: a) they are computer-marked and can be used for self-assessment; b) provide personalized feedback; c) are flexible (shuffling, generating 'infinite' questions, etc) d) they fit for survey, for example for peer-to-peer review used for group working; e) have an embedded system that compares students' performance and attendance.

Since the integration of those tools in the engineering programmes at the University of Exeter, the number of students failing modules in year 1 and 2 dropped by 76%. With a large cohort of students (e.g. >300), online tools are proved to be very effective: they enable providing instant and high quality feedback to students so that they have time to assimilate and improve. Tailor- made feedback is based on the student's academic performance, addressing specific needs and supporting their learning and progression.

References

Marsico MR (2015) University of Exeter Education Strategy 2015-2020 on <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/about/vision/educationstrategy/aims/research-inspiredinquiry-ledlearning/drmariaRosariamarsico/>.

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Buemi S. (2014) Taking the Tech out of technology, in The teaching professors, 28.5, Magna publications.

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<http://ta.vu/17jul2019>