

Assumptions and Challenges to the visual mode approach

Assumptions	Challenges
<p>The general pattern is that both formative assessments continue throughout the course culminating in a critically important final summative assessment at the end. Visual approaches are normally only considered to be formative.</p>	<p>This approach does not need to be the case. Formative assessment could take place regularly both formally and informally as part of the teaching process. Often within more creative and professionally orientated areas where visual medium are relevant, summative and formative assessment for different tasks and outcomes be given at the same time</p> <p>Students are, therefore, involved in active learning most of the time and the tutors' role is to monitor and support this activity through a process of both formative and summative assessment.</p>
<p>It is impossible to be objective in visual assessment approaches as the judgement is always subjective</p>	<p>One of the most taxing paradoxes is the necessity to translate quality into the numerical data which it represents.</p> <p>As with other practical and oral approaches to assessment, examples and characteristics of good practice were where the mode of assessment were aligned to the learning outcomes and where the main aim was to provide learners with feedback on both the product and the process. These characteristics are not different for visual approaches to assessment.</p> <p>The characteristics of criteria however can be more problematic, as they vary across different forms of communication (oral, visual and written). They can be difficult to articulate and have different interpretations. This emphasises the importance of assessment being criterion and not norm referenced. Such criterion referencing implied what Elsner (1985) called 'connoisseurship' or the '<i>educated ability of an expert in a particular field to assess work in it</i>' this is not to say that they always agree but are able to defend it to other connoisseurs and an agreed judgement becomes possible – an 'interpretivist' approach.</p>
<p>Group work and the ability to work creatively within a team is not a strong characteristic of traditional courses. This is in sharp contrast to the professional work practices that many students will experience when they have completed their time at college.</p>	<p>Group work and asking students to work creatively within groups is perceived as challenging partially because it is difficult to define what the outcomes might be. Encouraging students to judge the work of their peers in the traditional 'crit' is an accepted context for this to happen within the Arts but marking is still usually wholly in the hands of the tutors. Within the context of professional work, judgements are often visual, yet assessment of visual material within undergraduate and PG courses in HE is rarely undertaken except at a formative level.</p>

<p>Embeds employability skills</p>	<p>Students working in creative settings are often required to work on their own and collaboratively. Different assessment approaches can assist the development of these skills. Making judgments in the visual context is also important. Formative assessment in the form of crits is generally accepted practice within the arts</p>
<p>A variety of assessment approaches improves student learning, so visual is best used within a mixed approach.</p>	<p>Changes to assessment have a greater influence on student learning than other changes to the curriculum (Gibbs 2006) and that introducing variety has been shown to confuse and disengage students as they struggle to understand the requirements of different approaches A sensible mix can enable greater alignment of assessment with outcomes. Case study in environmental health http://www.ulster.ac.uk/staffdev/DatabaseGoodPractice/hharveymodule.htm and in the earth sciences http://goodpractice.gees.ac.uk/cgi-bin/searchspec.pl?terms=206</p>
<p>The input required by the student is far greater than needed if another approach is used.</p>	<p>A sense of achievement is fostered in students by the assessment process and high levels of intrinsic motivation are probably more common amongst art and design students than in other fields of study.</p>
<p>Good for formative approaches but not valid for summative approach as difficult to provide quantitative representation of performance.</p>	<p>A taxing paradox is the necessity to translate quality into numerical data, which represents performance or contribution. The Assessing Group Practice found numerous examples of good practice and the defining characteristics were that the mode of assessment was aligned to the learning outcomes and that the main aim was to provide learners with feedback on both the product and the process. The project recognised the limited work that had been done in addressing the challenges of generating grades and marks from assessed performance</p>
<p>Provides an environment where students who struggle with writing can excel and demonstrate what they know and their creativity.</p>	<p>Some students do well in essay or other written assignments; others excel under examination conditions; others like making things; performance is preferable for others, and so on. Wherever possible within the course constraints, offer students the choice of mode in which they are assessed.</p> <p>For example, in a course at Griffith University, students are able to present their analysis of creative work in the form of: a film; a piece of music; a novel; a poem; a television episode; or a piece of artwork. http://www.griffith.edu.au/centre/gihe/griffith_graduate/toolkit/creativity/assess02a.htm In another assessment item within the same course, students can opt for: a photo-essay, a sound recording, a short story, a letter to the editor of a local newspaper, or a short film. In this way, most students engage with the course material and use the assessment to demonstrate their own creativity. Other examples ask students to present two different methods of solving one problem or leave out an</p>

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