Online Assessment of a Student-Centered Module

Tamuna KHETAGURI *

Mzia ZANGALADZE **

Abstract

E-assessment can play a significant role in a more flexible and personalized environment for learning, as illustrated in this article. There are a number of reasons for this quiet prelude to what could be the next technology-based revolution in the classroom. New pedagogic approaches are opening up, challenging the perceptions that e-assessment is only suited to testing surface knowledge. Some questions about e-assessment for learning include virtual world scenarios for professional training and web-based tools to develop skills in reflection and self-assessment. E-assessment is the end-to-end electronic assessment process where ICT is used for the presentation of assessment activity, and the recording of responses. This includes the end-to-end assessment process from the perspective of learners, tutors, learning establishments, awarding bodies and regulators, and the general public. This interactive learning strategy allows students to receive immediate feedback.

Key words: e-learning, e-assessment, e-portfolios, web-based tools.

Introduction

Assessment is known to have a profound influence on what students study, how they study, how much they study and how effectively they study (Gibbs and Dunbar-Goddet, 2007, p2).

This sets us the challenge of further exploring the role of assessment and of then developing programs that employ it consciously in order to influence student learning constructively, as far as it is possible.

According to Biggs and Chang (2007), there are many reasons for the assessment of students, but of these the two most important are for summative grade decisions and for formative feedback. Since summative assessment takes place at the end of a learning program, to attempt to measure the outcomes, we must look to formative assessment for the positive influences we seek and provide an opportunity for students to recognise deficiencies, rectify mistakes, and build on their more successful experiences. Gibbs and Dunbar-Goddet (2007), in their study of the effect of program assessment environments on students' learning, found that providing frequent opportunities for formative assessment and oral feedback created the best environment for student learning. They also found that positive learning experiences were correlated with low levels of summative assessment and plentiful of formative one, including oral feedback.

Race (2001) describes the need to make students more aware of their own "unconscious uncompetence" and "unconscious competence", so that they can identify and address their needs whilst building on their success. In order to do this, students need opportunities to gain feedback, reflect on their practice and put in place the strategies for future learning.

It is formative work, then, that creates an environment that encourages deep learning and provides students with opportunities to discover the gaps in their learning and to devise strategies to bridge these gaps.

Theoretical Backgrounds and Methods

Juwah et al. (2004,p2), identified seven features of good practice in formative assessment. Such practice provides feedback that:

1. facilitates the development of self-assessment (reflection) in learning.

2. encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning.

3. helps clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, standards expected).

4. provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance.

5. delivers high quality information to students about their learning.

6. encourages positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem

7. provides information to teachers that can be used to help shape the teaching.

But providing meaningful assessment and feedback preset a challenge for academics, who are faced with large

* *An Associated Professor at International Black Sea University,Tbilisi,Georgia; E-mail: tkheta7@gmail.com*

** *A Full Professor at Gori Teaching University; E-mail: zangaladzemzia@gmail.com*

student numbers, diverse student needs and differences in learning styles.

Learners are increasingly more likely to experience technology-based assessment directly, or to be assessed within a system that is supported by online resources.

As today's school pupils progress on to post-compulsory and higher education, their experience of gaming in the social and personal dimensions of their lives, and of interactive formative assessments in the educational dimension of their lives mean that they are increasingly confident about taking computer-based assessments.

E-assessment must not be seen as a solution looking for a problem. It is a chance to improve the quality of assessment for our people. E-assessment is the end-to-end electronic assessment process where ICT is used for the presentation of assessment activity, and the recording of responses. This includes the end-to-end assessment process from the perspective of learners, tutors, learning establishments, awarding bodies and regulators, and the general public.

To differentiate between different types of activities, **computer-based assessment (CBA)** is used in this publication to refer to assessments delivered and marked by computer, and **computer-assisted assessment (CAA)** to refer to practice that relies in part on computers – for example, the use of online discussion forums for peer-assessment, **audience response** systems in group work, completion and submission of work electronically, or storage of work in an **e-portfolio**.

These following criteria of assessment practice like Appropriateness, Timeliness, Relevance, Accessibility, Validity, Quality of supporting systems are significant. Increasingly, a range of methods, both **computer-based and computer-assisted**, is occurring in higher education. Online tasks involving peer- and self-assessment and increasing use of e-portfolios and assessment tools within virtual learning environments (VLEs) indicate the diversity of approaches. Equally important is the relevance and accessibility of the assessment for the learner: evidence suggests e-assessments can provide assessment experiences that are more authentic – through the use of **e-portfolios, reflective diaries, blogs or virtual world scenarios** (Effective, 2007).

Research Questions

In order to obtain information about the awareness of Georgian teachers and students of the English language on e-assessment and e-learning activities I held a questionnaire. The purpose of administering the **questionnaire survey** (quantitative research) was to find out whether e-assessment was used by teachers and how useful it was for students. This research process module adopts an experiential learning approach, guiding students through each stage of the research process at Gori Teaching University. The questionnaire was conducted to 5 teachers and 30 students of this university.

The questionnaire comprised 10 questions.

1) Have you ever heard about the possibility of e-assessment?
- Yes
- No

2) Have you ever experienced e-assessment?
- Yes
- No

3) If you have, what are your impressions?
- very positive
- reasonably positive
- can't say
- didn't really like it
- very negative

4) If your answer is "can't say"/ "didn't really like it" / "very negative", why?
a) Due to lack of computer skills
b) I do not have internet at home,
c) It is time-consuming,
d) It requires high level of independence and consciousness, I prefer to be guided by a teacher (students prefer to be guided by teachers)

5) How effective do you find e-assessment?
- Low
- Medium
- High

6) Do you think it will offer some extra possibilities for more efficient learning/teaching?
- Yes
- No
- I don't have a certain idea

7) If your answer is "Yes", what possibilities, according to your belief, will it offer (tick as many as you think is necessary and add some more, if you can)
a) Motivating (as something new and challenging, such as e-portfolios)
b) Is really part of the educational process, but does not influence grades
c) Immediate, regular and neutral (non-offensive) feedback
d) Anonymous and objective assessment – no fear or shame of teacher
e) Face-saving assessment – no shame in front of classmates
f) Develops self-assessment strategies
g) Guarantees high professional qualification of the "assessor" (the group who made it up)
h) Add your ideas: …………………

8) Please indicate below what kind of activities using technology you use in your studies/teaching

• Student/student communication
• Communication with family / friends
• Communication with tutors / teachers
• Doing a learning task collaboratively
• Doing a learning task individually
• Gathering information
• Listening to course material
• Managing information
• Oral presentation
• Planning a group learning task
• Planning an individual learning task
• Reading course material
• Revising for an exam
• Self assessment exercises

• Viewing course material
• Writing assignment

9) List 4 technologies from any of the above you like to use most
a.
b.
c.
d.

10) Please explain how you use the technologies you have listed during your learning activities

Teachers and students answered these 10 questions through the questionnaire.

 These results are presented in the below table:

Questions	Answers	Percentage
1	Yes	100%
	No	0%
2	Yes	60%
	No	40%
3	Positive	80%
	Negative	20%
4	Due to lack of computer skills	20%
	It is time-consuming	40%
	It requires high level of independence and consciousness, I prefer to be guided by a teacher	40%
5	Low	20%
	Medium	60%
	High	20%
6	Yes	60%
	No	20%
	I don't have a certain idea	20%
7	Knowledge of possibilities	60%
	Lack of knowledge	40%
8	Knowledge of activities using technology	60%
	Lack of knowledge activities using technology	40%
9	Similar activities were chosen	60%
	Different activities were chosen	40%
10	Positive	80
	Negative	20

Table 1: Response Statistics of Questions from Teachers

Questions	Answers	Percentage
1	Yes	87%
	No	13%
2	Yes	67%
	No	33%
3	Positive	80%
	Negative	20%
4	Due to lack of computer skills	25%
	It is time-consuming	25%
	It requires high level of independence and consciousness, I prefer to be guided by a teacher	50%
5	Low	20%
	Medium	50%
	High	30%
6	Yes	62%
	No	15%
	I don't have a certain idea	23%
7	Knowledge of possibilities	62%
	Lack of knowledge	38%
8	Knowledge of activities using technology	62%
	Lack of knowledge activities using technology	38%
9	Similar activities were chosen	60%
	Different activities were chosen	40%
10	Positive	80
	Negative	20

Table 2: Response Statistics of Questions from Students

It is easy to see that many teachers (and, correspondingly, their students) are unaware or not well informed of e-assessment. However, The results of the questionnaire are inspiring enough as teachers who like e-assessment, find it creative, motivating, stimulating and imaginative. The feedback from students has been positive. They tend to agree that the tests or activities are useful for revision, and that they highlight both positive aspects of work and areas for improvement, which very often involve the need for more reading.

Conclusions and recommendations

For a vision for e-assessment to be realised with more certainty, it is necessary to explore more fully the institutional and pedagogic dimensions to e-assessment, addressing issues of sustainability and culture, as well as technological barriers. We need to know, for example, how technology

can be utilised to enhance assessment practices, rather than simply make them more efficient, and how to deploy e-assessment alongside other modes, so that each complements the other in the range and type of skill assessed. Finally, we need to explore how best to develop the confidence of all concerned in learning and teaching in the efficacy and appropriateness of computers in assessment.

References:

Biggs, J. & Tang, C. (2007) Teaching for Quality Learning at University. 3rd ed. Open University Press, Maidenhead.

Effective Practice with e-Assessment, An overview of technologies, policies and practice in further and higher education. (2007). Retrieved December 1,2012 from http://www.jisc.ac.uk/ - (2007)

Gibbs, G. &Dunbat-Goddet, M. (2007) The effects of program assessment environments on student learning. Higher Education Academy, York

Juwah et al. (2004) Enhancing students learning through effective formative feedback. Higher Education Academy, York.

Race, P. (2001) Using feedback to help students learn. Higher Education Academy, York

Technology Enhanced Learning (2012) Learning & Teaching Development Unit, published by LTDU, University of Wales Institute Cardiff