ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND THE SHIFT TO MULTIMODAL ASSESSMENT

Dimitar Angelov[1]

[1]*Coventry University, United Kingdom*

Keywords

Multimodality, assessment literacy, academic integrity, contract cheating

Abstract

To address the needs of an increasingly digitalised professional and public life, universities have sought to cultivate a new type of communication skills through multimodal assessment tasks that rely on the potential of meaning-making resources in addition to writing, such as image, speech and sound (Ross et al., 2020). This trend, already evident in higher education across the developed world in the 2000s and 2010s (Archer & Breuer, 2015; Archer & Breuer, 2017), accelerated exponentially during the sudden transition of teaching and learning from onsite to online in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic breakout (Xie et al., 2021; Rof et al., 2022). The phenomenon of 'multimodality' (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Kress, 2010) has thus become a key new factor in the university assessment process which affects how academics design, regulate and appraise student assignments, including monitoring their compliance with academic integrity rules.

In this workshop, I will draw on the results of a UK-based research project on the pedagogic uses of the academic poster, which I will present as a case study of the opportunities and potential challenges that multimodality offers for preventing plagiarism and contract cheating. I will analyse how the multimodal nature of the poster as an assessment task has altered the requirements for the development of students' assessment literacy (Price et al., 2012), and how current university procedures and tools ensuring academic integrity (e.g. the use of plagiarism-detecting software) have been affected by this change. In light of the academic poster case study, participants in the workshop will be invited to discuss a series of prompts and questions, including:

- To what extent can multimodal assessments be seen as an effective plagiarism prevention strategy?

- Can multimodal assignments present further challenges to prevent and detect cases of academic misconduct?

- What assessment design guidelines might be established to minimise the risk of academic misconduct when multimodal assessment tasks are concerned?

- What multimodal assessment genres can be offered as alternatives to written tasks, and what their benefits may be beyond ensuring academic integrity?

The workshop will conclude with the development of a framework of basic pedagogic principles that need to be taken into consideration when multimodal assignments are designed, overseen and assessed. The framework will be based on the discussion with the workshop participants, but will also reference the nine assessment strategies developed by Bloxam and Boyd (2007, pp. 63–64) to limit academic misconduct and, specifically, plagiarism in student writing. These include: requiring current and unique assessment content, avoiding unequal distribution of assessment in a term, requiring an auditable trail, making assessment tasks engaging.

References

Archer, A., & Breuer, E. O. (2015). *Multimodality in writing: The state of the art in theory, methodology and pedagogy*. Leiden: Brill.

Archer, A., & Breuer, E. O. (Eds.). (2016). *Multimodality in higher education*. Leiden: Brill.

Kress, G. (2010). *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication*. London: Routledge.

Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication*. London: Arnold.

Price, M., Rust, C., O'Donovan, B., Handley, K., & Bryant, R. (2012). *Assessment literacy: The foundation for improving student learning*. Oxford: ASKe.

Rof, A., Bikfalvi, A., & Marques, P. (2022). Pandemic-accelerated digital transformation of a born digital higher education institution. *Educational Technology & Society*, *25*(1), 124-141.

Ross, J., Curwood, J. S., & Bell, A. (2020). A multimodal assessment framework for higher education. *E-Learning and Digital Media*, *17*(4), 290–306.

Xie, J., Gulinna, A., Rice, M. F., & Griswold, D. E. (2021). Instructional designers' shifting thinking about supporting teaching during and post-COVID-19. *Distance Education, 42*(3), 331-351