



Assessing students' multimedia work

What is it?

Students produce social media (blogs, timelines, maps, re-enactments, etc), audiovisual recordings, a website, or combination of these.

Why do it?

The Web is changing the way we communicate. A 2016 advertisement for internships at The Spectator magazine discounted qualifications and CVs and instead put digital media capabilities front and centre: "If you write well but can't edit an audio file or make short video (or work out how to) then this internship is probably not for you." [<http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2016/03/internships-at-the-spectator-forsummer-2016/>].

As Web users, we are increasingly writing the Web ourselves in a range of digital media. Students encounter the resulting abundance of open-licensed or embeddable material on Wikimedia Commons, YouTube, Freesound, Flickr and other hosts. Accordingly, educators are rethinking assessment tasks to incorporate synthesis and curation as well as writing and tests. Assessment criteria developed for print media may also need a rethink so as to recognise essential differences between print and other media, including the non-verbal claims multimedia work makes on its readers.

Assessment & feedback quick guides

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Resources

Assessment Born Digital - Professor Sian Bayne, 2015 <http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/digital-education/2015/05/12/assessment-born-digital-sian-bayne-at-ucl/>

DePalma, M.-J., Alexander, K.P., 2015. A Bag Full of Snakes: Negotiating the Challenges of Multimodal Composition. *Computers and Composition* 37, 182–200. doi:10.1016/j.compcom.2015.06.008

Rubrics developed in UCL - <https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=22407>; http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/medical-physics-biomedical-engineering-teaching/files/2016/03/MPHY202P_rubric.pdf

Example rubrics outside UCL - www.uwstout.edu/soe/profdev/rubrics.cfm

MyPortfolio guidance - <https://wiki.ucl.ac.uk/x/DwXxAQ>

How to organise multimedia assessment

1. Based on the learning outcomes you want to observe in your students, decide on the type of multimedia assessment. A small website or collection of pages would require students to source or author different elements and relate them to each other; a video would require them to communicate a visual narrative; social media such as timelines, tweets would require different voices.

2. Early on, make the case about the benefits of the task to students and provide a forum for discussion. This is important because students who have succeeded so far on the strength of their essays and tests may find it unnerving to depart from these forms.

3. Decide together what aspects of the multimedia output would demonstrate the attainment of the core learning outcomes to be assessed.

4. Create assessment criteria based on the areas you agree are of central importance.

5. Provide clear guidelines about what you expect students to produce. For example, how long should it take a marker to look at? If there is a range of possible interpretations of the task, provide a range of examples.

6. To promote equal opportunities, consider setting constraints such as a common platform, toolset or medium, or requiring students to include certain elements. Again, discuss the reasons with students. Assume that a minority of students will struggle to access technologies. Group work can help with access and skills sharing, though you may need to consider how much or little you want to structure the division of labour. Or you could offer an equivalent alternative assessment e.g. a storyboard with commentary instead of a video.

7. Support students to master multimedia production by providing guidance and opportunities for practice or drafting.

8. Offer feedback on ideas and draft work; this will also give you an opportunity to adjust the assessment criteria or change the way you communicate them.

9. Encourage students to engage with intellectual property issues by asking them to decide whether to make their work available internally, publicly, open, or private. The first three states would provide examples for reference by the next cohort.