Beyond the Conventional and Measurable
Assessment challenges and opportunities when knowledge is represented in diverse digital forms

Henrika Florén, PhD candidate at UCL IOE & educational developer at Karolinska Institutet
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henrika.floren.19@ucl.ac.uk; henrika.floren@ki.se; @henrikafloren

@henrikafloren
Bio

• Doctoral researcher at UCL IOE
• Educational developer at KI
• Teaching higher ed
• I have worked in IT with systems design, computer communication, programmer
• But also in art, design and translation and teaching in 2ry education

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What I will present

• A short introduction to my doctoral research and some results from a pilot study
• Traditions and conceptualisations of assessment
• New and diverse form of assessment and the challenges and opportunities for assessment that follow.
• Assessment as a pedagogical tool
Reconsidering assessment

- Students increasingly represent their learning through multimodal and digital texts
- Educational practices are under reconsideration
Aim
To describe and understand how materialised learning in digital and multimodal texts is recognised and assessed in higher education.
Definitions

Assessment: an activity of finding out what students know and learn and involves recognition of learning (Kress, 2013)

Recognition of learning: the dual meaning of recognising as well as according recognition to learning
Multimodal social semiotics

Provides tools for studying multimodal texts (written, spoken, visual, gestural) (Kress, 2010; Bezemer & Kress, 2015)
Context – Higher Education in Sweden

- Decentralised & Autonomous
- High trust & low accountability
- Different grading scales
- Teachers can decide assessment methods
- High level of technological infrastructure and use of digital devices
Student tasks

Complex in several interconnected parts

✓ Written texts
✓ PowerPoint
✓ Live and recorded presentations
✓ Film (for the large screen)
Pilot study findings

• Results indicate common points of reference for quality in multimodal text
• This is evidenced across data sets in various subject domains
Explicit and implicit norms

- Key findings indicate tensions between explicit and implicit norms that govern the teachers' recognition and assessment of multimodal texts
- Explicit norms are codified in templates and instructions
- Implicit norms can take the form of judgements (Burnett & Bonnici, 2003)
New possiblities

Writing remains dominant in higher education and influences assessment (Kress, 2013, Kress et al 2021)

Advantages to diverse forms and digital ways of representing learning and knowledge (Lim et al., 2022)
Assessment Paradigms

• Different ways of thinking about assessment
• Gipps (2008)
Conceptualising assessment

APPROACHES  TYPES  METHODS
Assessment

Approaches (process vs product)

Types (summative, formative, authentic...)

Methods (test, essay, video, presentation ...)

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Assumptions about the world and knowledge

Phenomena can be objectively measured and generalised

Phenomena can be understood
Methods of assessment

- Summative
  - Tests
  - High-stake exams
  - Written examinations (essays)

- Formative
  - Continuous
  - Documentation; portfolios, presentations, film, projects
  - Problem-/Team-based

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Ensure quality and rigour in assessments beyond measurement

*Recognizing* and *evidencing* aspects of learning (knowledge, practical skills and professionalism) that are hard to measure

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What do we miss?

What we can see or measure and what we cannot
Assessment regulates learning

Powerful pedagogical tool
References


@henrikafloren
Henrika Florén

Email UCL: henrika.floren.19@ucl.ac.uk
Email KI: henrika.floren@ki.se
LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/henrika-florén
Twitter: @henrikafloren
Wordpress: Multimodal Study