
Aligning methods of assessment with conceptions of learning spaces

Laurine Cathala*¹

¹University of Essex (UoE) – Wivenhoe Park Colchester CO4 3SQ, Royaume-Uni

Résumé

The University of Essex, as many universities, uses Moodle and other online resources to enhance the students learning experience. Mainly based on data gathered through surveys and dialogues with language students and teachers at UoE, this study focuses on the possibilities of developing innovative methods of assessment, allowing the University to respond to QA reviews and the TEF and to improve student satisfaction.

Although the classroom is still the core learning space at UoE, Modern Languages students submit most of their coursework through FASer (a system that allows them to upload electronic versions of their work), use ListenAgain (allowing them to listen to lectures after they have been delivered) and revise and learn through resources, activities and formative quizzes on Moodle. Students rely excessively on the Internet especially when it comes to understanding and learning grammar. The study shows the impact technology has on teaching languages at UoE while technology-enhanced approaches are not being considered for summative assessment (every language test and exam are still produced on paper).

This study shows the various definitions of learning spaces and analyses students and teachers preferences in terms of classrooms settings and how physical environment can promote or inhibit learning (Oblinger, 2006). Although the data suggests that most language teachers make a good use of technology, students wish to use more technology in class through collaborative and synchronous activities (e.g: online quizzes through apps such as Socrative) and out of the class through the use of social media.

Bearing in mind the Framework for transforming assessment in higher education, a curriculum review and dialogue with students and teachers helped to evaluate existing policies and practice in terms of assessment but also to define how the use of technology-enhanced approaches could improve assessment (Elkington, 2016).

This study's first aim is to improve language learning and teaching at UoE by reviewing the current situation and adopting innovative approaches to assessment. This insight in policies and practices at UoE will hopefully inspire colleagues in other universities to engage in transforming assessment.

References:

Oblinger, D.G. (2006). Learning Spaces. Online at <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/PUB7102.pdf>

*Intervenant

Elkington, S. (2016) *Introducing a Framework for Transforming Assessment in Higher Education*. Online at <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events-conferences/event/hea-research-webinar-eight-transforming-assessment-and-feedback-higher>