Technology supporting assessment

"It is now recognised that learning programmes that provide opportunities for learners to acquire skills of self-monitoring and self-regulation (for example by assessing their own work against defined criteria) prompt deeper and more effective learning. A number of sources have demonstrated that technology has a significant part to play in making such approaches achievable without adding to the workload of practitioners.

However, technology provides only the potential for enhancing assessment and feedback. Transformative effects are more likely when there is a clear educational purpose behind the proposed innovation (for example, to increase learners' autonomy, to enhance the quality of feedback or to improve teaching efficiency) and when the use of technology is skillfully contextualised within the academic and wider social context." [From JISC, Effective Assessment in a Digital Age]

Ways in which you can use technology to support a sound assessment strategy

Broaden options – you may be able to set new types of tasks such as self and peer assessment tasks or assess a greater range of skills.

Immediate feedback – online systems enable prompt feedback, activated by a learner's completion of tasks.

Reusable – some feedback can be appropriately and usefully 'automated' so it can be provided repeatedly, saving you time.

Increase communication – when carefully integrated with learning objectives assessment tasks using technologies that facilitate peer-peer interaction can be highly engaging

Authenticity –video, visual imagery and interactive scenarios enable real-world tasks to be simulated, rehearsed modeled or critiqued.

Time efficiency – while the initial set-up and development of some activities take time, the abilitiy to re-use later and to use on a large scale often means time is saved overall.

Student contributed 'content' – peer assessment tasks can enable students to contribute essential learning content to each other.

Easy distribution and management – electronic submission of work enables access by multiple markers and easy tracking.

CONSIDERATIONS

Confidentiality issues – wider access, distribution and ability to download means students must be more aware of privacy issues and the need to take identifying information out of work presented.

Access and equity – be sure that there are options and alternatives for students

Give it a go…

1. **Begin with your course objectives**

   What do you need to know your students know?
   What sorts of skills do you they need to demonstrate?
   What teaching philosophy do you want to support and reflect?
   What assessment principles am I following?

2. **Change one aspect at a time**

   Start small - maybe you can begin with changing just one assessment task at first. If it is successful and when you get feedback you can review it and think about changing other aspects of your strategy.

3. **Jump in**

   Register on new sites, take a look around, talk to others who have used them and give it a go! Most of the technologies outlined in this site are very simple to use.

4. **Get feedback**

   Find out what worked well, what didn't, review and improve.

Be creative….

Can you use technology to*…bring in experts… get students talking with each other,sharing resources…create real-world tasks…enable observation… build an active learning community… enable practice and rehearsal…use pairs and small groups… use other well established online resources… get students creating questions…let students lead…?*