

Designing out plagiarism

Challenges in adapting assessment methods for diverse students on multi-disciplinary courses

Shawn McGuire and Bryan Maddox
School of International Development

The Overseas Development Group

ODG
DEV

The School of Development Studies

UEA

University of East Anglia

Our agenda - dual goals

- ❑ Foster diversity and innovation in assessment as part of good practice
- ❑ Recognising how different assessment methods may be vulnerable to plagiarism, offering tips for 'designing out'

So - produce a resource for faculty

Assessment and student learning – quality issues

“Students may well escape from poor teaching through their own endeavours, but they are trapped by the consequences of poor assessment.” – Boud, in Bryan and Clegg, 2006: xix (*Innovative Assessment in Higher Education*)

Good assessments should:

- Fit with learning objectives (authentic)
 - Enhance learning
 - Be dependable and robust
 - Deter plagiarism**
-

Plagiarism: scope of the challenge

- ❑ DEV - many disciplines & countries of origin
 - ❑ Pilots on Turnitin software (06/07) - **11%** (UG) and **22%** (PGT) of essays had plagiarism 'issues'
 - ❑ Of cases investigated formally - 50% are UK/EU
 - ❑ Spectrum of reasons why, ranging from poor understanding of attribution to intentional cheating
-

Essays as assessment tools

- ❑ Demand fluency in academic discourses
 - ❑ Time consuming and demanding to assess (esp. in multi-disc. School)
 - ❑ Learning outcomes restricted to some areas
 - ❑ Clear paper-trail - audits, appeals, feedback
 - ❑ But: Highly vulnerable to plagiarism
-

Essay questions - which ones are vulnerable?

1. How have shifting understandings of poverty influenced development practice? Use examples in your answer.
 2. Identify and analyse three contrasting approaches to understanding poverty.
 3. Evaluate the effectiveness of recent social protection programmes in alleviating chronic poverty in dryland Africa.
 4. How has Sen's ideas influenced our understanding of poverty?
-

Challenges of innovation

- ❑ Faculty time & skills (esp. considering tutors)
 - ❑ Disciplines – esp. social science
 - ❑ Student resistance
 - ❑ Student diversity
 - ❑ Have own vulnerabilities to plagiarism
 - ❑ Risks for faculty
-

Assessment approaches: some considerations

1. Work - Front- and Back-loaded
 2. Plagiarism & misconduct
 - a) How vulnerable?
 - b) How easy to detect
 - c) How design out?
 3. Fit with Learning and skills
 4. Feedback to students
 5. Equity
 6. Reliability of marking
 7. Student satisfaction
-

Assessing assessment

- Multiple choice test (in class)
 - Policy brief
 - Group presentation
 - Book review
-

Concerns

- Is there knowledge & institutional support to innovate?
 - How drive good practice?
 - Regular appraisal of CW's vulnerability to plagiarism?

 - Good assessment require careful reflection and planning
-

Future

- ❑ Interview faculty and student groups (EU and Int'l)

Resource

- ❑ tips for designing out plagiarism
 - ❑ Case study examples of new assessment methods
-

Conclusions

- ❑ Most assessment methods can be vulnerable to plagiarism – but good design can address this
 - ❑ Good quality assessment should help students to learn
 - ❑ Faculty face challenges to innovate with assessment
-