Technological University Dublin

ARROW@TU Dublin

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Blog

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Assessment & Feedback Use Cases

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This use case describes how one assessment method was designed and implemented by a lecturer or a group of lecturers in DIT. The use case was compiled from an interview conducted as part of **DIT's RAFT project (2013-14),** the aim of which was to provide a database of assessment practices designed and implemented by academic staff across DIT.

Lecturer

Ted Burke

Programme and year on which assessment was offered

- BE Electrical / Electronic Engineering
- BEngTech Electrical and Control Engineering

Description

Robotics (DT009/3) fulfils joint function of labbook and mini project (report). I use Wordpress.com (a free resource). The students are required to enter four posts during the semester. Topics are specified but some are flexible for substitution, as they cover the learning outcomes from the module descriptor.

Posts: these are like lab write ups. They have more flexibility with the schedule. Feedback is formative until the end of semester.

Pages: practical application, proof of concept, undertake work (4-5 weeks). This is like a long lab report, structured like a final year project report.

Why did you use this assessment?

They are good at capturing certain specific digital artefacts of the work being carried out (e.g. code), video captures evidence of build (work external to the lab environment), it is public facing which changes the mindset of the students (like hanging work on a wall). The students also experience finding information on other blogs.

This method makes the students creators and generators of knowledge rather than pure recipients. It allows them to share and disseminate knowledge.

This method is low risk, low cost entry to knowledge production.

Why did you change to this form of assessment?

This was a natural evolution from labbooks (for all reasons above) which had photos as evidence (as a record for external examiners). This method allows transparency to the laboratory setting. Videos were a further development of this.

How do you give feedback to students?

Formative throughout based on posts, encourages earlier engagement, focused on how to make posts better. Raise awareness of work being read. Point to previous years for best practice. Permission for reporting to avoid embarrassment.

Summative – categories, blog as a whole weighting. Holistic approach to blog.

What have you found are the advantages of using this form of assessment?

- Public format (building awareness of web publishing)
- Captures digital artefacts
- Less physical "stuff" to store
- Availability of material to assess
- Wordpress: this is a skill in itself, using a content management system
- Creates a public portfolio that potential employers can access.

What have you found are the dis-advantages of using this form of assessment?

- Lack of knowledge/confidence/familiarity of students can lead to confusion hindering documentation.
- Availability of work between students (disrespectful commenting etc.) or copying.
- Wordpress as host: constant potential for loss of material, harvesting information

If another lecturer was using this assessment method would you have any tips for them?

Do: Use wordpress, store information, give a quick tutorial at the beginning to build confidence e.g."how to" video, c code etc., give examples of best practice.

Don't: Feedback on blog is public so be careful! Utilise caution when giving feedback as literacy issues can be sensitive subjects.

Do you have any feedback from students about this assessment?

Some like, others ask about clarification/guidance and therefore are uncertain. Minority excel and are very imaginative/creative. Not many complaints!

Resources

- robosumo.wordpress.com
- roboted.wordpress.com

Additional Comments

This is a good way of doing things, trepidation at first but has proved to exceed expectations.

Improves engagement with writing. Very effective.