Using embedded Digitally-enhanced Patchwork Text Assessment to showcase employability skills

This workshop will present an outline of the JISC-funded Digitally-enhanced Patchwork Text Assessment project (DePTA) currently underway, and share the lessons being learnt so far. It will include activities focused on identifying the benefits DePTA could bring to students in your particular discipline areas, in particular how these can potentially support employability of graduate student learners in the ‘leaner meaner world’.

Outline of the workshop:

1. Briefly write down your understanding of ‘Patchwork Text’ and ‘Portfolio’ assessment - including the differences and similarities
2. What we are doing at the present with the DePTA project, and relevance to this CRA seminar
3. DePTA project features
   - High stakes assessment
   - More ‘traditional’ academic subjects
   - Use of different digital environments
   - Current progress of project members - more from Megan later
4. Clarifying terms as we define them
   - Patchwork Text Assessment (and how it differs from portfolio)
   - Digital Enhancement
5. What benefits could PTA bring to your students?
   - Course work that enables learning in a range of different perspectives of a broader topic
   - Metacognition of own learning through self and peer assessment
   - Personal communication and confidence-building
   - Clarity of transferable graduate attributes as ‘marketable assets’
   - Preparation of showcase for potential employers
6. Activity with a partner
   - think of a final year module in your discipline area, and consider how you may use a DePTA within the module
     - what would be suitable areas for patches (3-4)
     - how could this augment student learning in the module
     - what graduate skills could it showcase
     - how could digital media enable/enhance the process
7. Megan’s experience at Wolverhampton
8. Early issues from the other participants
Brief history of PTA
Original Project 1999-2002: led by Richard Winter at Anglia Polytechnic (now Anglia Ruskin) with partners at Universities of Cambridge & Nottingham Trent

Included a range of discipline areas such as Science education, Greek tragedy, family therapy, dance, teaching, social work and business and management, and assessed different academic levels.

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More recently, work has been followed through, in particular on a range of professional discipline programmes (personal experience in nursing, academic practice)

Key features of PTA

- Individual students carry out regular short writing tasks - known as patches - throughout the module
- Each patch shared is with a small peer group for discussion and formative feedback
- Tutor might see a sample of these ‘patches’ as they are written
- Typically the patches embody different genres of writing, and often different elements of a broader topic
- Concluding activity is to produce a reflective, synoptic, ‘stitching together’ of the patches
- Final assessed work is made up of the patches and reflective commentary that demonstrate personal learning and/or achievement of module learning outcomes

What advantages are there to PTA

- Continuous workflow during module
- Opportunity to try different forms of presenting work
- Cumulative assessment enabling rapid formative feedback
- The opportunity to see other learners’ responses to the task - aid to self-assessment and understanding of learning outcomes
- Integration of learning through reflection
- Fostering self-management of learning through meta-cognitive self-reflection on the learning journey

Digital environment?

- From basic (word and google docs) to advanced (multi-media, interactive)
- Exploitation of current learning technologies (VLE, e-portfolios, social networking, MP3/4 and other portable devices, web pages and blogs)
- Appropriate match to individual disciplines

What can a digital environment do to enhance learning through PTA

- Enable easy sharing of patches and feedback with peer group and tutors
- Offer the opportunity for using a wider range of genres (including non-text based media) as patches
- Provide a portable medium easily shared with others, e.g. potential employers

Link to DePTA web page on Wordpress