

### FINAL REPORT May 15th 2009

**Project :**

***What's it worth? Developing equivalent assessment opportunities for students with disabilities, through the use of digital video and audio recordings***

**Roehampton University, London SW15 5PJ**

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Questions	Explanation and further information
<p><b>1. Why did you undertake this particular inclusion project?</b></p> <p><i>approx. 100 words</i></p>	<p>We wished to contribute to some new assessment guidelines for academic staff on the <i>assessment of multi-format coursework</i>, which is a particular issue for students with disabilities. At the moment, there is little formal or workable guidance in this area, which causes concern for both staff and students. We were particularly keen to consider ways in which e-coursework ( such as e-portfolios or WIKIs ) can be fairly assessed by academic staff.</p> <p>We are planning to draft our own institutional guidelines as a result of our project, and will also be making them available for national discussion via the SEDA and M-25 Jiscmail lists. We feel that these guidelines will be of interest to all academic staff wishing to adopt a more inclusive approach to assessment, which will benefit a wide range of students, not just those with a disability.</p>
<p><b>2. What was the context in which you</b></p>	<p>We have set up a small working party of 6 undergraduate students with a range of disabilities, and have been working closely with academic staff to ensure that the multi-format coursework is an equivalent piece of work to</p>

<p><b>used/developed this inclusion approach?</b></p> <p><i>approx. 150 words</i></p>	<p>the rest of the cohort's ( e.g. If the student wishes to replace a 3000 word essay with a DVD documentary or radio interview, how long and how detailed should this be? To what extent will technical competence be assessed, if at all? Have the tutors been fully consulted, and will they accept the revised format?)</p> <p>Students are all second or third years, and studying one of these programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classical civilisation</li> <li>• Psychology</li> <li>• Sociology</li> </ul> <p>We have also been liaising with outside bodies ( such as the British Psychological Society) who co-validate some of our degree programmes, as the new guidelines will need to be approved by them before any permanent changes are actioned.</p> <p>Prior to the development of our project, any coursework adjustments were made by individual tutors, in consultation with the Disability Office. However, there was little sense of parity across the different academic departments, which we felt was unfair to students on some programmes.</p> <p>We are in the process of consulting fully with the university's newly appointed Academic Registrar prior to implementing our new guidelines across all degree programmes, as there are clear implications for the programme review process.</p>
<p><b>3. What technologies and/or e-tools were available to you?</b></p> <p><i>approx. 150 words</i></p>	<p>We were awarded digital video and audio recording equipment, which we are using in conjunction with our own resources.</p> <p>We wanted to offer students with disabilities the chance to put their coursework together in a multi-format way, rather than just using a 100% text-based approach.</p> <p>Two students have now successfully submitted their video and audio coursework onto the university's e-portfolio software ( WebCT ). The remainder of the group have made good use of the audio and video resources, but have yet to submit their projects.</p> <p>We chose a video and audio method to encourage students who find writing difficult ( e.g. those with dyslexia) to approach their project work in a</p>

	<p>different way, and to build on their own strengths as visual or auditory learners.</p> <p>We are hoping to encourage all undergraduate programmes to offer this approach for at least some of the coursework each year, to move away from our current model of assessment which is heavily text-based.</p>
<p><b>4. What was the overall design or plan?</b></p> <p><i>approx. 150 words</i></p>	<p>Our working group of 6 students met twice with the Disability Officer and a member of staff from the university's learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit prior to setting up any meetings with academic staff.</p> <p>Two members of staff from Learning Support were also involved, as they work closely with the students on a regular basis. E-learning colleagues are providing support for students who have not used audio or video recording equipment before, and have put together some support materials as well.</p> <p>Bridget Middlemas is now meeting the students regularly to check progress, and to gather feedback about the whole process in terms of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• time spent ( more or less than, or roughly the same as a “normal” assessment)</li> <li>• the difficulty and complexity of the tasks, compared to writing a traditional essay</li> <li>• any additional academic support or e-learning needs identified</li> <li>• recommendations for “ rolling out” the scheme across a wider range of disciplinary areas, to ensure that all students are offered a variety of assessments during their time at Roehampton</li> <li>• consent and permission issues relating to filming / recording in off-site settings</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Please outline any significant developments.</b></p> <p><i>Approx 200 words</i></p>	<p>Prior to starting our project, we had not fully envisaged the need to liaise with outside bodies ( e.g. the British Psychological Society, the TDA and the British Association of Social Work) .These issues have become very pertinent as we write the final guideline. ( see Appendix 1 on page 11).</p> <p>An additional outcome of our project has been to provide good advice / resources for staff and students on using video and audio recording techniques for assignments, in terms of how to present coursework which incorporates DVD , digital or audio materials. We have been working closely with colleagues from film studies and photography to put together some clear and simple advice for non-specialists, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• planning an structuring your recordings using a story-board</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• issues relating to lighting and sound quality</li> <li>• where to access support</li> <li>• giving access to others for assessment / marking</li> <li>• examples of good practice from other disciplinary areas ( we are in the process of setting up some resources in <i>Moodle</i> at the time of writing)</li> </ul> <p>In Autumn 2009, we will be providing some staff training workshops in the area of multi-format assessments, to encourage them to try out this approach with small groups of students.</p> <p>We have filmed student interviews to provide us with some useful staff training materials, and will be making this resource available to JISC shortly.</p> <p>The project has already extended beyond its original brief, as colleagues and other students from around the campus have discussed our progress. One interesting example is that we were able to fund ( from our TQEF budget) a group of <i>Historical issues in human rights</i> students, who undertook a field trip to Auschwitz and Berlin, and built their own WIKI of the trip . This innovative piece of multi-format coursework incorporated video, audio and digital photos, as well as text. It can be seen at: <a href="http://historicalissuesinhumanrights.pbworks.com/">http://historicalissuesinhumanrights.pbworks.com/</a></p> <p>The students and staff involved in the group WIKI project have now agreed to work with us to consider multi-format assessment issues such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whether such a piece of work might be able to replace the traditional 3,500 word essay for a 20 credit undergraduate module</li> <li>• how to fairly assess a collaborative group WIKI</li> <li>• support requirements for non-technically minded students</li> <li>• how to set ( or not set) the boundaries for such work, for example one student wrote a superb poem about her experiences at Auschwitz, although this was not part of the original plan. She then included it in her section of the WIKI. We are therefore thinking about suggesting that multi-format coursework has both formal sections ( to evidence programme learning outcomes) and “ free choice” sections to encourage and permit a wider range of contributions.</li> <li>• how to organise a presentation day when students can showcase their projects ( this would make assessment much more straightforward for the staff involved)</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. What benefits did your</b></p>	<p>This project has enabled us to stand back from traditional academic practice, and take a fresh view of what we understand by the term</p>

<p><b>inclusion approach produce?</b></p>	<p>“ assessment”. It has enabled us to involve staff and students in a very real way, and given them a platform to suggest adaptations and changes to current programme design and delivery.</p> <p>Colleagues from SEDA ( the Staff and Educational Development Association) have also taken a great interest in this project, and we have benefitted from their suggestions.</p> <p>Additionally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• our 6 students are very motivated and enthusiastic about the “ What’s it Worth?” project, in spite of the fact that they have found it very hard at times</li> <li>• learning support and disability staff have welcomed clear guidance around the area of assessing non-traditional coursework</li> <li>• we had a very good response from SEDA Jiscmail colleagues, who all report that these guidelines could be usefully adapted elsewhere</li> <li>• academic staff involved have all shown a keen interest, and are now contributing to discussions around programme design / revalidation etc</li> <li>• the project is having a direct impact on our new <i>Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy for 2009-2012</i>, and is enabling us to make some clear recommendations about good, inclusive practice</li> <li>• our Students’ Union are now becoming more involved in the “ student voice” approach to curriculum and programme design</li> </ul> <p>One of the main benefits for us as an institution is that we now have a clearly informed view on the potential advantages of encouraging staff to adopt a more inclusive approach to assessment, as we also have some very positive comments from participants on the issue.</p> <p>Some representative quotations from our participants:</p> <p>It’s fantastic to take learning into the 21st century, and encompass all learner types, because aural and visual learners have had it their way for too long I say! Let the kinaesthetic learners show their true colours..... <i>Student with learning difficulties and a long term mental health condition</i></p> <p>I think your project will really show everyone what can be achieved, and hopefully, encourage others to think about offering visual assignments alongside text-based ones. <i>Dyslexia Tutor to one of the participants</i></p>
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	<p>This sounds a potentially very interesting alternative form of assessment and I'm very interested in hearing more about it. A more diverse assessment portfolio will mean that some of our students will really be able to show what they're capable of...</p> <p><i>SEDA Coordinator, School of Arts</i></p>
<p><b>7. How did you develop and subsequently embed this inclusion approach?</b></p> <p><i>approx. 250 words</i></p>	<p>We will be running some staff training workshops on inclusive assessment and multi-format coursework during 2009-2010.</p> <p>The findings of our report will be incorporated into the university's <i>Assessment Policy</i>, and <i>Assessment Guidelines for Academic Staff</i>.</p> <p>We ran a workshop at SEDA's May 2009 Conference ( Brighton, Sussex) in order to gather the views of a range of academic staff from learning and teaching in HE backgrounds. Details at:</p> <p><a href="http://www.seda.ac.uk/confs/bri09/abstracts/14_MiddlemasCheesemanMcInnes.pdf">http://www.seda.ac.uk/confs/bri09/abstracts/14_MiddlemasCheesemanMcInnes.pdf</a></p>

<p><b>8. Did implementation of this inclusion approach have any disadvantages or drawbacks?</b></p>	<p><i>What's it Worth</i> has been a very complex and time-consuming project, but we are extremely pleased to note that changes are already starting to happen. The project has enabled us to approach academic staff from a range of disciplines to discuss inclusive assessment, and encouraged us to present our ideas to colleagues from other institutions. For example, Bridget Middlemas presented a workshop at Leeds Metropolitan University's <i>Listening to the Student Voice</i> Conference in May 2009. ( see overview of this talk on page 13 of this document.)</p> <p>One of the main drawbacks has been arranging suitable times to meet up with students, and ensuring that they are able to keep "on task" and complete their assignments in good time. The student group that we worked with have all struggled previously with coursework deadlines, but this did not deter us from working with them to consider new ways of evidencing their learning.</p> <p>Another drawback is that these new forms of assessment are much more multi-faceted in terms of the students' need to work with staff from around the campus – e.g. the e-learning team, media services, library staff and learning support staff. Some students are not used to working with so many different people, although they have all said that they are pleased to have participated. This has made us seriously consider possible implications for the way that we organise our induction process – we are aware that from autumn 2009, we may need to offer new students support in a different and more inclusive way.</p>
<p><b>9. How did this inclusion approach accord with or differ from any relevant departmental and/or institutional strategies?</b></p>	<p>Although Roehampton University is currently undergoing a structural reorganisation at the moment, we are keenly aware that central units such as E-learning, the University Library, Student Services and the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit will still need to work together very closely to support staff and students with developing inclusive and accessible learning environments.</p> <p>Our new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy for 2009-2012, is underpinning our efforts to bring the topic of inclusive and accessible assessment to the forefront of discussion. We work with staff informally, as well as via formal channels such as our various Learning and Teaching Quality Committees.</p>

### 10. Summary and Reflection

*approx. 200  
words*

We believe that this has been a very worthwhile project which will be of direct benefit to students from a diverse range of backgrounds, particularly students with disabilities and those from widening participation backgrounds.

One of the main advantages has been that staff from support units have been able to discuss assessment issues with a range of staff and students, and learn from each other in terms of planning the next stages.

This still requires a great deal of discussion and consultation (with students, staff and colleagues at other institutions) before we “roll it out” more formally. We are now at the stage of meeting formally with our Academic Registrar and our Assistant Deans for Learning and Teaching, in order to embed some of our recommendations at programme level.

Having trialled the idea of multi-format coursework with a small sample of undergraduate students, we now need to consider the assessment implications of our suggestions for:

- staff who have to mark this type of coursework , in terms of their time, their technical skills, and their understanding of what we mean by “equivalency”
- the balance between formative and summative assessments
- the balance between peer assessed and tutor assessed coursework
- the role of support staff ( eg laboratory or technical staff) who may be working alongside students to complete their assignments
- training and awareness raising needed for learning support colleagues
- the role of external examiners in the marking process
- ensuring that all outside bodies are in agreement with our suggestions for equivalency
- supporting academic staff to review their current practice in terms of ensuring that inclusive assessment options are available to all those students who require this way of being assessed
- sharing good practice with other institutions

We have already committed some of our 2009 TQEF funding to further supporting this work, which will then be disseminated in 2010.

### Appendix 1



#### *What's it worth? (JISC Funded Project)*

#### *Developing more diverse ways of assessing your coursework*

### DRAFT FOR STAFF & STUDENT DISCUSSION Equivalency Chart for assessed coursework

These are suggestions – you will need to discuss in fine detail with your programme team

Text-based coursework	OR Live presentation / viva	OR E-portfolio /multimedia coursework/ WIKI	OR Group work
<p><b>Essay</b> – 3000 words, plus 10-15 references</p> <p><i>100% graded by lecturer, and double marked where appropriate</i></p>	<p><b>A2 or A3 Poster</b> , using text and/or artwork/visual data, plus 10 minute presentation to rest of group; with accompanying 500 word explanatory / background text. You will need to use 10-15 references.</p> <p><i>50% Peer assessed by group 50% graded by lecturer</i></p>	<p><b>E- Project</b> 2000 words, plus 1000 word equivalent to include photographs, charts, visual resources, DVD clips, artwork etc, plus 10-15 references</p> <p><i>50% Peer assessed by group 50% graded by lecturer</i></p>	<p><b>30 minute teaching session</b> for a group of six peers. Make your own handouts / resources / games to illustrate your session. You will need to use 10-15 references.</p> <p><i>50% Peer assessed by group 50% graded by lecturer OR 100% peer assessed</i></p>
Text-based coursework	OR Live presentation / viva	OR E-portfolio /multimedia coursework	OR Group work
<p><b>Essay</b> - 5000 words, plus 15-20 references</p> <p><i>100% graded by lecturer, and double marked where appropriate</i></p>	<p><b>A1 or A2 Poster</b> , using text and/or artwork/visual data, plus 15 minute presentation to rest of group; with accompanying 1000 word explanatory / background text</p> <p><i>50% Peer assessed by group 50% graded by lecturer</i></p>	<p><b>DVD</b> - produce a 10-12 minute edited and titled DVD, with accompanying 1000 word explanatory / background text . You will need to use 15-20 references.</p> <p><i>50% Peer assessed by group 50% graded by lecturer OR 100% peer assessed</i></p>	<p><b>45 minute teaching session</b> for a group of ten peers. Make your own handouts / resources / games to illustrate your session. You will need to use 15-20 references.</p> <p><i>50% Peer assessed by group 50% graded by lecturer OR 100% peer assessed</i></p>

<p><b>Research report</b> – 10,000 words with 25-30 references.  <i>100% graded by lecturer, and double marked where appropriate</i></p>	<p><b>Research report</b> – 5,000 words plus 30 minute presentation to group, plus accompanying A4 750 word handout</p>		<p><b>DVD project</b> : make a 15-20 minute DVD, edited and titled, to show to the rest of the group. Plus 2000 word accompanying handout with 25-30 references.  <i>50% Peer assessed by group 50% graded by lecturer</i></p>
<p><b>Patchwork text exercise</b> : construct 400 words each week for 6-8 weeks, and hand in final piece of work as a 5,000 word project. Discuss each section with your peers, and use their feedback for your final piece of writing.  <i>50% Peer assessed by group 50% graded by lecturer</i></p>	<p><b>Presentation</b> – 20 minute PowerPoint presentation to students from your group, giving 6 examples of theories / research that you have studied. Handouts to be provided, with 10-15 references.  <i>100% peer assessed ( clear assessment guidelines to be provided by lecturer)</i></p>	<p><b>E- Presentation</b> – produce a 10-12 minute presentation, with recorded commentary, giving 6 examples of theories / research that you have studied. Supporting text and 10-15 references to be included.  <i>50% Peer assessed by group 50% graded by lecturer</i></p>	<p><b>Workshop</b> – devise and run a 30 minute workshop for your group, introducing 6 examples of theories / research that you have studied. Handouts to be provided, with 10-15 references.  <i>100% peer assessed (clear assessment guidelines to be provided by lecturer)</i></p>
<p><b>Text-based coursework</b></p>	<p><b>OR Live presentation / viva</b></p>	<p><b>OR E-portfolio /multimedia coursework</b></p>	<p><b>OR Group work</b></p>
<p><b>Reflective diary</b> – 5000 words, based on 5 hours of experience ( e.g work placement; field trips; museum/ gallery visits etc) including reference to theory and good practice  <i>100% graded by lecturer, and double marked where appropriate</i></p>	<p><b>Wall of photos</b> : create a “wall of photos” on an A1 or A0 whiteboard / flipchart ( full instructions to be provided) to share your experiences with selected group members and your course tutor. Make notes about each photo, and make an audio recording of your 15 minute talk.  <i>50% Peer assessed by group 50% graded by lecturer</i></p>	<p><b>E- photos</b> : create a “wall of photos” ( full instructions to be provided) to share your experiences with selected group members and your course tutor. Each photo to have accompanying audio file, with reflections.  <i>50% Peer assessed by group 50% graded by lecturer</i></p>	<p><b>Dialogue sheet</b> – 4-5 students to create a dialogue sheet on a large piece of A2 or A1 paper, to provide the basis for a group discussion. Choose 2 reflections from each person’s own notes ( on a range of topics / feelings) and share these with your peers.  <i>100% peer assessed (clear assessment guidelines to be provided by lecturer)</i></p>

<b>Laboratory / studio / field work report</b> 5000 words	?	?	?
<b>Multiple choice paper</b> : 30 questions , one hour paper  <i>100% graded by lecturer, and double marked where appropriate</i>		<b>Multiple choice paper</b> : 30 questions , one hour paper on StudyZone  <i>Marked automatically</i>	
<b>Seminar contribution:</b>	<b>Presentation</b> – 20 minute PowerPoint presentation to students from your group, giving 6 examples of theories / research that you have studied. Handouts to be provided, with 10-15 references.  <i>100% peer assessed ( clear assessment guidelines to be provided by lecturer)</i>	<b>StudyZone activity:</b>	<b>Group seminar contribution:</b>

### Suggestions received so far:

It is a good idea to allow students a choice of formats over the course of their programmes, rather than only offering text-based assignments such as essays or traditional reports.

Ensure that the programme learning outcomes are being met, whatever the format of the assessments.

Presentations of non-traditional coursework can be run concurrently with larger groups, to make better use of time. Lecturers can move between presentations if appropriate, or ask a colleague to provide additional marking support for the session.

It's a good idea to set up a presentation day for viewing a WIKI or DVD, and all such presentations will need to be filmed, in case of grade queries ( eg from the external examiner) . Each student can then keep any such recordings on a DVD, or on their e-portfolio if they have one.

Make sure that you leave time between student presentations / vivas for grading / comments / feedback etc.

A multimedia presentation can also be a web document which provides *equivalent content*. ( Agree as a course team what you will accept as equivalent, or ask the LTEU for further advice.)

In all cases, we recommend that students sign a cover sheet attesting to the assignment's / paper's authenticity upon submission

Make sure that you clearly describe the purpose / aims of the assignment, and your own and expectations / marking criteria. Whatever the format you choose, you will still need to be evidencing the original programme learning outcomes.

Fonts should be Arial or Times New Roman, and in size 12 for any text based documents.

You will need to be very clear about hand-in / completion dates for all assignments, irrespective of which media the assignment is being submitted in. Ensure that the students allow sufficient time for copying their completed work onto DVD or CD if required.

In the case of illness before or during a presentation, or failure to complete work on time, you will need to be clear to the students about your hand-in policy

Issues to consider for DVD production:

- Titling / cover sheet / authoring
- Project planning / time management for the student
- Basic information included ( name, date, assignment title etc)
- Quality of filming
- Timing / viewing speed of text & images
- Content & sectioning ( what do we do when there's no paragraphs!)
- Support prior to and during hand-in
- Final grade & role of external examiner
- How to arrange a suitable viva opportunity

**Appendix 2****Details of Workshop at Leeds Metropolitan University, May 2009, at the *Listening to the Student Voice* Conference**

Using a student voice approach to design innovative, multi-format assessments

**Bridget Middlemas, Roehampton University, London**

Roehampton University is currently involved in a JISC TechDis HEAT3 Project, entitled 'What's it Worth? Developing Equivalency Guidelines for the Assessment of Multi-Format Coursework'. This project is using a student voice approach to encourage disabled undergraduates to consider ways in which a traditional essay-based assignment might be constructed in an alternative format such as a DVD documentary, live presentation or an eportfolio.

In other words, what might an assessment look like when it's *not* an essay? How long should a DVD be if it is to replace a 5000-word essay? How will we ensure that the students are fully meeting the programme learning outcomes, and how will we attempt to grade such multi-format coursework? What technical or learning support will students require when tackling unfamiliar assessment formats?

The workshop will explore some of the learning and teaching issues that have arisen with our student participants, and feed back on our draft guidelines for academic staff who wish to broaden their assessment approaches. A short DVD of student and staff experiences will also be shared with the group.