



REFLECTING ON CHANGE AND THE MANAGEMENT OF NON-STANDARD SUBMISSIONS IN TYPOGRAPHY

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OVERVIEW

Online submission, feedback and marking has been adopted within the Department of Typography over the last four years. This case study outlines the experience of change and the management of non-standard kinds of submission. It also considers the impact of these changes, in particular, how the shift to online assessment has triggered pedagogical debate and reflection.

OBJECTIVES

Typography has been keen to continue to support the move from offline to online submission, feedback and grading, where possible. In particular, the Department has wanted to ensure a more consistent and streamlined approach to managing assessment, especially given the range of diverse submission types within Typography programmes. The Department were also very keen to ensure that online marking tools allowed colleagues to provide feedback that supports students' design literacy. In this respect, markers aim to give feedback designed to allow for openness in the ways students think and that builds students' confidence to develop their own design judgement.

CONTEXT

The University has a long-term vision to move toward online assessment, where practical, and improve underlying processes. In 2015–6, the Department of Typography adopted a policy of either online submission or dual submission (where students are asked to submit both an online digital 'copy' and in material form as relevant to the particular deliverables of different design briefs) across the undergraduate degree. Paper-based feedback forms were replaced with online rubrics. The Department mainly made use of Blackboard as a marking tool but with some further use of Turnitin, particularly for essay based assessment. The Department

has undertaken this change in the context of growing student numbers, increasing diversity of student cohorts and growing numbers of international students. The trends have increased the need to adopt more efficient and streamlined assessment processes.

IMPLEMENTATION

Over the past four years the Department has supported student online submission and the increased use of marking tools. In 2014, The Head of Department and I initially worked together to explore different online tools to find sustainable assessment practices for increasing cohorts. We liaised with our IT partners who encouraged us to work with Maria Papaefthimiou – as they were aware that the University was setting up a new TEL team. Maria introduced us to Blackboard rubrics, which we piloted for both practical and written forms of assessment.

These early initiatives were reviewed ahead of our decision to adopt online assessment for all undergraduate coursework (with a few exceptions such as technical tasks, examinations and tasks where self or peer assessment plays a particular role in the learning process). I then translated our paper-based forms into a set of Blackboard rubric templates for colleagues to work with and provided a workshop and video resources to support the transition.

For almost every submitted piece of work, students receive feedback from colleagues using either Turnitin or the Blackboard marking tool. Each piece has an online submission point so that colleagues can provide feedback online, often using the rubrics function within the Blackboard marking tool.

One of the challenges faced by the Department has been managing non-standard types of submission. Typography employs a particularly broad range of assessment types including self- and peer-assessment and group work. It also handles a range of different physical submissions such as books or posters and assessment involving creating designs like websites and app prototypes that exist only in digital form.



Because of the nature of the work, dual submission is common. Our policy of online submission for written work and dual

submission for practical work ensures that – regardless of the nature of the work – students receive feedback and grades in a consistent manner throughout their degree.

More recently, we have introduced some new practices that support the development of professional skills and enhance the transparency of group work. For example, professional practice assignments use a project management app, Trello. Students are assessed on their usage and the content (including reflection) they input into the app. The tutor can, for example, set up a Trello group and monitor group activity. Some practical modules require students to use prototyping software or create videos. In these cases, it might be easier for students to share links to this content either by submitting the link itself online to Blackboard or to a dedicated Typography submission e-mail address monitored by administrative colleagues (although this second approach may change as we work with the EMA Team).

A second issue faced by the Department during implementation, as a result of the significant diversity of assessment, is that the management of online submission can become confusing for students in terms of what exactly they should submit and how. The diversity of assessment allows students to demonstrate a range of learning outcomes and broad skills base but the Department has had to ensure that students fully understand the range of submission practices. This challenge exists both in Part 1 when students are being introduced to new practices and in Parts 2 and 3 where a single design brief may have multiple deliverables. We are continually working to find the best balance between ensuring the kind of submission is always appropriate to the learning outcomes, provides students with experience in industry standard software and tools, and is accompanied by clear guidance about submission requirements.

IMPACT

The shift from offline to online assessment within the Department has led to a range of changes to the staff and student experience:

1. Online feedback for students has meant that they now always know where their feedback is. There is no need for them to contact their tutors to access content.
2. For some staff, the use of online marking and feedback has meant spending some time getting used to the interface and learning about the functionality of the tools, particularly the Blackboard marking tool. There have been some issues surrounding the accessibility of rubrics within Blackboard and their consistent use, which the Department has had to work through. In general colleagues are now reporting that online marking has significantly reduced marking time, especially where more detailed rubrics have been developed and trialled in the current academic year.

- The Department has spent time thinking carefully about the consistency of the student assessment experience and making the most of the functionality of the tools to make marking easier and, potentially, quicker. As a result, there is a sense that the practices adopted are more sustainable and streamlined, which has been important given rising student numbers and increasingly diverse cohorts.

REFLECTIONS

Over the last year, following recommendations from Periodic Review, the Department has been trialling different practices such as the creation of much more detailed rubrics. As noted above, detailed rubrics seem to reduce marking and feedback time, while providing students with more clarity about the specific criteria used to assess individual projects. However, these do not always accommodate the range of ways in which students can achieve the learning outcomes for creative briefs or encourage the design literacy and independent judgment we want students to develop. We are also working on ensuring that the terminology used in these rubrics is mapped appropriately to the level of professional skill expected in each part of the degree. The Department is currently looking at the impact of this activity to identify best practice.

TY2020A Project 2					
Description: This assessment rubric is structured to help you identify which areas to focus on for re-submission.					
Rubric Detail					
Criteria	Levels of Achievement		Satisfactorily realised	Weakly realised	Not realised
	Fully realised	Well realised			
The app shows prototype/realise makes the purpose and functionality clear and is appropriate to the intended target audience. OR: The submission is effectively supported by a clear and relevant summary of the app concept, USP and audience.	Excellent - coherent and well supported with all the right amount of detail	Good - a little more detail or focus required	Satisfactorily - recommend you rework this to more your objectives/USP much clearer	Substantial reason required to make this effective	Insufficient engagement with this attribute
Realise effective design solutions for a native app using an appropriate range of tools, including software (or an equivalent prototyping tool) to create an interactive prototype and any other tools used to create images and text.	Excellent use of tools to realise your prototype effectively	Good use of tools but some room to refine or develop the technical aspects of your work a little bit more	Satisfactory use of tools but lots more could be done to develop this further (ie by using sections meaning that you need to add to sufficiently realise your prototype	Weak use of tools or prototype seemed substantially incomplete or underdeveloped	Insufficient engagement with this attribute
Demonstrate an understanding of key interaction conventions for mobile apps	Excellent engagement with current conventions to support user engagement	Good engagement with current conventions to support user engagement - room to improve in some sections but overall a good start	Satisfactory engagement with current conventions to support user engagement but less room to improve UX	Weak engagement with conventions - evidence how you can show on real practices to develop your UX	Insufficient engagement with this attribute
Achieve an effective presentation of your ideas through your choice of text, images and design attributes	Excellent synthesis of content and design attributes	Weakly good synthesis of content and design attributes but open to improve	Satisfactory or inconsistent synthesis of content and design, use more attention to structuring content to help you realise your ideas	Weak synthesis of content and design attributes - substantially more attention to content to help you realise your ideas	Insufficient engagement with this attribute
Demonstrate an understanding of key design principles for small screen digital design	Excellent and convincing evidence - this feature the it has potential to be a real app	Good realisation - but pay more attention to how you fine tune this to make it feel like a real app	Satisfactory realisation but much more attention to some of the subtleties of small screen interface design required. Engage with proportion and scale more carefully	Weak realisation, much more engagement with real apps required to inform your approach to your work, rethink your mobile organisation	Insufficient engagement with this attribute
Demonstrate an applied understanding of how typographic differentiation effectively supports UX and a range of reading strategies	Excellent use of typographic differentiation to effectively support UX and a range of reading strategies	Good use of typographic differentiation to support UX and a range of reading strategies but room to improve the contribution of your typographic differentiation in places or consider a greater range of reading strategies/user engagement	Satisfactory use of typographic differentiation but aim to extend how you use this to effectively support UX and a comprehensive range of reading strategies	Weak engagement with typographic differentiation - does not sufficiently support user UX and/or a range of reading strategies	Insufficient engagement with this attribute
Use of images (icons, illustrations, photographs, graphic elements)	Excellent use of images that enhance both your UX and UX	Good use of images but develop this aspect further to really enhance both your UX and UX	Reasonable use of images but develop this aspect further to really enhance both your UX and UX	Weak or inconsistent use of images - rethink this aspect to substantially contribute to better realisation of your UX and UX	Insufficient engagement with this attribute
The originality of your UX (visual identity) and its appropriateness for your audience with an emphasis on ethics, typography and spatial realisation	Clear, distinct and really engaging for your audience	Clear and appropriate but room to take this to the next level	Satisfactory effort but still a bit bland - develop this aspect further	Inconsistent and/or inappropriate visual identity, substantial revision required	Insufficient engagement with this attribute
The app icon is effective	Great logo, lots of potential to be distinct and memorable, possibly some minor refinements required	Logo is based on a good idea but needs a bit more work to give it an edge	Logo is based on a reasonable idea but needs to be more further to really work as an app logo	Logo is weak and needs to be reworked substantially. To our department with some new ideas, only you to find a bit of distance from the project	Insufficient engagement with this attribute
Attention to detail	Exemplary or nearly exemplary	Minor refinements required	Much more attention to detail required	Weak attention to detail	Insufficient engagement with this attribute

Typography is keen to continue to provide a range of assessment options necessary for developing professional skills and industry-relevant portfolios within the discipline. We are committed to complementing this diversity with an assessment and feedback process that gives students a reassuring level of consistency and enables them to evaluate their performance across modules.

There is some scope to develop the marking tools being used. It would, for example, be very helpful if Blackboard could develop a feature where students can access their feedback before they can see their marks or if it allowed colleagues to give a banded mark

(such as 60-64), which is appropriate formative feedback in some modules. In addition, Typography students have reported that the user experience could be improved and that the interface could be more intuitive. For example, it could contain less layers of information and access to feedback and marks might be more direct.

More broadly, the shift from offline to online practices has been one driver for the Department to reflect on existing assessment practices. In particular, we have begun to consider how we can better support students' assessment literacy and have engaged with students to review new practices. Their feedback, in combination with our broader engagement with the new Curriculum Framework and its impact on Programme Level Assessment, is informing the development of a new set of rubric templates to be adopted in autumn 2018.

LINKS

For further information please see the short blog, 'Curriculum Review in Practice Aligning to the Curriculum Framework-first steps started at:

<http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/engage-in-teaching-and-learning/2018/04/09/curriculum-review-in-practice-aligning-to-the-curriculum-framework-first-steps-started-by-jeanne-louise-moys-rob-banham-james-lloyd/>

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— Curriculum Framework Conference 2018

Curriculum review in practice **Aligning to the Curriculum Framework – first steps started By: Jeanne-Louise Moys, Rob Banham, James Lloyd**

Posted on [April 9, 2018](#) by [Engage in Teaching & Learning](#)

We're all hearing about the University's new Curriculum Framework in meetings and training. But how do we start to put this process of alignment into action for individual programmes? Three Typography & Graphic Communication (T&GC) colleagues decided to thrash out a clearer strategy for achieving this objective for our BA Graphic Communication programme.

Background

In T&GC, we're currently working on ways to develop more sustainable assessment and feedback practices for increasing numbers of students. In autumn, Jeanne-Louise Moys

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