Student video presentations for assessment

Mechanical Engineering

Energy and the Environment
Around 65 students, Year 4
Optional unit, MEng

Background context

The assessment for this unit originally included a student group presentation to a live audience. The audience included experts based in industry. This gave students a chance to receive feedback from policy makers on the importance of policy and legislation. An increase in student numbers meant it was more difficult to schedule the assessed group presentations in a face to face setting. Student numbers per group had increased. It was becoming harder to involve external experts as the presentation assessment events took up to two days.

Dr Marcelle McManus explains how she introduced video presentations as a way to keep group sizes small, and to enable input from industry experts.
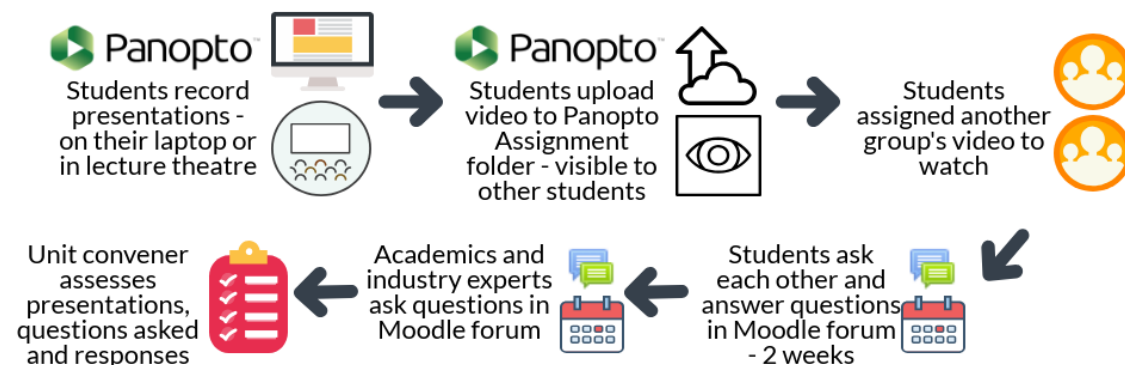
Purpose

Students were asked to video their group presentation so that they could continue to work in small groups. It was easier to involve a range of industry experts in providing feedback and asking questions about the videos. There was greater flexibility for externals. Some watched all the recordings and marked the presentations. Others watched parts of the recordings and provided feedback comments.

In addition, final year students are often asked to attend interviews for employment by video. The video presentation provided an opportunity to develop skills to prepare for this.

Approach

The process for student video presentations and assessment

Panopto — Students record presentations - on their laptop or in lecture theatre → Panopto — Students upload video to Panopto Assignment folder - visible to other students → Students assigned another group's video to watch

Unit convener assesses presentations, questions asked and responses ← Academics and industry experts ask questions in Moodle forum ← Students ask each other and answer questions in Moodle forum - 2 weeks

Outcomes

Pros

- Students enjoyed the video presentation activity and found it a worthwhile exercise

- Students valued the feedback comments from external industry experts

- The activity helped students to build up employability skills

Cons

- Students were nervous about recording and spent a long time trying to perfect their presentations (despite being advised they did not need to edit their videos)

- The timing of the activity wasn't always helpful for students - many had already been exposed to video interviews before the activity took place

Introducing the activity and setting up the Panopto Assignment folder was a quick process.

Moderating the question and answer activities online was time consuming. This phase is asynchronous, and requires an extra week to make sure there is time for students to respond to questions.

It takes longer for the lead academic to formulate questions online, compared to in live time (where you can adapt your questioning to take account of students' understanding).

Marking the questions and responses also took time.

Recommendations

1. Consider how the video assessment fits with the overall assessment requirements. This was a final year unit, and there was an issue with bunching of assessments. As a result, this assessment activity has been discontinued on this unit

2. Think about the timing for supporting employability skills. This type of activity could work well with groups in earlier years, allowing more time for students to develop skills which they can use when attending video interviews in their final year

3. Get staff together to moderate marking of video presentations, to ensure consistency

4. Ask for advice from your Faculty Learning Technologist. They can help you to choose the best technologies for your activity, and to prepare guidance materials for students

Further reading: Video assessments in Pharmacy and Pharmacology, University of Bath
http://blogs.bath.ac.uk/keithbrown/2017/12/06/videoassessments/
Using Video in Assessment, University of Cardiff (Video case study 10:41 minutes)
https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/learning-hub/view/using-video-in-assessment-case-study