Experiences of using Unicam for asynchronous video assessment of the Irish language

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Abstract. Video is used widely in language education as a learning tool and a production tool for students to demonstrate oral competence. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Irish language lecturers at Dublin City University (DCU) set asynchronous video assessment tasks for students on teacher education programmes. Tasks were completed using the web-based Unicam platform, which streamlines video creation and submission, allowing students to focus on their task and not technical affairs. Students' and the teaching team's Unicam experiences were evaluated through anonymous surveys drawing on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology. Both parties were neutral to slightly positive in their attitudes towards the Unicam tool.

Keywords: Unicam, asynchronous video assessment, oral competence, online assessment.

1. Introduction

This paper will share findings from an evaluation of the video platform Unicam at DCU.

The use of video in language learning is nearly ubiquitous (Hockly & Dudeney, 2018). As well as providing context and visual aids to language learners, video lends itself to assessment of language as learners can document their language

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production (Shrosbree, 2008). Producing their own videos is a form of multimodal active learning for students (Schultz & Quinn, 2013) and also facilitates self-regulation (Glenn, 1996).

DCU Irish language lecturers participated in the *Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning* project to explore options for technology-enhanced assessment. Led by learning technologists, they learned about Unicam, a web app which allows students to record audio, video, and screen sharing. Video files are stored in the student's own institutional Google Drive. It also facilitates one-click video submission to DCU's virtual learning environment 'Loop' for assessment and grading purposes. It aims to streamline video creation for students, allowing them to focus on their task and not the intricacies of creating, editing, and managing video. When grading submissions, educators do not need to manage video files locally as playback occurs online. Unicam is DCU's institutional video platform, created by a university spin-out company.

DCU adopted remote teaching in 2020/21, which meant lecturers needed to create meaningful assessment tasks to support student learning online (Kelly, 2020). Aware of the above affordances of student-produced video, the lecturers designed asynchronous video tasks for students on teacher education programmes to demonstrate oral competence in the Irish language (e.g. reading a passage, delivering a school lesson). As an institutional tool, Unicam was chosen for this.

2. Method

In spring 2021 the authors evaluated students' and the teaching team's experiences through a quantitative study. One anonymous survey was circulated to students (913) and one to the teaching team (13).

Both surveys mostly comprised Likert-scale questions in which respondents indicated their level of agreement to statements, where one is equivalent to 'strongly disagree' and five is equivalent to 'strongly agree'. The statements largely drew on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology, or UTAUT (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003). This theory states that there are a number of factors that influence users to use a particular technology in the future. These factors include performance expectancy (does the tool perform in the way that you expect it to); effort expectancy (how much effort does it take to use the tool and is that effort level reasonable); attitude (what is a user's general attitude towards the tool); facilitating conditions (what support and resources are available); self-efficacy

(how well can a user use the tool themselves); and anxiety (does the use of the tool cause any sort of anxiety, worry, or fear). The theory proposes additional factors (including age and gender) but these were excluded from the survey instruments because they constitute special categories of personal data under GDPR.

Two hundred and twenty eight students responded to their survey (~25% response rate), and eight of the teaching team responded to theirs (~50% response rate). The responses to each statement were averaged across both surveys.

3. Results and discussion

In most cases (with the exception of the anxiety factor), a higher score indicates a greater level of positivity and tendency towards using the tool in future (see Table 1). The student responses are almost medial, around the three mark. Although this does not indicate an overwhelmingly positive response towards Unicam, it would seem to suggest that there is a middling attitude towards it. Perhaps that is to be expected – the purpose of Unicam is simply to streamline the video creation and video submission workflow. It is not intended to be a revolutionary tool; it aims to be a simple, user-friendly tool to allow students to create video.

Table 1. Student survey responses (n=228); note: ASV=Asynchronous Video Assessment

Statement	Average agreement	Statement	Average agreement
PE: Unicam is useful for creating ASV	3.75	AT: Unicam ASV make assessment more fun	3.00
PE: Unicam is useful for submitting ASV to Loop	3.76	AT: I like using Unicam	3.19
PE: Using Unicam to create/ submit ASV increases my productivity	3.11	AT: It is a good idea to use Unicam for ASV	3.71
EE: It is clear and easy to use Unicam	3.72	FC: There are sufficient resources/support to help me	3.71
EE: It is clear and easy to submit Unicam ASV to Loop for grading	3.58	FC: I have sufficient knowledge to use Unicam	3.90
EE: Using Unicam makes it more efficient for me to create and submit ASV rather than creating/ exporting/uploading files from my computer	3.69	FC:Unicam works well with Google Drive	3.61

EE: From a technical point of view, Unicam does not take that much time to use	3.48	FC: Unicam works well with Loop	3.64
EE: Getting to know Unicam was easy	3.62	FC: Unicam works well with other tools/ processes for assessment	3.34
EE: Getting to know Unicam did not take much time	3.55	FC: There are specific people to help with Unicam	3.50
EE: I am comfortable in using Unicam technically	3.72	AN: Unicam is somewhat intimidating to me technically	2.81
AT: Unicam ASV make assessment more interesting	3.26	AN: I hesitate to use Unicam for fear of making a mistake	2.93

The teaching team's workflow is different to students (Table 2). They do not usually create Unicam videos – they grade them – so their survey largely relates to accessing submitted videos via Loop. Their responses show slightly more positivity compared to the students. In particular, statements around effort expectancy, performance expectancy, and some of the facilitating conditions received higher than medial responses.

Table 2. Teaching team survey responses (n=8)

Statement	**Average agreement**	**Statement**	**Average agreement**
PE: Unicam is useful for ASV	4.25	AT: Unicam ASV make assessment more fun	3.38
PE: It is clear and easy to access students' submitted ASV	3.75	AT: I like using Loop to grade Unicam ASV	3.63
PE: Grading Unicam ASV increases my productivity	3.38	AT: It is a good idea to use Unicam for ASV	4.00
PE: Students submitting with Unicam enables me to assess more efficiently than if I were to download/upload/ open video files locally	4.13	FC: There are sufficient resources/support to help me use Loop grading features	4.13
EE: Grading Unicam ASV on Loop is easy	3.75	FC: I have sufficient knowledge to use Loop grading features	4.38
EE: It does not take too much time to access/ playback Unicam ASV	4.13	FC: Unicam works well with Loop	3.88
EE: Getting to know Loop grading features was easy	3.88	FC: Unicam works well with other tools/processes I need to use for assessment	3.88

EE: Getting to know Loop grading features did not take much time	4.28	FC: There are specific people to help me with Loop grading	4.38
EE: I am comfortable using Loop grading features	4.25	AN: Grading Unicam ASV was somewhat intimidating to me technically	2.25
AT: Unicam ASV make assessment more interesting	3.63	AN: I hesitate to use Loop grading for fear of making a mistake	2.25

4. Conclusions

As an institutional tool, the lecturers chose Unicam to facilitate students' production of videos in a streamlined way, and facilitate easy grading by the teaching team. The findings have shown a medial to slightly positive experience of Unicam asynchronous video assessments. The lecturers note that some minor administrative issues occurred at times, where slightly incorrect Loop submission settings were applied, but once resolved, a smooth workflow was experienced by students and the teaching team. The authors therefore believe that there is scope to continue Unicam asynchronous video assessments for future student cohorts. It has the potential to be positioned as a central Irish language assessment tool on DCU teacher education programmes. Creatively engaging students, through asynchronous video production such as this, could lead to the redevelopment of future approaches to oral assessment.

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