

Cost, Plagiarism and Pedagogy Tensions in Digital Era Assessment

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Abstract

The paper about student assessment is motivated by recent USA and New Zealand media headlines about examples of student cheating. The authors reflect on possible structural factors for this in the complex interactions between contemporary tertiary education drivers—cost reduction, digital innovation, promotion of teaching and learning quality. For instance, is cost efficiency necessarily in opposition to teaching and learning quality, or can there be synergies? These complexities, and even contradictions, are discussed here within the restricted sphere of student assessment processes. The drive for cost reduction of student assessment has seen proliferation of multi-choice instruments; the ongoing struggle with plagiarism and other academic integrity failures are not easily solved by digital means. Distinguishing assessment types helps illustrate how cost, rapid digital change and teaching and learning issues lead to multiple trade-offs carefully balanced in the final decision.

Keywords: cost of assessment, plagiarism, student assessment, teaching and learning