



Digital Participation: New Awareness of Oracy

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7ED050 Contemporary Challenges and Opportunities in Higher Education

Motivation and Aims

Online learning (and a digitalised world of work) calls for skills in digital communication and puts new pressures, inc. wrt quality of shared content

Aims:

- explore oracy in the HE context
- trace its role to enhance learning experience
- propose a way to bring academic oracy to MA

Context: a competitive European Masters, all students are international

Oracy in a Digital World

- Oracy is the mastery of spoken language (speaking and listening).
- genres: taking part in a debate, presenting a prepared monologue and group work
- Digital oracy is a hybrid communication skill: digital design, recording and editing video, communicating data.
- “one of the most desired graduate employability skills” (Jackson, 2014)
- Communication is listed among most sought-after 14 new foundation skills in 2019 (It appears in 40% of job posting in future-oriented smart cities).

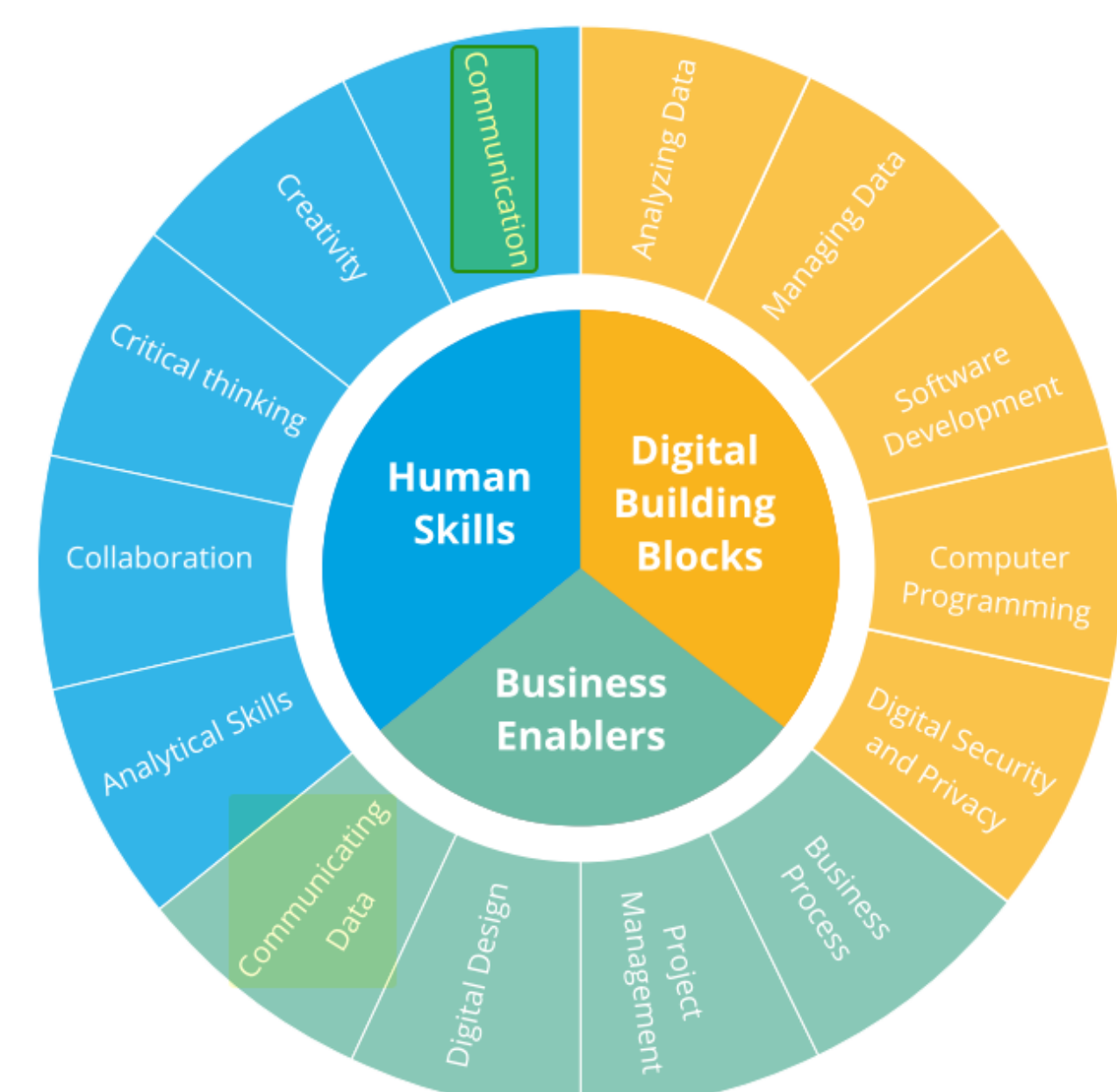


Figure 1: New Foundational Skills

Context Analysis

Requirements:

- UK Quality Code: "holders of the qualification will be able .. to communicate [their findings] accurately and reliably" "in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences."
- digital capabilities and EdTech are focused in UK strategy in education 2019 (9)

Gaping Issues:

- oracy was dropped from GSCE in 2014 allegedly for lack of robust marking
- few opportunities to practice
- an important medium for participation, but not an explicit product
- disruptive digital environments are here to stay and favour written interaction

New Opportunities and Evidence

Advantages

- new technology, unprecedented participation: more students are noticed to speak up from the comforts of their homes and no immediate face threats
- English as a Lingua Franca (ELF): re-think student support for oracy based on evidence of the same skills in the core of academic oracy
- UoW has comparatively developed digital support, inc. Portfolium (PebblePad)

Empirical evidence for oracy in HE):

- improved confidence and perceptions of self-efficacy (Campbell, 2020)
- promotes participation
- strong link to cognition (Vass and Littleton, 2010)
- reinforced learning: videos can be more engaging by involving emotions
- helps with self-reflection

Proposed Embedding to MA

- include it as part of Dissertation module each year (written::spoken 70/30%)
- set up a mock conference (a real audience and purpose for the speech and Q&A)
- require a video-recording of the talk
- provide conditions for students' self and peer assessment based on analytic formative judgments (use a assessment sheet leading to awards nominations)

Presentation Rubric

- components of the rhetoric framework as criteria (Mercer 2017)
 - physical (voice, body language)
 - linguistic (vocabulary, rhetorical techniques)
 - cognitive (choice of content, reasoning, time-management)
 - social (audience awareness, liveliness and flair)
- sanity of the visual support (slides), digital design

Challenges

- To be heard can be difficult, esp in real time (student/teacher ratio: 20.3).
- Students need to allocate extra time and resources to develop oracy.
- Learning to use a video-editing tool is another challenge (and making the right choice of (free?) software) (ex. kde vs Adobe Premiere).
- Students require more experience and training to support academic video production (see a framework proposed in Campbell, 2018)
- Credits for the Dissertation module need to be redistributed to incorporate the new assignments involving oracy components



Figure 2: Lights, camera, action!



Conclusion

- The recent shift to greater digitalisation of HE is a transformative opportunity for oracy.
- Video oracy deserves more attention (esp. with the advent of distance and digital learning), as it is part of digital fluency.
- It is important to recognise and foster oracy by course designs: create opportunities and scaffold student video generation.
- Embedding oracy skills will provide all students with equitable opportunities for participation.
- Student-created video is an active personalized learning activity in an online environment (Campbell, 2020)

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