

appendix 2a

Information for Participants

INVITATION

My name is Ania Rolińska and I am in the dissertation stage of the MSc in E-learning. My dissertation research project *Multimodality – Destruction or Deconstruction of Academic Ethos? Students’ Perspective* is supervised by Dr Sian Bayne, Senior Lecturer in the Moray School of Education at the University of Edinburgh. The project has been approved by the University of Edinburgh Research Ethics Committee.

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study that looks into students’ perceptions of creating multimodal assignments on a post-graduate course and how these may contribute to the authoring student’s development of academic skills and attributes.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN

To contribute to my research, you will be sent a series of emails at crucial moments of the design process, that is prior to embarking on the task, while doing it and in its final stages. The emails will ask you a few questions prompting you to reflect on various issues that might arise while designing the multimodal assignment; for example, you will be asked to reflect on any decisions made and rationale for these when opting for particular modes, such as audio, video, layout to meaningfully express the ideas of your assignment. The emails serve the purpose of documenting moments deemed to be milestones in the design process. It is hoped that thus stimulated reflection will help you remain focused and engage deeper with the task.

Once you have designed your assignment and submitted it, I will ask for access to the assignment in order to analyse it. This will be completely independent of the assessment carried out by your tutor. As a follow-up exercise, I will ask for an interview with you, during which you will take me on a guided tour of your assignment. This will allow you to reflect further on the process of creating the multimodal assignment from the time perspective as well as the usefulness of the email exchange during the creation process. The interview will take place via Skype and will be recorded using screen-capturing software.

TIME COMMITMENT

As mentioned above, you will be contacted via email at crucial moments of the designing process, which might start in the last stages of the IDEL module and last until the submission date. I am aware that I am asking you to spend extra time and effort at a very sensitive time, close to the submission deadline. However, I believe it might be time and effort well spent as it might help you reflect on the task at hand.

The interviews will take place in the new year, either during the term break or at the beginning of the new term, at a time convenient for both of us.

PARTICIPANTS’ RIGHTS

You may decide to withdraw your participation in the project at any point and with or without providing an explanation. This refers to any of the stages of data collection: emailing, assignment analysis and interviews. In the emails and the interview, you have the right to refuse to answer or omit any question that is asked of you.

You have the right to ask any questions about the study, its perceived benefits and risks. If you have any questions as a result of reading this information sheet, you should ask the researcher before the study begins.

BENEFITS AND RISKS

There are no known risks for you in this study. Participation in it or lack of it will not affect in any way the results in the course you are undertaking or any other courses within the MSc programme.

As said before, it is hoped that the participation in the email exchange and the interview might reinforce your reflection and analysis skills.

COST, REIMBURSEMENT AND COMPENSATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary.

CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

The information provided in the email exchanges will be kept anonymous and every effort will be taken to remove any contextual clues, for example your name or email address. When it comes to the assignments and interviews, the confidentiality of the data might be compromised as the assignment might already be in the public domain. Due to the nature of the data provided and the nature of the research output (see below) I would like to ask for straightforward use of the assignment and the screencasts. If you wish, when using those data, I will take care not to attract undue attention to your personal information like your name and surname.

The data will be used as part of my dissertation for the MSc in E-learning at the University of Edinburgh. The findings of the study will be presented in a multimodal format as a publicly available website. This might mean that parts of the screencasts can be used to construct the digital artefact. I intend to make the dissertation available at the end of academic year 2013/2014. If you would like to gain access to this website, please request details by emailing me. The results can be further used for academic purposes, such as writing up an article, presenting a conference paper and the ensuing PhD study.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like to ask any questions about this study you can contact me using the form on the website: <http://towardmultimodality.weebly.com/biocontact.html>