Onscreen Marking: A Useful Evaluation Tool for Tertiary Education in the Digital Era

EZU Aliu Bashiru, YAKUBU Egene, OMEIZA S. Folorunsho

Corresponding author: ezubashiru@gmail.com, 07030165565

[1]*Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa*

Abstract

This paper discusses a useful evaluation tool, termed onscreen marking, which is taking over evaluation of learners in the 21st century in Nigeria educational system. When evaluating student written assignments in business education, onscreen marking has several advantages over the conventional method (marking hardcopies of the assignments). These benefits include reduced waste of paper and ink, no shipping charges, quick turnaround times, and timely feedback from the students.. There are other difficulties as well, some of which are covered in this paper: lack of training, sluggish Internet speeds, server system outages, and academic reluctance to change. It is imperative that academics adopt a new way of thinking in order to evaluate the rapidly increasing amount and lightning-fast dissemination of knowledge in the digital era.

Keywords: onscreen marking, transformations, turnaround times, academic reluctance to change

Introduction

The saying "It is not the strongest of the species that survives or the most intelligent of the species that survives" is among the oldest. It is the one that can adjust to changes the best (Khalil, 2013). It was also said that, if one wants to experience continual achievement, one must accept that change is unavoidable (Hubbart, 2023). Every aspect of modern society is changing, and higher education is no exception. Modifications to curriculum designs, instructional methods, and assessment plan as an aspect of higher education around the world have drastically changed, including evaluation plans and student profiles are but some of the aspects that have undergone radical change in higher education globally (Ali, 2023). Added to this is the advent of the "information age". Telegraphy, telephones, radio broadcasting, and mechanical automation were associated with the "industrial age," whereas computers, the Internet, mobile phones, broadband, and wireless communication are associated with the "information age." In the context of higher education, the "information age" is sometimes synonymous with educational technology, which can be widely characterized. It includes any technology-based approach that can be used to supplement, enhance, and not replace conventional teaching and learning methods in an effort to improve student academic performance. Additionally, it is not limited to the use of hardware, software, and audio-visual aids, nor is it restricted to the application of psychological concepts and instructional theories to improve the teaching and learning process (Abdulraman et al, 2020). In an effort to increase student academic success, it includes any technology-based method that can be used to supplement, enhance, and not replace traditional teaching and learning methods (Abid et al, 2022). Students who successfully complete a course with a final grade of 50% or higher are considered to have achieved academic success; however, a significant issue that persists in many universities is that academic staff members are reluctant to use educational technology in the classroom. Lack of knowledge on what is needed, what is involved, what is anticipated, what the advantages are, and what the processes are is frequently cited as the reason for poor communication and research (Hassan & Muhammad, 2020). This is frequently ascribed to ignorance of the necessary, involved, expected, beneficial, and procedural elements. Given the aforementioned, it is imperative to explicitly explain that educational technology offers a wealth of opportunities for both teaching and learning, as well as for expanding and connecting students' spaces and locations (Sean, 2019). When compared to traditional training, students prefer educational technology because it allows them to learn just as

much in less time (Kaite et al, 2021). Effective assessment methods like online learning management systems (Magbali & Al-Shamsi, 2023) and onscreen marking (OSM) have also been made possible by educational technology (Yang & Coniam, 2017). Despite the various technological advancements in this digital age, many Nigerian higher education institutions have failed to fully utilize technology's potential and capitalize on its benefits. The researchers believe that this meeting is not only appropriate but also relevant given the aforementioned unrealized technological potential of many Nigerian educational institutions.

Purpose of the study

This research aims to describe the On Screen Marking (OSM) method in relation to academic achievements in business education, as well as its advantages and disadvantages in Nigerian tertiary institutions. One of the most popular courses for open distance learners (ODL) in Nigeria's colleges of education is business education. Other profitable courses are offered in our tertiary institutions. To meet the need for a worldwide education, the majority of Nigeria's universities and other postsecondary educational establishments have now developed a way to set up remote learning. Consistent with the global literacy vision and objective, Nearly 400 000 non-resident students get online education from the University of South Africa (UNISA), the country's largest open distance learning institution (Mackay, 2023). In the framework of this study, the research would first describe how to use OSM, followed by its advantages and disadvantages.

Benefits of using on-screen marking

Five key points can be used to highlight the advantages of using OSM: students save time, Nigerian tertiary institutions save money, there is less administrative labor, students may succeed academically, and UNISA software products are used to their fullest potential (Adesakin, 2023). The "information age" has come to be associated with time savings. People are working at a rate that has never been observed in human history since technology is improving globalization by speeding up various procedures. The introduction of OSM has specifically helped to reduce the time spent on written assignments circulating through an educational system (Johannes & Gerhardt, 2017). Today, writing assignments are traditionally turned in the mail, which can take up to 25 days for the student to receive them. Only in the absence of postal strikes does this happen. A postal strike in South Africa at the beginning of 2013, delayed the return of written assignments to

students by two to three weeks. This has a detrimental effect on students' learning, which is heavily reliant on the academic feedback they receive from their written tasks. Since they do not communicate with academics frequently, students need to know what they did well, where they made mistakes, and how they may do better. Before turning in their next written work, students must receive this feedback; otherwise, they risk making the same errors again,

Therefore, R660 000 is the projected total cost savings for 40,000 assignments online. Using OSM also leads to less administrative work (academic and administrative processing of marks). At UNISA, marking is traditionally done by separating the assignment from a pink docket covering a page that contains the module and student information. The marker must use a pencil to fill in this docket covering the page with particular numbers that correspond to the student's final grade and the marker's personnel number. After marking the assignment, the docket covering page must be reattached. In the same vein, it is recommended that the markers enter the student's number and mark in an Excel document page on their PCs, just in case the written assignments become misplaced during the mail delivery process. The docket covering sheet is once more separated from the assignment by UNISA's assignment department, which then utilizes it to enter the student's final grade into the system. It also serves as evidence that the marker finished the job, which makes it possible to file a claim for payment to the marker. OSM eliminates the need to separate docket covering pages, colour in numbers, and record final marks. By employing OSM, it may be possible to increase student academic accomplishment rates. When comparing students' performance and the traditional teaching and learning methods with colleges that have adopted the most advanced technologies, the present success rates are extremely low. Academics' tardy comments may cause this since students don't have much time to think deeply about their work. This can cause individuals to fail to see their errors or even comprehend the format of the upcoming venue-based examination or the examiner's method of questioning (Mwaka & Wambua, 2013).

Procedure to effectively use on-screen marking

Loading Adobe Acrobat Pro and the OSM tools, which are an add-on to the core Adobe platform, is the first step in using OSM efficiently. Along with J-Router, the primary software application for sending assignments to instructors, graders, and students, the My UNISA comments software must also be loaded. Instructors and instructors utilize their UNISA username and password to access

the J-Router. The module window, which displays the total number of modules allotted to a primary professor, is the next window to appear.

Since some lecturers do not have the necessary software installed or have not yet activated their OSM modules, many modules may occasionally be sent to the department chair. Along with the number of unfinished assignments for assignment 2, which in this instance is 1, the desired module, SCM4701, is shown. The primary options are displayed as tabs at the top of the page when you select the relevant module in the module window. You may examine the details of the unfinished assignments in the inbox. However, since no marker has been chosen, these assignments cannot be moved or marked. Therefore, the first step is to select the assignments. and then sent to the appropriate marker via the "Route to" option on the "Selected Document" tab at the top of the page. The MARKER column will now display the right marker's number. The relevant assignments will show up in the marker's inbox after it has been routed, and the marker can choose his or her name in the marker selection box. This time, however, the marker has the option to relocate the assignments to the workspace where the marking tool is available. To do this, you must first pick all of the assignments, then click the "Selected Document" tab once more, and then choose "Put in the workspace."

After that, each is downloaded to a designated folder on the marker's computer's hard drive. Even if the machine is not online, the marker can now open each assignment for marking by accessing that folder, which is often located on the C: drive under the "Onscreen Marking" folder. Now, the J-Router has the option to "Open for marking." Other options that are now accessible include "Set mark" (which records the assignment mark on the system when marking is finished), "marked," Retrieve into inbox" (which moves the assignment back to the inbox so that it can be routed to another marker), "Replace with another document," and "Put on a flash drive." Put on flash drive" (transfer assignments to a flash drive for offline marking), "Replace with another document," and "Put in outbox" (moves the assignment out once it has been marked).

Since Adobe Acrobat Pro is the platform for the OSM tools, the document must be in PDF format. The myUNISA comments tool is an extra tool that is included. Using this tool, markers can create pre-written remarks that can be quickly added to certain areas of the assignment. This implies that if a similar error occurs in multiple assignments, the marker does not have to retype every comment. All the marker has to do is choose Adobe Acrobat Pro's "Comment Mark" tool, position

the comment circle, copy the relevant comment from the myUNISA comments, and then paste it inside the circle. This "Comment Mark" should have a value of zero.A select cursor (used to remove a comment or inappropriate tick), a comments mark button (with a small e inside), a mark count button (used to set the total number of marks and tally the awarded number of marks for the assignment), a half correct tick, a full correct tick, a stamp, a wrong tick, and an info button are additional OSM tools that are available.

After marking the assignment and selecting the mark count button, the student's mark is automatically placed at the end of the assignment and entered into the system using the "Set Mark" selection in the "Selected Document" tab. Selecting all of the marked assignments and checking the "Put in outbox" option is the next step, which may take some time because the PDF documents must be uploaded to the J-Router) then the marker can again "Select all Assignments" Now transfer them to the "Sent to Students" folder, which is the following folder. This is accomplished by choosing the "Assignments" button at the top of the website, then choosing "Bulk Processing" and "Send assignments to Students." The marked assignments are then automatically sent back to the students. Students occasionally turn their homework as zip or docx files rather than PDF files (FILE_TYPE). The file must be downloaded to the workspace using the marker. Before marking can take place, the doc x file must be opened in the appropriate directory on the main disk and then converted to a pdf file. The original marking must then be replaced.with this newly produced doc x file.PDF file for processing (the "Replace with other document" option is located on the Selected Document tab).

The submission of a corrupt file that the marker is unable to open can also cause issues. In this scenario, the marker must first select the corrupted file, then click on the "Selected Document" tab, choose the request and subsequent cancellation of assignment option, and then enter or select the appropriate reason for the cancellation request, which in this case is "Unable to open for marking."

Challenges of on-screen marking Systems

Technology Infrastructure: The absence of dependable technology infrastructure is one of the biggest problems. Many educational institutions struggle with poor hardware, erratic internet connections, and a lack of technological support, especially in developing nations like Nigeria and certain other African nations.

Data Security: It's imperative that student data be private and secure. Protecting sensitive data from breaches is a big issue as cyber threats get more complex (Singhal, 2013).

User Adaptability: Both students and teachers may find it challenging to adjust to new technologies. The implementation of on-screen evaluation techniques may be hampered by resistance to change and the learning curve related to new technologies.

Consistency and Reliability: It's imperative to preserve the dependability and consistency of digital assessments. Software bugs, system outages, and technical issues can all disrupt the review process, leading to errors and delays.

Possible solutions to the Challenges of On-screen Marking

Robust Infrastructure Support (RIS): For a variety of institutions' technological requirements, Learning Spiral provides scalable solutions. All users can access their systems since they are built to function well even in situations where resources are limited.

Stronger Security Measures (SSM): The company employs secure data storage procedures and cutting-edge encryption methods to safeguard private data. Frequent security updates and audits contribute to maintaining the integrity of the assessment procedure.

Comprehensive Training Programs (CTP): Learning Spiral offers teachers and students comprehensive training programs to aid with user adjustment. The goal of these programs is to facilitate the transfer so that users can quickly become accustomed to the new system.

Reliable and Consistent Performance (RCP): Known for their dependability and consistency, Learning Spiral's methods are superb. By doing regular system maintenance and offering strong technical support, they lessen the risk of interruptions and guarantee a seamless evaluation procedure.

Conclusions

This paper's goal was to describe the OSM process as it should be experienced in our tertiary education establishments in Nigeria. This study discussed the procedure, advantages, difficulties, and potential remedies of on- screen marking processes.

However, there are a number of issues with switching to on-screen evaluation methods; Digital Evaluation by Learning Spiral (DLS) offers solutions that simplify and expedite the process. The

use of digital assessments by educational institutions can enhance their assessment procedures by addressing issues with dependability, flexibility, security, and infrastructure.

Recommendations

It is important to remember that any higher education institution that participates in a lot of online learning and needs prompt feedback to properly prepare for their final exams has to be friends with OSM. For written assignments turned in by distance learning students who don't frequently interact with their lecturers in person, the usage of OSM will enable quicker turnaround times. Students have more time to consider the errors they made in their assignments and fix them well before their written exam, which could result in higher throughput and pass rates.

The followings are the suggestions made

1. Tertiary institutions in Nigeria should see the advent of educational technology as an opportunity that could solve the problems of manual marking rather than seeing it as a threat.

2. The management and staff of tertiary institutions should not be reluctant to adopt and use educational technology for research work, teaching and learning, as well as a means of communication in addressing the prevailing problems.

3. Comprehensive training programmes should be instituted in every tertiary institutions that embraces educational technology as the only way to go, by ensuring that all the aspect of the organization felt the presence of change.

4. Robust Infrastructure Support should be put in place in Kogi State college of education and other tertiary institutions for effective and efficient use of the new educational technology platform (on-screen marking).

References

Abdulrahaman, M. D., Faruk, N., Oloyede, A. A., Surajudeen-Bakinde, N. T., Olawoyin, L. A., Mejabi, O.V., Imam-Fulani, Y. O., Fahm, A. O., Azeez, A. L. (2020). Multimedia tools in the teaching and learning processes: A systematic review, *Heliyon,6*(11), e05312. (https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2405844020321551).

Abid, H., Mohd, J., Mohd, A. Q., & Rajiv, S. (2022). Understanding the role of digital technologies in education: A review, Sustainable Operations and Computers, 3: 275-285. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666412722000137.

Adesakin, S. (2023). Mastering the Art of Saving: A Nigerian Student's Guide to Financial Success. Available at https://businessday.ng.

Ali, A. M. (2023). A review of curriculum change and innovation for higher education in Somalia. *European Journal of Education Studies,10*(5), 135-144.

Al-Maqbali, A. H., & Al-Shamsi, A. (2023). Assessment strategies in online learning environments during the COVID-19 pandemic in Oman. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice, 20*(5). 8-21. https://doi.org/10.53761/1.20.5.08

Hanan, A., & Muhammad, N. (2020). Exploring the impact of ineffective formal communication between teachers and students: A case study of Mustaqbal University and Jubail University College, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *English Language Teaching, 13*(3), 68-76.

Hubbart, J. A. (2023). Organizational Change: The Challenge of Change Aversion. *Administrative Sciences* 13: 162. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372167040.

Johannes, J. M., & Gerhard, I. P. (2017). Onscreen Marking For Electronically Submitted Essay Type Questions. Proceedings of EDULEARN17 Conference 3rd-5th July 2017, Barcelona, Spain. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318706203.

Kaite J. C., Jamie, M. M., Mohamed, B., & Adel, A. (2021). Effects of technology on student learning. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology, 20*(1), 105-113.

Khalil, S.M.(2013). "From resistance to acceptance and use of technology in academia,*" OpenPraxis,* 5(2), 151-163.

Mackay, I. V. (2023). Status of Distance Learning in South Africa Status of Distance Learning in South. Africa Contemporary Developments and Prospects. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372401858.

Mwaka, M., & Wambua, B. K.(2013). A. Syomwene and K. Kitainge, "Monitoring of educational technology progress to enhance the quality of graduate teachers from the Kenyan universities," *European Scientific Journal*, 9(10).

Sean, M. L., Charlotte, H., & Francis, W. (2019). The digital frontier: Envisioning future technologies impact on the classroom, *Futures,* 113: 102422. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016328718304166.

Singhal, P. (2013). "Educational Technology - Presenting the art of teaching in a new fashion," *Indian Streams Research Journal*, 3(2)1-4.

Yang, M., Yan, Z., & Coniam, D. (2017). A qualitative study of markers' perceptions on onscreen marking in five subject areas. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, *23*(7–8), 290–310. https://doi.org/10.1080/13803611.2018.1446836.