

Johnson, M. and Greatorex, J. (2005) *Judging learners' work on screen. How valid and fair are assessment judgements?* British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, University of Glamorgan, September.

We have undertaken a review of some of the literature about assessor judgements and the affordances of technology particularly in the field of educational assessment. We discuss issues of reliability and validity in assessment and argue from the literature that there are many factors which influence the decisions made by assessors. To limit our discussion we focus on factors such as the context of assessments and the previous experience of assessors. We consider whether in addition to a range of factors, mode of assessment might also affect assessment judgements. If mode does affect assessment judgements then it must be considered within a wider context; (1) it is just one of many influences, and (2) there are many benefits of technology in education and assessment which are well rehearsed in the research literature.

Our review also suggests that there are no systematic differences in the marks given to the same work when it is presented to assessors to be judged on paper and on-screen. We have taken reliability to be of secondary importance to validity in this paper. High reliability could potentially mask underlying validity issues. The impact of mode on assessment judgements might be an issue of construct validity in that it might affect the extent to which the assessment measures what it is supposed to measure. Another interesting point for consideration raised in the literature from other fields is that reading long textual pieces on screen might be problematic. Perhaps this issue has received less discussion because some of the problems might be overcome with future technological advancements. Whilst the issues we raise need to inform debate they must be viewed in the context of the benefits and opportunities afforded by technology in assessment.