

# Planning for authentic language assessment in higher education synchronous online environments

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The teaching of some languages in Australia is under threat due substantially to small enrolments. There is considerable need to preserve Australia's community languages as part of the country's cultural and linguistic diversity. However, it can be difficult to generate sufficient numbers to sustain the provision of a specific language course in any one location in Australia. Online technologies can provide a solution to this problem.

According to the New Media Consortium Horizon Report: 2012 Higher Education Edition<sup>1</sup> "education paradigms are shifting to include online learning, hybrid learning and collaborative models" (Johnson 2012:4). Models such as these present a possible solution to the problems associated with providing small enrolment language topics such as Modern Greek.

The Logos Australian Centre for Hellenic Language and Culture was established at Flinders University in 2011. Promotion and preservation of Greek language and culture is the focus of the centre which is funded by the South Australian Government with support from the Greek Government. In 2012 the centre moved towards enhancing the delivery of Modern Greek by developing and delivering four language topics and two culture topics online. The delivery of these topics identified assessment as an area which needs further investigation. This paper describes the importance of an assessment strategy for foreign language (FL)<sup>2</sup> learning which is based on the principles of authentic assessment and describes how synchronous technologies can support this strategy.

## Introduction

Online FL learning environments offer a wide range of possibilities for the assessment of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Current practices include the use

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<sup>1</sup> The New Media Consortium Higher Education Report 2012 is available online at: <http://www.nmc.org/publications/horizon-report-2012-higher-ed-edition>.

<sup>2</sup> FL will be used as an abbreviation for foreign language throughout the paper.

of synchronous technologies<sup>3</sup> for students to demonstrate language competency by participating in text chats or speaking to a live audience using synchronous cyber classrooms (Leone, Leo et al., 2010). Asynchronous technologies<sup>4</sup> are used as well, for students to complete assessment tasks such as quizzes, written assignments and speaking tasks. As one example, Pop, Tomuletiu et al. (2011) describe their use of the asynchronous voice tools VOXOPOP<sup>5</sup> and VoiceThread<sup>6</sup> to support spoken communication in online learning environments. Tools such as these can also support assessment activities online.

The aim of this study is to make recommendations for the use of synchronous, web-based communication software, such as Adobe Connect<sup>7</sup> to support FL assessment in online learning environments. Our recommendations will be based on authentic assessment principles.<sup>8</sup> Rather than adopting an approach in which “teachers frequently transfer tasks used in face to face settings to the online environment without adapting them to the new setting” (Hampel, 2006:106), identified by Hampel as a frequent practice when designing tasks for the online environment, the synchronous online environment must be recognised for the new assessment possibilities it offers. As Hampel (2006) points out, there is much to be learned from existing theories about tasks in face-to-face classrooms in terms of how they can be applied to online environments but time must be spent exploring how tasks that are appropriate to a multimodal virtual environment can be devised.

A recent review of current literature reveals that many people are researching and writing about both synchronous and asynchronous online environments in terms of FL teaching, learning and task design (e.g. Hampel, 2006; Chen, Ko et al., 2005; Chen and Wang, 2008). Likewise, there has been some discussion regarding online FL language learning and assessment in which the focus is on using asynchronous technologies (e.g. Pop, Tomuletiu et al., 2011; Kol & Schcolnik, 2008). However, little has been proposed in regard to FL assessment using synchronous technologies and methods.

## Current approaches to online assessment

Online assessments can be divided into those which can be completed by students anywhere and anytime (asynchronous) and those which involve real time interaction

<sup>3</sup> Synchronous technologies enable real-time communication and collaboration in a “same time-different place” mode. They allow people to connect at a single point in time, at the same time.

<sup>4</sup> Asynchronous technologies enable communication and collaboration over a period of time through a “different time-different place” mode. These tools allow people to connect together at each person’s own convenience and own schedule.

<sup>5</sup> VOXOPOP is a voice based e learning tool available at: <http://www.voxopop.com/>.

<sup>6</sup> VoiceThread is an online platform for teaching, learning, training, and collaborating available at: <http://voicethread.com/>.

<sup>7</sup> Tools which are similar to Adobe Connect include Saba Centra, Blackboard Collaborate and Cisco Webex.

<sup>8</sup> Authentic assessment principles are discussed and defined for the purposes of this paper on pages 248 and 249.

(synchronous). Learner management systems (LMS)<sup>9</sup> such as Moodle are equipped with a range of functionality and tools which support asynchronous online assessments in particular.

Referring specifically to Flinders Learning Online (FLO)<sup>10</sup> Moodle, there are three different asynchronous assignment options as listed and described below:

- Advanced uploading of files — allows multiple file submission, submission of an accompanying message and the returning of files online.
- Online text — students type their answer online rather than submitting a file.
- Offline activity — the assignment is completed offline. Setting it up in Moodle allows students to be reminded to complete it, and grades to be entered against it.

This assignment upload functionality allows students to submit written work and audio/video recordings.

FLO also provides the functionality for students to submit their work for peer assessment via an online text tool and attachments. Discussion forums can be used in assessment activities and online quizzes incorporating many different question types can be constructed. Within FLO topics, students can contribute to collaborative or individual wikis<sup>11</sup> for assessment. E portfolio functionality is also provided as an asynchronous assessment tool within FLO via PebblePad.<sup>12</sup>

Synchronous communication tools such as web conferencing software can be integrated with LMS. However, text chat is currently the only synchronous communication tool fully integrated with FLO Moodle. Other options such as the use of synchronous, web-based communication software such as Adobe Connect<sup>13</sup> teleconferencing (telephone or Skype)<sup>14</sup> and videoconferencing can be accessed by linking them to the online topic spaces.

It is important to note at this point that the assessment functionality provided in online learning spaces is very much dependent upon the LMS which is being used and the institution. Godwin-Jones (2012) has written extensively about these emerging technologies in online language learning concluding that “before language faculty

<sup>9</sup> LMS will be used as an abbreviation for learner management system throughout the paper.

<sup>10</sup> FLO will be used as an abbreviation for Flinders learning Online throughout the paper.

<sup>11</sup> A wiki is a website which allows its users to add, modify or delete its content via a web browser usually using a simplified mark-up language or a rich-text editor. Wikis are powered by wiki software. Most are created collaboratively.

<sup>12</sup> PebblePad is a personal learning space which helps users create records of learning, achievement, and aspiration, and has a reflective structure underpinning all of its core elements. More information is available at: <http://www.pebblepad.com.au/about.asp>.

<sup>13</sup> Adobe Connect is a web conferencing platform used for e learning. More information is available at: <http://www.adobe.com/au/products/adobeconnect.html>.

<sup>14</sup> Skype is a voice-over-Internet Protocol (VoIP) service and software application. It allows users to communicate with peers by voice using a microphone, video by using a webcam, and instant messaging over the Internet. More information is available at: <http://beta.skype.com/en/>.

throw themselves into this movement; there are a number of logistic, pedagogical and professional issues that would need to be addressed” (p. 10).

Authenticity in regard to assessment is a multi-faceted concept which must also be addressed. It is an approach much used by educators today (Rocco, 2007; Lam, Williams et al., 2007; Lyddon et al., 2008; Brown, 2010). According to Mueller (2005) there are several benefits of using an authentic assessment approach. This approach provides a direct measure of a student’s ability to apply knowledge and skills and encourages a constructivist approach to learning where students learn through application. It also gives students considerable freedom to demonstrate what they have learnt without being limited to a particular set answer.

## Principles of authentic assessment

The move towards authentic assessment has taken place because of a realisation that “traditional assessment ... no longer provides (if it ever did!) an adequate and realistic measure of knowledge (and its application) in a fast-changing world” (Lam, Williams et al., 2007:209). However, a recent project undertaken at the Open University “revealed that authentic assessment is not only a difficult notion to define but it is also problematic to collate features within an assessment task that define it as authentic assessment” (Whitelock et al., 2012:3). Likewise, with reference to authenticity in foreign language learning, Gilmore (2007) expresses the opinion that “there is a considerable range of meanings associated with authenticity, and therefore it is little surprise if the term remains ambiguous in most teachers’ minds” (p. 98). Defining authenticity is thus problematic but never the less vital to the development of a plan for authentic language assessment in synchronous online environments.

In recent years many explanations and descriptions of authentic assessment have made reference to it as assessment which focuses on the learning *process* rather than on the product (Lam, Williams et al., 2007; Blake, 2009; Oskoz, 2005; Liang and Creasy, 2004; Leone, Leo et al., 2010). Traditionally the products of language assessment activities have included answers to quiz questions and listening and reading comprehensions and samples of written and spoken texts. If authentic assessment is to focus on the learning process it must not involve students in producing one correct answer e.g. true/false, matching or cloze quiz questions or producing a snapshot of language e.g. short composition or oral presentation in isolation from learning. Alternatively it should engage them in continual production and use of language in communication and collaboration with teachers and peers.

Authentic assessment has been closely linked to dynamic assessment. This approach to assessment incorporates Vygotsky’s theory of cognitive development and in particular the concept of zone of proximal development (ZPD)<sup>15</sup> and mediation. Vygotsky<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> ZPD will be used as an abbreviation for Zone of Proximal development throughout the paper.

<sup>16</sup> More information about Vygotsky’s theories is available from <http://www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html>.

makes it clear that ZPD learning occurs not only in collaboration with an expert, but also in peer interactions (Oskoz, 2005). It is an approach based on learning processes rather than learned products (Oskoz, 2005) and includes the following characteristics:

- Students demonstrating the ability to apply knowledge and skills (Lam, Williams et al., 2007) according to explicitly stated criteria (Gulikers, Bastiaens et al.) in scenarios situated in an actual, or a near replica of a real-world context (Lam, Williams et al., 2007) i.e. tasks involving higher order thinking.<sup>17</sup>
- Opportunities for collaboration with an expert but also in peer interactions (Oskoz 2005).
- Instructional events that describe and promote students' best performances across time and use a range of methods (Liang and Creasy, 2004) allowing students the "freedom to demonstrate what they have learnt without being limited to a particular set answer" (Lam, Williams et al., 2007:209).
- The teacher as a guide, supervising student interactions, providing feedback (Blake, 2009) and using the information collected during observations, discussions, group collaboration and analysis of student work to alter teaching and learning (Liang and Creasy, 2004).

These characteristics will be adopted as the principles of authentic assessment underpinning the plan for authentic language assessment in Modern Greek topics.<sup>18</sup>

Possibilities for authentic assessment in synchronous online language learning environments are enhanced by the ease of communication within this environment. Online technologies facilitate interaction and communication allowing for collaborative learning. Students can receive feedback from their peers and the teacher who have been able to observe their language use during online communication and completion of tasks. It has also been found that "the unique features of the web-based instructional environment open up to the adoption of a more learner-centred pedagogy" (Leone, Leo et al., 2010:110) which further meets the requirements for authentic assessment to allow students the "freedom to demonstrate what they have learnt without being limited to a particular set answer" (Lam, Williams et al., 2007:209).

<sup>17</sup> For more information about tasks involving higher order thinking refer to Strategies for Students with Diverse Talents: World Languages and Bloom's Taxonomy Figure 47 on Page 281 Appendix D: Instructional Strategies from the New Jersey World Languages Curriculum Framework available online at: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/frameworks/worldlanguages/appendd.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> In the Flinders University context, topics are designed to come together in structured combinations to form coherent major and minor sequences and courses. Each topic has a unit value. More information about Modern Greek topics is available on the Flinders University website.

- Undergraduate Topics: <http://www.flinders.edu.au/ehl/language-studies/departmental-sections/modern-greek/undergradaute-topics.cfm>.
- Honors and Post Graduate Study: <http://www.flinders.edu.au/ehl/language-studies/departmental-sections/modern-greek/honours-and-postgraduate-study.cfm>.
- Modern Greek for Teachers: <http://www.flinders.edu.au/ehl/language-studies/departmental-sections/modern-greek/modern-greek-for-teachers.cfm>.

## Case study summary

### *Assessment for learning*

Leone, Leo et al. (2010) describe their use of an online assessment approach based on assessment *for* learning<sup>19</sup> as “ongoing formative and summative assessment for the 4 language skills [...] based on interaction, participation, fluency, vocabulary and grammar appropriateness” (p. 111). The teacher’s role in providing ongoing feedback as part of this assessment process is crucial. The teacher is a guide, supervising student interactions, providing feedback and collecting information about student progress by observation. Chao, Hung et al. (2012) when writing about the design of online synchronous assessments state that “the purposes of assessment are focused on finding ways of improving instruction, designing suitable and feasible learning objectives, and confirming to what extent learning objectives have been reached” (p. 384). This reinforces the authentic assessment approach that instructional events should describe and promote students’ best performances across time in that it promotes the use of a continual feedback process as students move towards meeting the criteria outlined in stated objectives.

Quizzes are usually associated with assessing factual knowledge. However, quizzes are described by Chao, Hung et al. (2012) as a useful tool in synchronous online assessments to “provide immediate feedback and ensure there are no misconceptions or missing conceptions” (p. 385). This is a useful assessment *for* learning strategy and authentic in its approach because it provides opportunities for collaboration with experts and peers when immediate feedback is provided.

### *Interaction and collaboration*

**Text chat** features strongly as an assessment tool in existing synchronous online language classrooms. Assessments described by Leone, Leo et al. (2010) included open questions to be answered in **text chat** within the synchronous online classroom session. The use of **text chat** to share written responses to multimedia contents shared by joint web browsing is also described by Leone, Leo et al. (2010). Yamada (2009) found that **text chat** gave students more grammatical confidence than voice chat and mentioned that **text chat** can be used in assessments for answering open questions from the teacher and for students to help each other if the task is a collaborative one. The synchronous computer-mediated communication software Lyceum developed by the Open University in UK included a written **text chat** facility as a collaborative tool for students completing online tasks in university German language courses (Hampel, 2006).

According to Cunningham, Beers Fägersten et al. (2010) **oral interaction**, which they refer to as the voice channel, within the synchronous online environment was

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<sup>19</sup> Assessment *for* learning is a process by which assessment information is used by teachers to adjust their teaching strategies, and by students to adjust their learning strategies.

found to “add a dimension of closeness and contact between participants, given the paralinguistic information it contains in terms of emotion, pace, sociogeographic background, personality, etc.” (p. 170). **Oral interaction** thus builds relationships within the learning environment and is conducive to the teacher being considered a trusted guide observing and analysing student work and altering teaching and learning accordingly. Synchronous **oral interaction** thus facilitates authentic assessment of student learning.

The whiteboard within the synchronous online environment described by Cunningham, Beers Fägersten et al. (2010) provided a “collaborative way of working that is not possible in face-to-face teaching” (p. 173). It can be used as a stimulus for synchronous **oral interaction** and provide scaffolding to guide **oral interaction** when it is used to display vocabulary and patterns of speech.

The integrated model of synchronous cyber assessment and blended learning environment for foreign language learners described by Leone, Leo et al. (2010) includes collaborative **oral interaction** tasks. These were sometimes based on live authentic contents shared in the synchronous web conferencing sessions by using joint web browsing.<sup>20</sup>

Synchronous assignments involving **oral interaction** based on Bloom’s four dimensions of knowledge taxonomy<sup>21</sup> are one of the four online synchronous assessment methods identified by Chao, Hung et al. (2012). They describe assignments involving **oral interaction** as being “particularly suited to assessing spontaneous reaction, presentation skills and understanding the depth of learners’ understanding” (Chao, Hung et al., 2012:387). Whilst Chao, Hung et al. (2012) are not writing specifically about online language learning environments, this approach is applicable to maximising **oral interaction** based on real world situations (e.g. role play scenarios).

**Breakout rooms** are a functionality provided by most synchronous online classrooms. They provide opportunities for synchronous written and spoken communication in small groups away from the central online environment. Leone, Leo et al. (2010) describe the use of **breakout rooms** (referred to by them as sub cyber classrooms) for small group activities and Chao, Hung et al. (2012) describe the use of **breakout rooms** for synchronous practice assignments (formative assessments) in which instructors designed a series of scenarios in advance and students met in synchronous **breakout rooms** to discuss these scenarios and complete the tasks in communication and collaboration with each other. Instructors could enter the **breakout rooms** to monitor student interactions and gather useful information about student progress. According to Chao, Hung et al. (2012) synchronous written assignments in **breakout rooms** can involve students in answering questions, summarising topics or responding to authentic online resources. These written responses could be completed collaboratively

<sup>20</sup> In Adobe Connect, joint web browsing is accessed using the **Share my Screen functionality**.

<sup>21</sup> More information about Bloom’s four dimensions of knowledge taxonomy is available from Page 3 of <http://www.celt.iastate.edu/pdfs-docs/teaching/RevisedBloomsHandout.pdf>.

by small groups of students working together in the **breakout room** or by individuals working alone in the online space. Peer assessment is easily facilitated in this environment. For example “an instructor can ask learners to write a summary of the topic, and send it to a peer who then critiques the summary” (Chao, Hung et al., 2012:386).

### ***Authentic contents***

Joint web browsing is a powerful tool for sharing authentic contents in synchronous online classrooms (Leone, Leo et al., 2010). Whilst Leone, Leo et al. (2010) did experience some problems associated with the use of authentic materials as some students found them difficult to comprehend, it was found that the students “appreciated the experience [referred to by them as ICT integration] as challenging and enriching, ***a different way of learning***” (p. 2). Hampel’s framework for the development of tasks in a synchronous online environment used for language learning and teaching provides examples of tasks “designed around a variety of outcomes which are embedded within different scenarios, providing participants with roles” (p. 113). These include “a panel discussion about town planning developments in an East German spa; a meeting of newspaper editors deciding on a page 1 story; an interview with a film director; organising an event around environmental issues; or putting together an exhibition about German history” (Hampel, 2006:113). These tasks reflect authentic assessment principles by asking students to demonstrate their ability to apply knowledge and skills in scenarios situated in an actual, or a near replica of a real-world context. These tasks involve higher order thinking.<sup>22</sup>

## **Synchronous technology in current Modern Greek topics**

In 2012, the Flinders University model of Modern Greek language teaching moved towards creating online language learning communities in which students communicate and collaborate with each other and with the teachers to maximise their learning. Four first and second year language topics were offered online to students at Flinders University and Adelaide University in South Australia and to students at Charles Darwin University in the Northern Territory. Flinders University Modern Greek topics will be introduced to Griffith University (Queensland) in the near future and the delivery of these topics to New Zealand is also currently being negotiated.

The Modern Greek topics delivered in 2012 included a range of asynchronous assessment activities to assess reading, writing, listening and speaking. Examples were online quizzes and writing assignments to be written and submitted online, speaking tasks in which students were asked to upload a voice recording and listening and reading activities which tested the students’ ability to identify key ideas. The current

<sup>22</sup> For more information about assessment and higher order thinking refer to Strategies for Students with Diverse Talents: World Languages and Bloom’s Taxonomy, Figure 47 on page 281 Appendix D: Instructional Strategies from the New Jersey World Languages Curriculum Framework available online at: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/frameworks/worldlanguages/appendd.pdf>.

assessment approach was limited to synchronous interaction via video conferences and occasional phone conversations. According to Wang and Chen (2009), synchronous oral and visual interaction is a crucial component in online language learning and fostering real-time synchronous interaction is an important principle in distance language teaching. This recommendation needs to be addressed when planning future assessment tasks.

The assessment activities included in the 2012 Modern Greek topics provided some level of authenticity as they were associated with stated learning objectives and many of them engaged students in “social processes that are present in real-life contexts” (Gulikers, Bastiaens et al., 2004:8). However, authentic assessment involves more than aligning assessment tasks with learning objectives which reflect real world contexts. The need for future assessment tasks in Modern Greek topics to adopt a new assessment approach is evident and an approach based on the principles of authentic assessment is supported by the research cited above. To meet the requirements of students studying online an approach which adopts identified principles of authentic assessment and involves students in synchronous (as well as asynchronous) assessment tasks will be proposed and trialled. A plan for authentic language assessment in higher education synchronous online environments will be proposed.

The Modern Greek topics prepared for online delivery in 2012 did not include synchronous assessment within the FLO topic spaces. However, students from Charles Darwin University in Darwin were assessed via video-conferencing and informal assessments took place during these weekly synchronous sessions with the lecturer observing student oral interaction, providing feedback and adjusting teaching accordingly. Within this synchronous environment students were also asked to write sentences and paragraphs in Modern Greek and read what they had written. In these situations the lecturer would occasionally ask students to spell words to make sure what they had written was accurate. An attempt was made for students to share handwritten texts via the video conference camera but the text was not readable by the lecturer due to the poor quality of the video. Oral presentations were delivered by students and assessed during video-conferencing sessions. On one occasion a student who was not one of the Darwin distance students completed an oral presentation over the phone and was provided with immediate feedback.

## **A plan for synchronous authentic language assessment**

FLO Live is synchronous, web-based communication software (Adobe Connect) that allows lecturers and students at Flinders University to collaborate with one another by using voice-over-internet (VoIP) audio. Participants can share their computer screens, documents and an online whiteboard. They can browse a website together, present slides and participate in text chat. There are breakout pods available for individual work and small group collaboration separate from the main online classroom. The synchronous online communication tools available in FLO Live provide the functionality

to support authentic assessment in Modern Greek language topics. The plan outlined below will apply the case study findings and the identified principles of authentic assessment to propose a plan for authentic language assessment in the synchronous online environment of FLO Live. It is important to remember at this stage that universities use a range of different synchronous web-based communication software programs. However, the suggested actions are not specific to FLO Live (Adobe Connect) and the functionality available within different synchronous online environments<sup>23</sup> is likely to be very similar even though the terminology used to refer to it may be different.<sup>24</sup>

Authentic language assessment in higher education synchronous online environments is a process engaging students in continual production and use of language in communication and collaboration with teachers and peers. The plan below describes the actions which are part of this process and the FLO Live functionality to support each action. Assessment criteria and tasks specific to each Modern Greek language topic should be developed in the future as each topic is reviewed.

<i>Action</i>	<i>FLO Live functionality (Bold text indicates terminology used within FLO Live classroom)</i>
Share assessment criteria with students at the beginning of the topic.	<b>Share my screen</b> or <b>Share a document</b> to share *supported file types <b>Connect audio</b> to enable oral interaction
Explain higher order thinking tasks (**formative and summative assessment) based on real world scenarios which must be completed to fulfil assessment requirements of the topic.	<b>Share my screen</b> or <b>Share a document</b> to share *supported file types <b>Connect audio</b> to enable oral interaction
Provide opportunities for guided interaction and collaboration (listening, speaking, reading and writing) between students, peers and lecturers (**formative assessment).	<b>Share a document</b> to share *supported file types as a listening, speaking, reading or writing stimulus <b>Share the Whiteboard</b> to provide a collaborative reading and writing space <b>Text chat</b> <b>Connect audio</b> to enable speaking and listening
Provide opportunities for small group speaking and writing practice (**formative assessment) and presentation (**summative assessment).	<b>Break out pods</b> with small groups assigned to each pod <b>Text chat</b> <b>Connect audio</b> to enable oral interaction <b>Share my screen</b> to share *supported file types
Provide opportunities for small group reading and listening practice (**formative assessment) and presentation (**summative assessment).	<b>Break out pods</b> with small groups assigned to each pod <b>Text chat</b> <b>Connect audio</b> to enable speaking and listening <b>Share a document</b> to share *supported file types

<sup>23</sup> A useful reference for comparing web conferencing software is available online at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison\\_of\\_web\\_conferencing\\_software](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_web_conferencing_software) accessed on November 27th 2012.

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Breakout pods in Adobe Connect are referred to as sub cyber classrooms by Leone, Leo et al., 2010.

(continued)

<i>Action</i>	<i>FLO Live functionality (Bold text indicates terminology used within FLO Live classroom)</i>
Provide opportunities for individual lecturer-student interaction e.g. individual tuition, feedback or **summative assessment of listening and speaking.	<b>Break out pods</b> assigned to individual students so that the lecturer can enter the pod and <b>connect audio</b> to enable oral interaction with that student only <b>Share a document</b> to share *supported file types
Share authentic content e.g. websites and online multimedia resources and facilitate written and oral responses.	<b>Share my screen</b> to share a <b>Web Link</b> open in a web browser such as Internet Explorer or Firefox <b>Text chat</b> to enable written responses <b>Connect audio</b> to enable oral responses
Provide live and immediate feedback to students regarding their understanding of a specific concept e.g. grammar.	<b>Text chat</b> <b>Connect audio</b> to enable oral interaction <b>File share</b> to enable students to download and complete a task (e.g. quiz) <b>Share document</b> to share *supported file types
Record observations of student progress (**formative assessment).	<b>Record meeting</b>

\*File types supported by Adobe Connect using the **Share a document** functionality are image files (JPG PNG), Flash movie files (SWF), PowerPoint files (PPT PPTX), PDF files (PDF), Flash video files (FLV), MP3 audio files (MP3), Zip files (ZIP).

\*\*Whilst the terminology formative and summative assessment is used within this table it is not recommended that students be encouraged to distinguish between the two. Assessment should be promoted as a continual process and the completion of all tasks as equally important.

## Conclusion

The functionality provided by synchronous online environments has the potential to greatly enhance opportunities for authentic online language assessments based on continual engagement and participation in listening, speaking, reading and writing activities. With careful planning, taking into account topic objectives and associated assessment criteria, Modern Greek topics at Flinders University will incorporate a range of resources and activities within synchronous online tasks to support students in this constructivist learning process. Lecturers and professional staff will work together to design and implement authentic assessment processes in which students are provided with opportunities for synchronous communication and collaboration. Students will be involved in learning through applying their knowledge and using their acquired language skills to communicate in Modern Greek. We believe that by observing student interactions and providing ongoing feedback within a supported online environment lecturers will be able adjust teaching and learning accordingly. Students will be guided towards a high level of competency as communicators in Modern Greek by an assessment process which uses a range of methods and synchronous technologies to provide

a direct and ongoing measure of each student's ability. This paper makes recommendations regarding basic FLO Live functionality and actions which are part of the authentic assessment process. Further research regarding specific and more advanced functionalities will be needed to determine their usefulness in further supporting this process.

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