

James
Arthurs
BALEAP PIM
Astana,
Kazakhstan
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How can the EAP viva support the
assessment of student research when AI
and apps make assessment of writing
problematic?

***Vivas and oral examinations:
PhD, professional certification,
and pre-university assessment***



Bassil, K. (2023). Stress-in-a-dish: modeling the neurobiology of glucocorticoids in vitro, investigating stress susceptibility, and highlighting ethical implications. [Doctoral Thesis, Streamed Defence, Maastricht University. Video. You Tube].

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZYgHa2GQP0&t=2344s>

Excerpt (less than 1 minute) showing question and answer.)

PhD Viva Voce (Bassil, 2023)



American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery. (n.d.). Mock Oral Examination <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3zGzELUiBI>

Excerpt (50 secs.) showing questions and answers.

Mock Oral Examination

(American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery, n.d.)



Vzmakh Private School (n.d.) Geometry Oral Examination 7th and 8th
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kp8D3bE80IA>

Geometry Oral Examination

(Vzmakh Private School, n.d.)



IB the International School Dusseldorf. (n.d.). Reflection Process: the Viva Voce. [Video]. You Tube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3EiEgH4oRI>

Reflection Process: the Viva Voce

(IB International School Dusseldorf, n.d.)



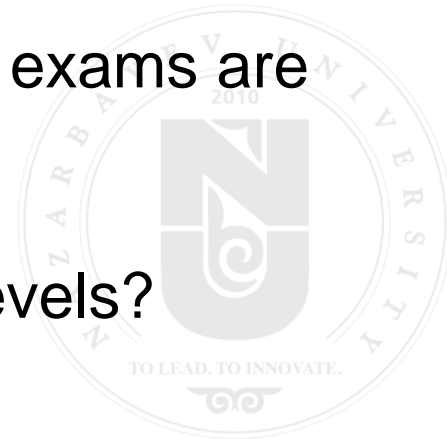
Oral examinations and vivas: current use in assessment



The use of vivas in assessment: infrequent and problematic?

- “currently, oral examinations are infrequently used for student assessment outside of language classes”
- many instructors feel that oral exams are time-consuming
- grading subjective?
- likely to raise student stress levels?

(Hazen, 2020)



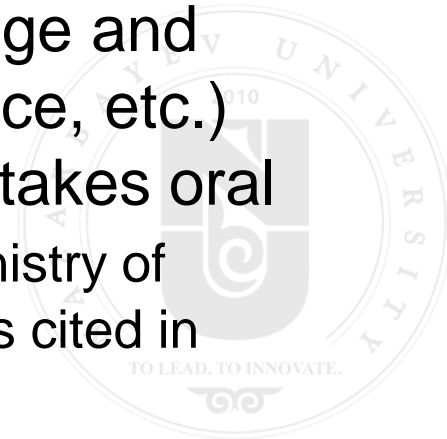
The use of vivas in assessment: professional examinations

- the viva voce or oral examination has played a central role in the assessment of learning outcomes in medical studies and social sciences
- for health professionals it is used to test clinical reasoning and decision making.

Dobson (2018)

Use of oral tests in assessment: widespread: pre-university level

- found in secondary school examinations in education systems around the world
- in the Norwegian school context, learning outcomes (Norwegian language and literature, mathematics, science, etc.) assessed through final high stakes oral exams at ages 15 and 18 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019a, as cited in Skovholt et al., 2021)



The use of vivas in assessment: worthwhile outcomes

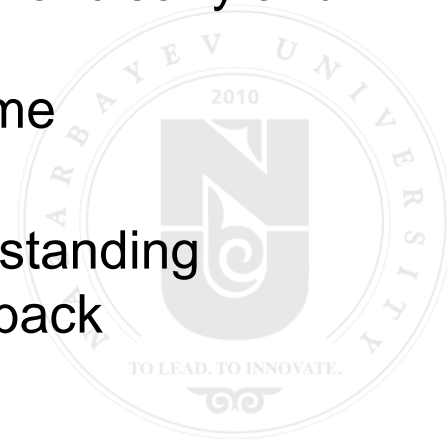
Oral exams appear to encourage students

- to deeply engage with the course material
- to learn to express technical material clearly and concisely
- to apply their knowledge in real-time

They also allow the instructor

- to see the student's level of understanding
- to give and receive real-time feedback

(Boedigheimer et al., 2015)



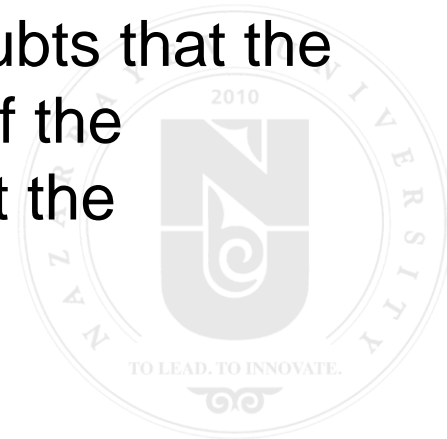
Maintaining integrity of research when written submissions may be suspect because of cheating or AI-generated text: a new role for vivas?



Using the viva to check on written work

- during the viva the examiners should seek to establish whetherthe thesis is genuinely the work of the candidate
- if the examiners have any doubts that the thesis is genuinely the work of the candidate they should contact the College Registry

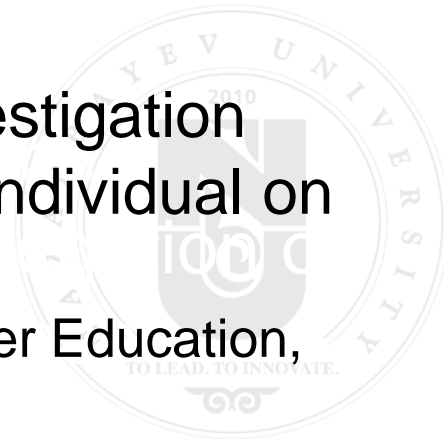
(Imperial College London, 2017)



How to use a viva when dealing with suspected cheating in a written paper

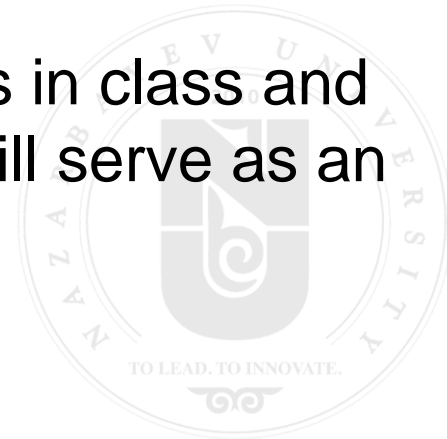
- use an additional viva explicitly noted to be an examination of misconduct
- gather evidence but allow the student to defend their work
- distinct from a separate oral investigation which could cross-examine the individual on authorship

(The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2022)



Using a viva when plagiarism is suspected

- hold random viva voce sessions that require students to defend and further explain, if necessary, what they have written
 - if clearly advertised to students in class and in course documentation this will serve as an effective deterrent to cheating
- (Cortinhas & Deak, 2023)



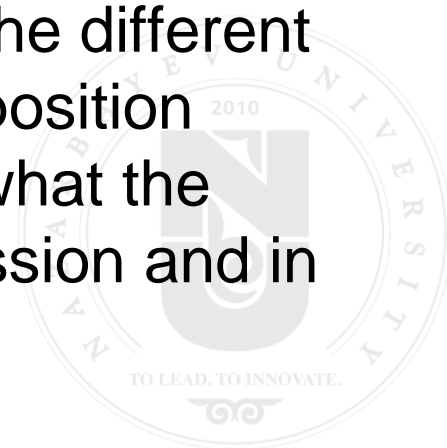
How vivas can counteract cheating

- on a more practical note, oral exams provide a format in which cheating is discouraged
(Burke-Smalley, 2014)
- – a point of increasing significance in the context of larger class sizes and new technologies for sharing information, which make cheating easier.
(Hazen, 2020)



Conclusions: Assessing speaking and writing: the EAP research paper

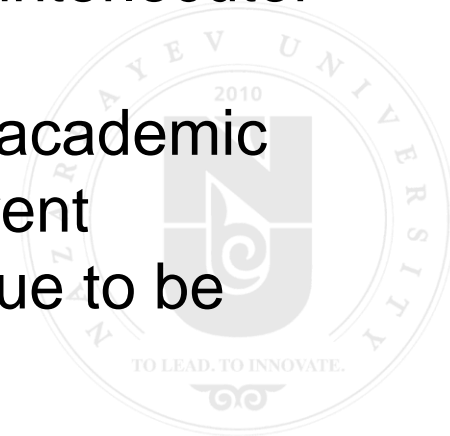
- monitor work in regular tutorials as the student is writing the paper
- maintain a synoptic view at the different stages of planning and composition
- does what is written fit with what the student can explain in discussion and in response to questions?



Conclusions 2

Use the EAP viva to assess the student's ability

- to speak clearly about a prepared topic
- to engage positively with an interlocutor
- The student's ability to read academic material and to write a coherent academic paper must continue to be assessed and valued

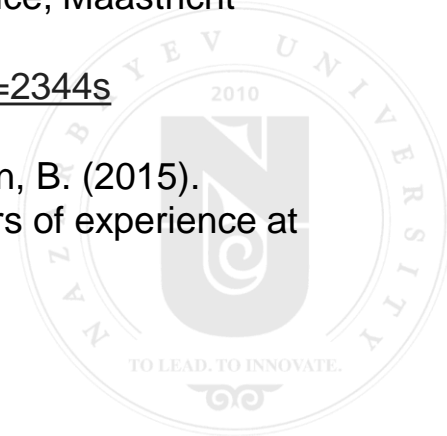


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Thank you.

Questions?

Comments?

