Assessment futures: the 'final frontier' for UK Higher Education – issues and possibilities.

Prof Peter Hartley

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# A quick intro: Peter Hartley

Now into my 3rd career:

- Career 1: lecturer. Academic in Communication Studies – from lecturer to department head to Professor of Communication..
- Career 2: educational developer. National Teaching Fellow. Professor of Education Development.
- Career 3: educational consultant. Visiting Professor at Edge Hill. External examiner and writer. Working/ed on: project evaluation, learning spaces, assessment strategies etc.

Advancing Practice in Academic Development

Edited by David Baume and Celia Popovic

https://www.routledge.com/products/9781138854710

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION
Rethinking your professional practice for the post-digital age
Second Edition
Peter Hartley and Peter Chatterton

http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415640282/

UNIVERSITIES INTO THE 21ST CENTURY
Learning Development in Higher Education
Peter Hartley, John Hilsdon, Christine Keenan, Sandra Sinfield and Michelle Verity

https://he.palgrave.com/page/detail/Learning-Development-in-Higher-Education/?K=9780230241480

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION
Peter Hartley   Second Edition

3rd edition, in development
with Sue Beckingham
Planned for 2019

Chapter with Ruth Whitfield in:

SEDA
SEDA Special 39

Supporting programme leaders and programme leadership
Edited by: Jenny Lawrence and Sam Ellis
2018 ISBN: 978-1-902435-61-9
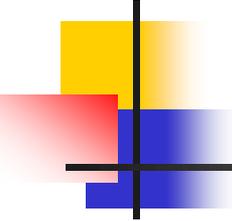
Personal assessment history.

- Practical innovation as lecturer, course leader.
- Writing regulations and strategies.
- E-portfolio implementation.
- Research (e.g. Higgins et al).
- Developing and establishing computer-aided assessment facility. (Jisc ITS4SEA project).
- Audio feedback. (Jisc ASEL project)
- PASS project (HEA NTFS project).
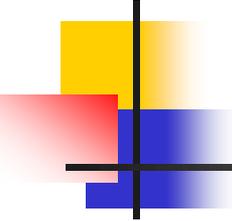
This session

- Why worry? Why change?
- Developments in assessment practice.
- A new framework for your consideration.

Leading into:

- Tomorrow's workshop on programme assessment looking at detailed issues and specific approaches.
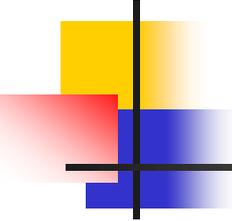
Final frontier? Why worry? Some good news to start ..

- From a purely educational point of view, learners have never had it so good …
  in terms of:
  - Access to learning and research resources.
  - Access to and use of technology.
  - Guidance and support.
  - Specific clarification of assessment criteria and assessment requirements/conventions.
  - Professionalism of teaching and support staff.

Final frontier?
We live in interesting times …

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Colleges hit by grade inflation row as EVERYONE gets a top degree on dozens of university courses

- More than 50 university courses across UK awarded students a First or 2:1
- Number achieving 2:1 or above has leapt over five years at some institutions
- Critics say grades have been pushed up as a 'marketing ploy'
- Universities said the rises reflected improvements in A-level grades

By JONATHAN PETRE FOR THE MAIL ON SUNDAY
PUBLISHED: 22:01, 12 October 2013 | UPDATED: 22:01, 12 October 2013

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2456254/Dozens-British-degree-courses-single-student-getting-grades.html

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Education ▶ Schools Teachers Universities Students

Higher education

22 October 2018

UK universities face grade inflation crackdown

Ministers move to address concerns over growing number of first-class degrees
🕐 12:01 AM

And last month's Guardian …
22/10/18
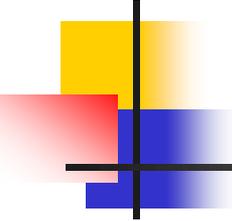
The culture of university-bashing?

- Universities have never previously received the current level of media (trad and social) and public scrutiny.

- This will continue, given developments such as OfS.

And the latest 'moral panic'

Piers Morgan, 53, ranted on Good Morning Britain on Tuesday after reading the news that Leeds Trinity University's journalism department has ordered lecturers to stop using capital letters to avoid upsetting students. Pictured: Piers (left) with co-host Susanna Reid on GMB

'The world has gone nuts!' Piers Morgan blasts university bosses who told lecturers not to use capital letters when setting students work to avoid upsetting them (and GMB viewers agree)

- **Leeds Trinity University journalism department advised lecturers on the move**
- **Piers Morgan, 53, has criticised the news, saying it shows 'the world's gone nuts'**
- **He accused the students of not living in the 'real world' by being offended**

By MOLLY ROSE PIKE FOR MAILONLINE
PUBLISHED: 11:06, 20 November 2018 | UPDATED: 12:33, 20 November 2018

Piers Morgan vented his fury over a university issuing instructions to lecturers to avoid using capital letters when assigning work to students - for fear of upsetting them.

The memo sent out to staff at Leeds Trinity journalism department suggested that using uppercase letters may 'scare them into failure', according to the **Express**.

Piers, 53, was baffled when he read out the news on ITV's Good Morning Britain on Tuesday, declaring that 'the world's gone nuts' and accused students of not living in the 'real world'.

GMB viewers agreed with the presenter's take on the move, with one tweeting: 'You couldn't make it up!'

ADVERTISING

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And note the language of the public debate …

Universities fix results in 'race for firsts'

University examination results are being manipulated to increase the number of first– class degrees awarded, a study suggests.

Degree classifications: Mathematics consistently awards the highest proportion of top grades, reaching an unprecedented 30 per cent in 2012.   Photo: Getty

Prof John Thornes, from Birmingham University, who carried out the study, analysed how degree classifications were calculated and found the rules were often bent to boost numbers. He said that using degree levels as a "marketing ploy" in this way could eventually lead to the top awards becoming meaningless.

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/10180093/Universities-fix-results-in-race-for-firsts.html

British universities bend their rules to award more firsts
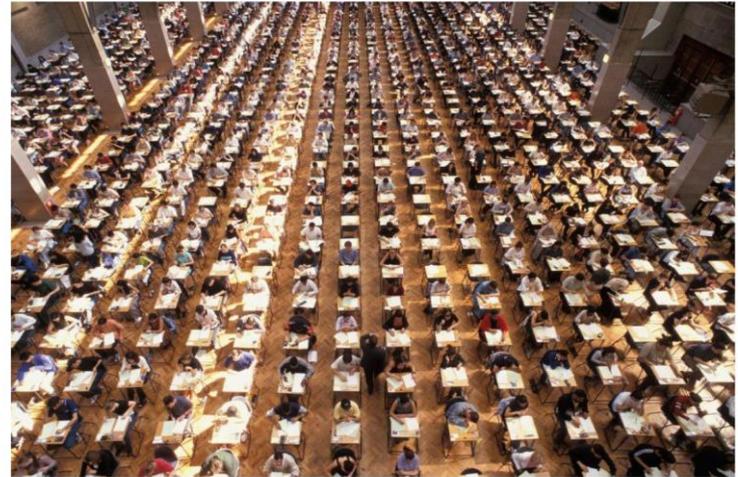
The number of first-class and 2:1 degrees awarded has soared in recent years (Charlie Newham)

https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/british-universities-bend-their-rules-to-award-more-firsts-06kv3r2mdpv

How much change already in our assessment practices?

Then	**Now (and potential)**
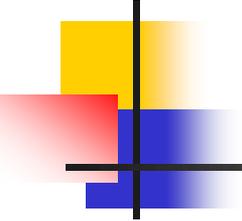
- Emphasis on judgement.
- Assessment criteria largely 'hidden' from students.
- Dominant types: examination and written assignment.
- Assessment feedback typically written comments.
- Termly progress reviews – could discuss individuals.
- Little scholarly attention.
- Marks usually in range: 30-75.

Then and Now compared … for assessment practices.
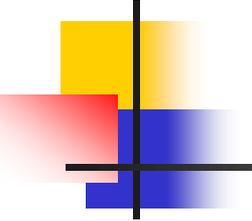
Then	Now (and potential)
- Emphasis on judgment.	- Growing focus re AfL/development.
- Assessment criteria largely 'hidden' from students.	- Assessment criteria typically published (but are they understood?)
- Dominant types: examination and written assignment.	- 2 types still dominant; many more techniques available (e.g. online).
- Assessment feedback typically written comments.	- Assessment feedback typically written (other media available)
- Termly progress reviews – could discuss individuals.	- Semester assessment board – focus on procedure?
- Little scholarly attention.	- Growing research/evaluation.
- Marks usually in range: 30-75.	- Marks can now range to 100.
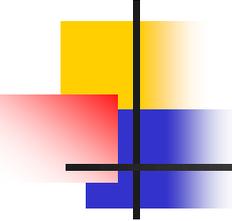
And so?

- Are our assessment policies and practices suitably robust and 'future-proof'?

What did we learn from the quiz? Reasons to be worried #1

- We tend to take for granted basic features of the assessment system (which actually date back centuries). Still fit for purpose?

- Some characteristics of assessment are interpreted very differently.

- Significant variations in policies and practices between institutions.

- Significant variations between disciplines.

- Significant variations between assessors.
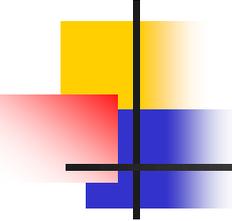
A key text

- *The universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* by Hastings Rashdall, 1895, Vol. 2 Part 1. page 262. Oxford : Clarendon Press.
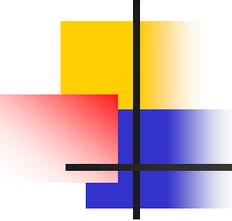
A key text

- *The universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* by Hastings Rashdall, 1895, Vol. 2 Part 1. page 262. Oxford : Clarendon Press

- Roman Catholic University of Louvain, 1441.
  - First class - *Rigorosi* (Honour-men).
  - Second *Transibiles* (Pass-men).
  - Third *Gratiosi* (Charity-passes).
  - "A fourth class, not publicly announced, contained the names of those who could not be passed on any terms".
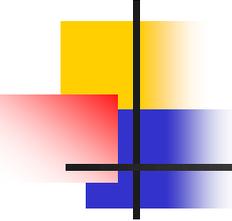
And a bit more history

- "Since 1785, when one professor at Yale wrote in his notebook that 58 of his seniors were Optimi, second Optimi, Inferiores and Pejores, school wasn't the same again."

    - From a discussion of different grading systems across the world at: https://www.mastersportal.com/articles/2291/8-university-grading-systems-around-the-world-that-may-or-may-not-be-weird.html
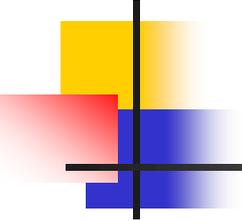
ARE WE 'STUCK' IN OUR PERCEPTIONS/ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT ASSESSMENT?

The 'stickiness' of perception: what do you see?
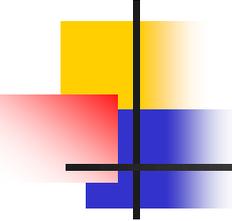
Why worry #2

- What is assessment for?

What is assessment for? What are its functions?
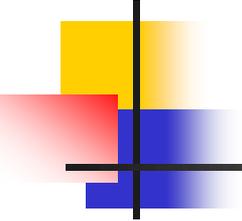
From David Carless (2015)

A. 'support student learning'
B. 'judge quality of student achievement'
C. 'accountability'

From Gibbs (1999)

A. 'capturing student time'
B. 'generating student activity'
C. 'providing feedback'
D. 'students internalise standards'
E. 'generating marks'
F. 'evidence for others'
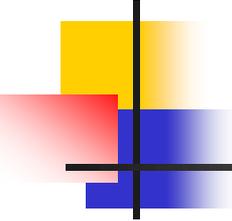
Assessment literacy means …?

Smith et al (2013)*

- 'students understanding of rules'
- 'use of assessment to further their learning'
- 'ability to work within the guidelines/standards'

> * From Carless 2015 who adds: understanding attribution and plagiarism

Price et al (2012)*

- 'appreciation of relationship – assessment and learning'
- 'conceptual understanding of assessment'
- 'understanding assessment criteria'
- 'skills re peer/self-assessment
- 'familiarity with techniques'
- 'ability to select/apply appropriate task approaches
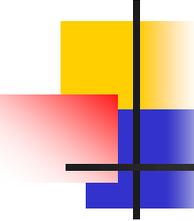
Are these definitions sufficient?
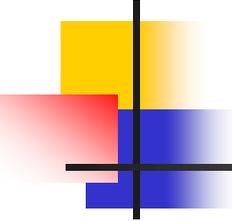
The big question?

- Do students learn sufficiently from their assessment experience?

OR

- Do students predominantly learn the 'algorithms for degree success'?
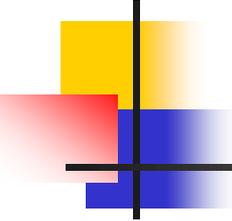
The big question?

- Do students learn sufficiently from their assessment experience?

- As a result of their assessment and feedback experience, can/do they **self-evaluate** the qualities they may need for their future professional development?

Why worry #3: changing contexts.

The Age of Average—a cultural era stretching from Quetelet's invention of social physics in the 1840s until today—can be characterized by two assumptions unconsciously shared by almost every member of society: Quetelet's idea of the average man and Galton's idea of rank. We have all come to believe, like Quetelet, that the average is a reliable index of normality, particularly when it comes to physical health, mental health, personality, and economic status. We have also come to believe that an individual's rank on narrow metrics of achievement can be used to judge their talent. These two ideas serve as the organizing principles behind our current system of education, the vast majority of hiring practices, and most employee performance evaluation systems worldwide.

The
End of
Average

How to Succeed in a World
that Values Sameness
—
Todd Rose

'Transforms our understanding of who we
are and what's important' SETH GODIN
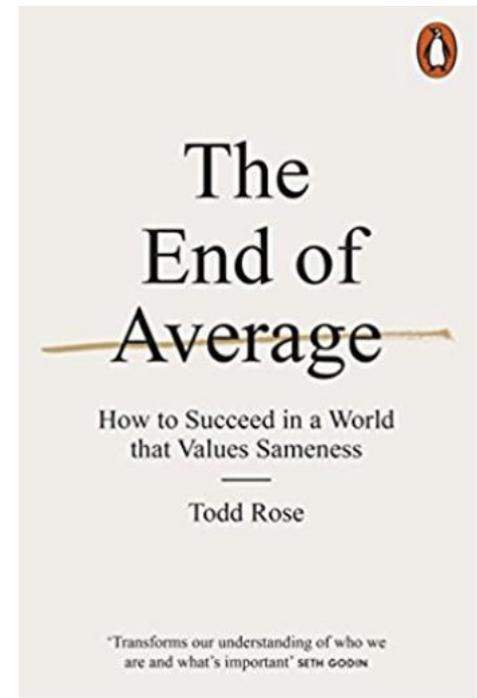
For an introduction to his ideas, see the
TED talk at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4eBmyttcfU4

'Talent is always jagged.'
Todd Rose, p. 89

Which woman is smarter? According to the WAIS, they are equally intelligent—each has an IQ of 103—and each is close to average intelligence, defined as an IQ of 100. If we were tasked with hiring the smartest candidate for a job, we might rate each woman equally. Yet each of these women clearly possesses different mental strengths and weaknesses, and if the goal is to understand

JAGGED PROFILES FOR INTELLIGENCE
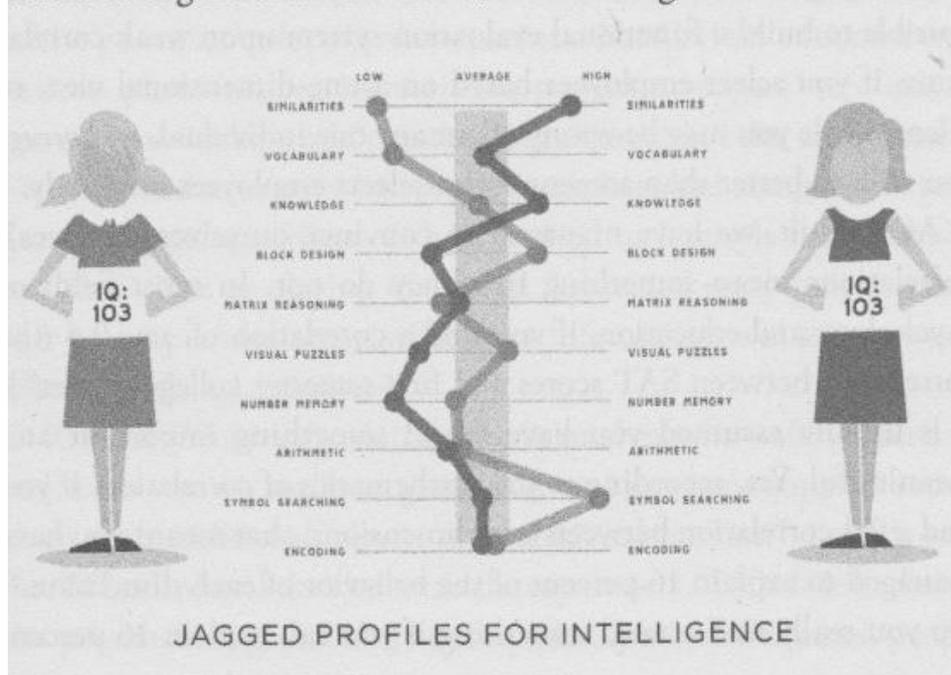
Why worry #4:
The robots are coming?

IPPR Commission on Economic Justice

Managing Automation

Employment, inequality and ethics in the digital age

Discussion Paper

Mathew Lawrence, Carys Roberts and **Loren King**

FIGURE 1.6

For 60 per cent of all occupations, at least 30 per cent of activities can be technically automated

Proportion of activities within an existing occupation that can be technically automated with existing technology, US

5% of occupations consist of activities that are 100% automatable

About 60% of occupations have at least 30% of the activities that are automatable

Example occupations:
- Sewing machine operators, graders and sorters of agricultural products
- Stock clerks, travel agents and watch repairers
- Chemical technicians, nursing assistants and web developers
- Fashion designers, chief executives and statisticians
- Psychiatrists and legislators

Technical automation potential (%): 100, >90, >80, >70, <60, <50, <40, <30, <20, <10, <0

Share of roles (%) 100% = 820 roles

Source: McKinsey 2017

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And the HE response could/should be?

ROBOT-PROOF

HIGHER EDUCATION
IN THE AGE OF
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

JOSEPH E. AOUN
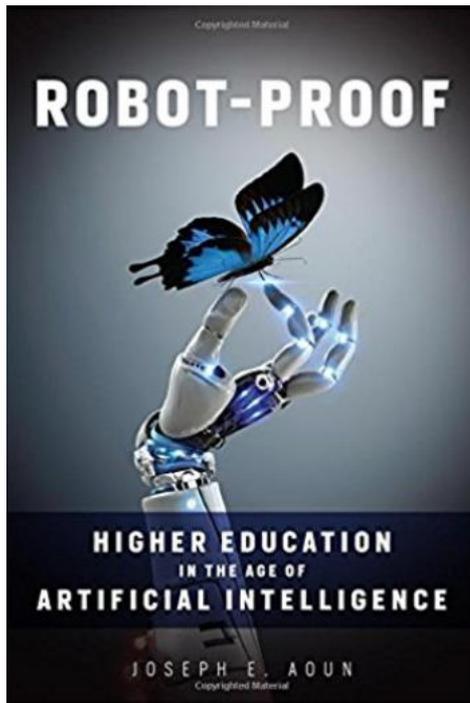
of tomorrow. The second side of humanics, therefore, is not a set of content areas but rather a set of *cognitive capacities*. These are higher-order mental skills—mindsets and ways of thinking about the world. The first is *systems thinking*, the ability to view an enterprise, machine, or subject holistically, making connections between its different functions in an integrative way. The second is *entrepreneurship*, which applies the creative mindset to the economic and often social sphere. The third is *cultural agility*, which teaches students how to operate deftly in varied global environments and to see situations through different, even conflicting, cultural lenses. The fourth capacity is that old chestnut of liberal arts programs, *critical thinking*, which instills the habit of disciplined, rational analysis and judgment.

Can you recommend the future-proof job or 'career'?
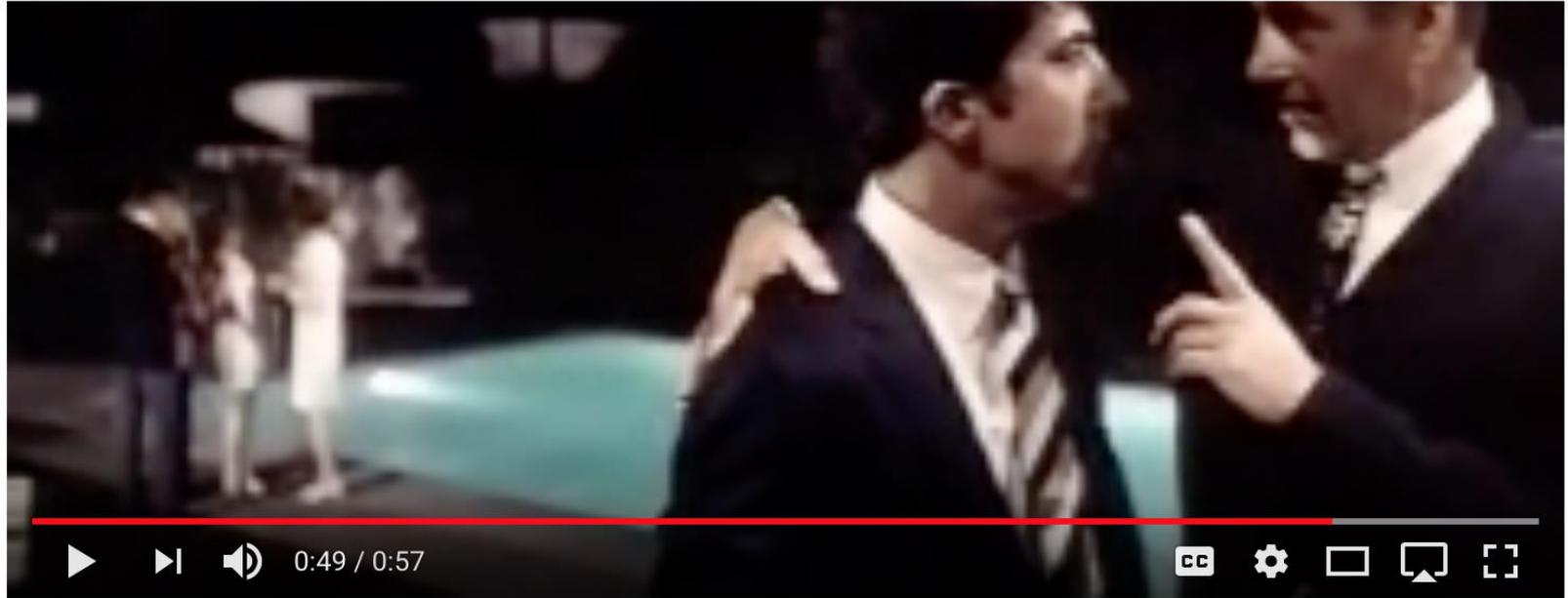
The Graduate "One Word: Plastics"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSxihhBzCjk
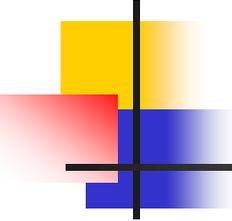
Reasons to be cheerful: new inspirations

- Significant initiatives:
    - JISC Assessment and Feedback Programme
    - AdvanceHE/HEA projects and publications
    - Scottish Enhancement Themes
    - CETLs (ASKe and AfL)

- Growth in research and publications
    - e.g. Sue Bloxham, David Boud, David Carless, Nancy Falchikov, Dai Hounsell, David Nicol, Margaret Price, David Sadler et al

Framework example:
A Marked Improvement - HEA

A Marked Improvement

Publication Date: 24-10-2012

Download this PDF (2.11MB)

A Marked Improvement has been developed by a group of experts, working with the HEA to provide a strong rationale for transforming assessment in higher education. It includes an assessment review tool, offering a practical method to take stock of current practice and look to a targeted approach to strategic change. The publication also includes further resources for staff, which can be used to support changes to assessment policy and practice.

https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resource/marked-improvement

THE NEW HEA FRAMEWORK

The framework provides a clear structure and process to rethink and reframe assessment policy and practice.

This framework has been designed to engage and support a process of enquiry-based and evidence-informed change in practice and policy

Find the Transforming Assessment Framework along with toolkits and resources here:

https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/frameworks-toolkits/frameworks
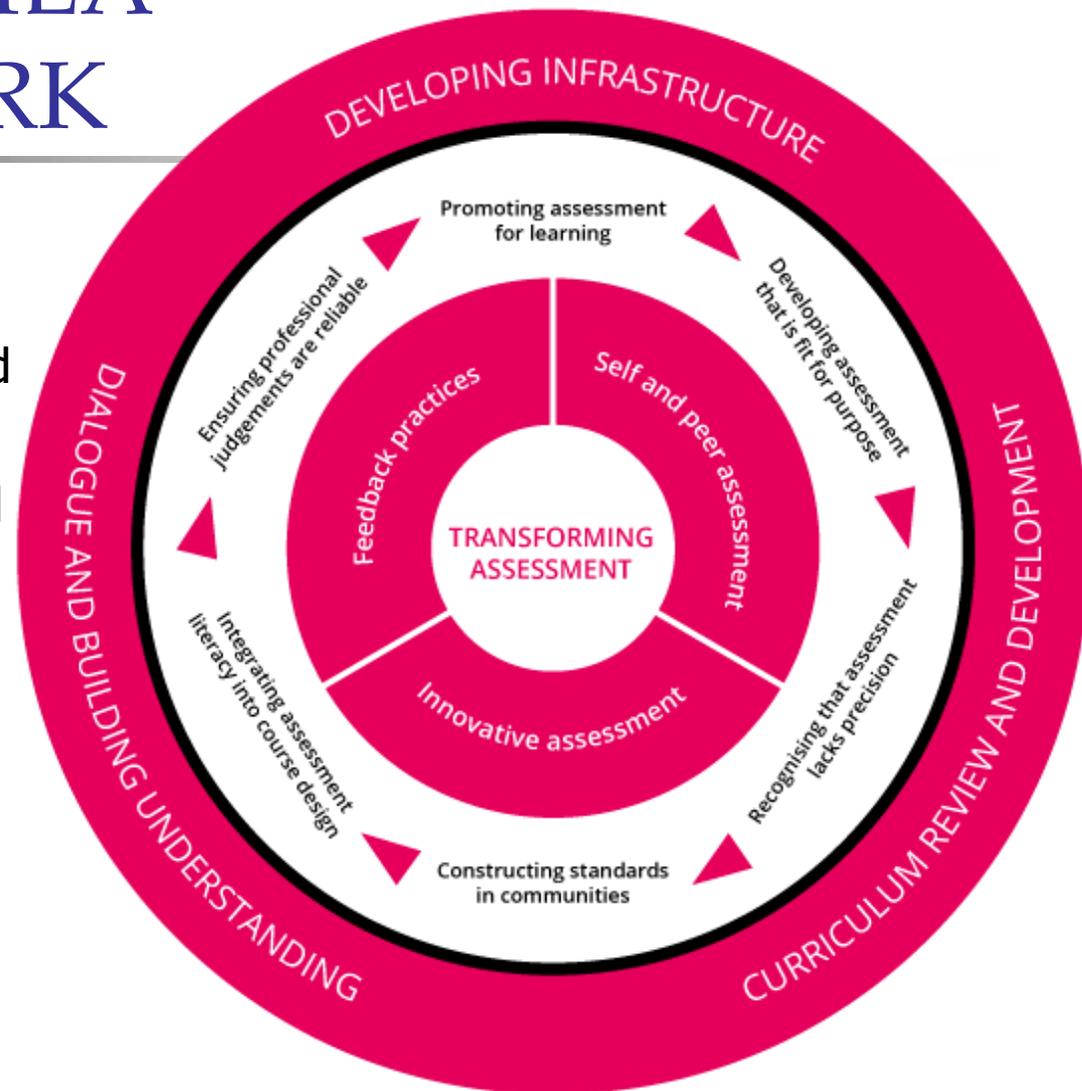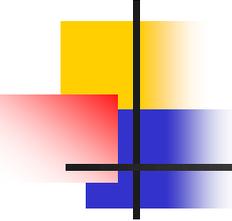
HEA Framework – 6 tenets

1. **Promoting assessment for learning** – *moving beyond achievement of learning outcomes onto demonstration of higher order learning and integration of knowledge*

2. **Ensuring assessment is fit for purpose** – *achievement of programme outcomes through a variety of routes reflecting ability at the end of a programme not accumulation of marks*

3. **Recognising that as an exercise assessment lacks precision** – *cannot set out precisely all meaningful learning or assessment outcomes*

4. **Constructing standards in and through communities** – *developing standards within the discourse and practices (WTP) of the appropriate disciplines and professions.*

5. **Integrating assessment literacy into course design** – *encouraging an active educational community in which students are contributing partners*

6. **Ensuring professional judgements are reliable** – *sharing and demonstrating professional judgements regarding assessment standards is the prime responsibility of discipline or subject communities*

Higher Education Academy

TRANSFORMING TEACHING
INSPIRING LEARNING
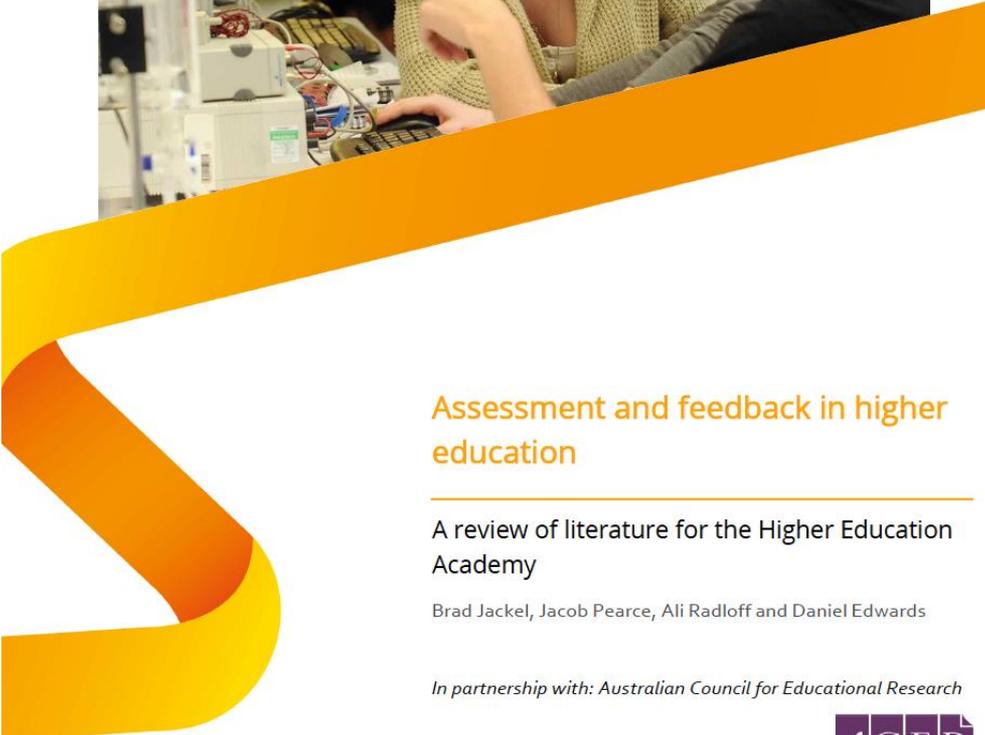
Assessment and feedback in higher education

A review of literature for the Higher Education Academy

Brad Jackel, Jacob Pearce, Ali Radloff and Daniel Edwards

In partnership with: Australian Council for Educational Research

ACER

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And more new ideas? Assessment-led alignment?

Not recommended	Recommended	Highly Recommended
Traditional syllabus-led approach (may be emergent)	**Conventional approach to aligned course design** (pre-planned)	**Assessment-led approach to aligned course design** (pre-planned)
Construct a syllabus	Define the learning outcomes	Decide what students must demonstrate they can do via assessment tasks; write assessment criteria
Deliver learning and teaching activities that enable the students to cover the syllabus	Select learning and teaching activities likely to enable the students to attain the outcomes	Select learning and teaching activities (including formative assessments) likely to enable the students to successfully complete the assessment tasks
Assess students' attainment of syllabus items	Design assessments to measure the students' acheievement of the learning outcomes	Finalise the learning outcomes

'*start [by] thinking in terms of **evidence of achievement**. It's really helpful to students to know what success looks like. Then, in a nutshell, work backwards towards the intended outcomes for which this evidence is valid, and how best to measure reliably students' achievement, and the criteria which will set the standards for this achievement. Then go backwards and forwards until the whole lot are in harmony. It's an iterative business'* (Race, undated, page 1).

Edwards, Corony (2017) *Assessment and feedback guidance for staff* (unpublished) prepared for the University of Lincoln's Educational Development and Enhancement Unit by Corony Edwards Consulting www.coronyedwards.co.uk

And new research

© 2017

Module Design in a Changing Era of Higher Education

Academic Identity, Cognitive Dissonance and Institutional Barriers

Authors: **Binns**, Carole

palgrave
macmillan

- "the practice of module design and review is situation-informed rather than evidence-informed or theory-informed." (p.214)

And a final worry #5
Don't we need to change?

- ## What do our graduates really need these days and for the future?

    - changes in expectations and demands from employers?

    - "a new discourse of assessment in HE is required … should focus on the key organising idea of informing judgement"
    (Boud and Falchikov, 2007)
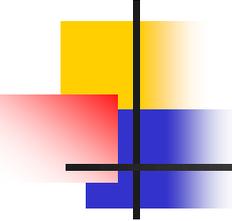
Sustainable assessment?
(Boud and Soler, 2016)

- Assessment 'that meets the needs of the present and [also] prepares students to meet their own future learning needs'
- The key elements of developing informed judgement from the perspective of the students were proposed as:
  - (1) identifying oneself as an active learner;
  - (2) identifying one's own level of knowledge and the gaps in this;
  - (3) practising testing and judging;
  - (4) developing these skills over time; and
  - (5) embodying reflexivity and commitment.
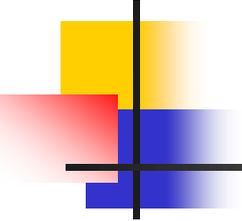
So where do we go from here?

Where have we been #1
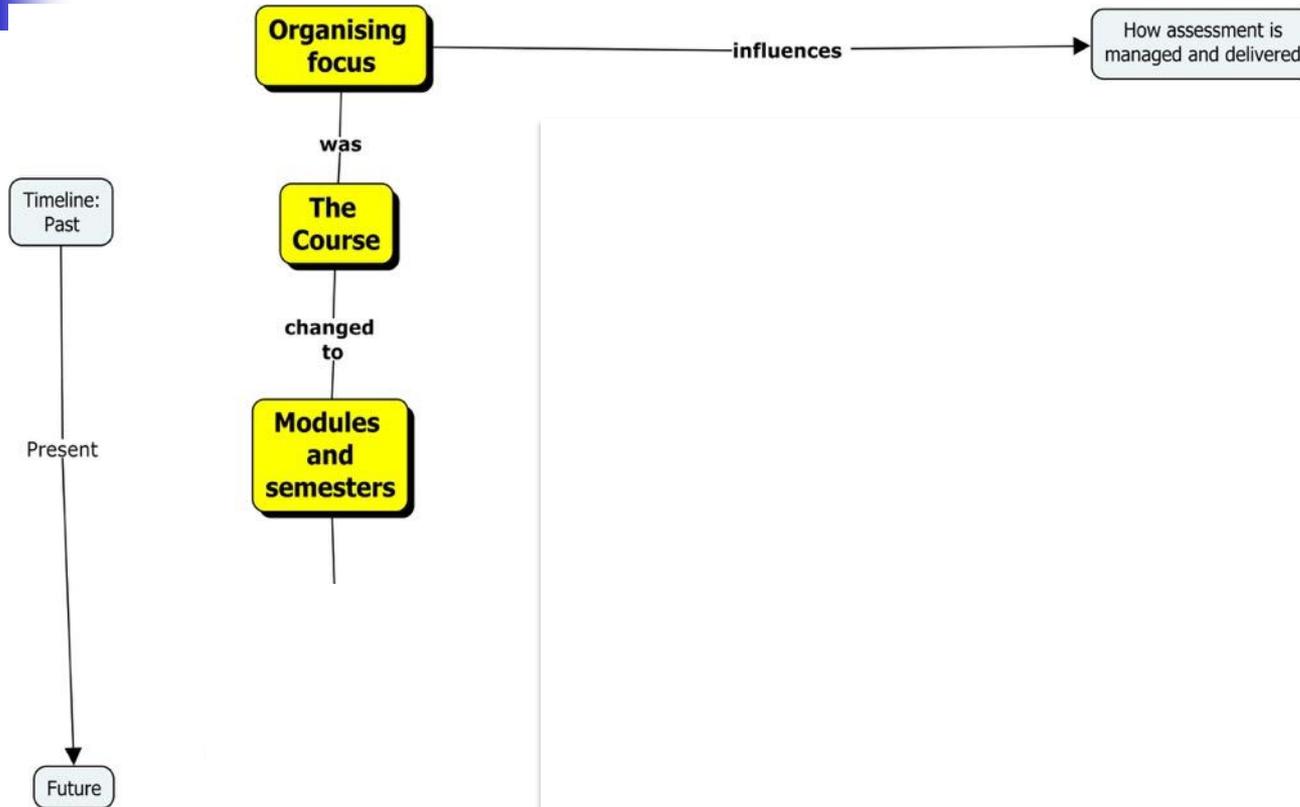
The changing context of assessment in UK HE:a speculative model
Peter Hartley and Ruth Whitfield, June 2018.

Where have we been #2
A personal history.

Timeline

	Organising focus	influences → How assessment is managed and delivered

was

1960s
1970s
1980s

The Course — **The Age of 'Mystery'** — characterised by → Aims and content dominant in curriculum design / Assessment criteria implicit / Little discussion re assessment with students / Assessment at endpoint of curriculum desgn

changed to

From mid 90s

Modules and semesters — **The Age of 'Lego'** — characterised by → Module learning outcomes dominant / Assessment criteria more explicit / Some discussion with students / Assessment at endpoint of curriculum desgn

and on to

Last 5/10 years?

??? — **The age of 'Reflective Lego'** — characterised by → Learning outcomes more variable/challenged / Focus on feedback & assessment literacy / Concerns for assessment environment / Assessment still at endpoint of curriculum desgn

The changing context of assessment in UK HE: a speculative model
Peter Hartley and Ruth Whitfield, June 2018.

Where to go? Rejuvenating assessment strategy
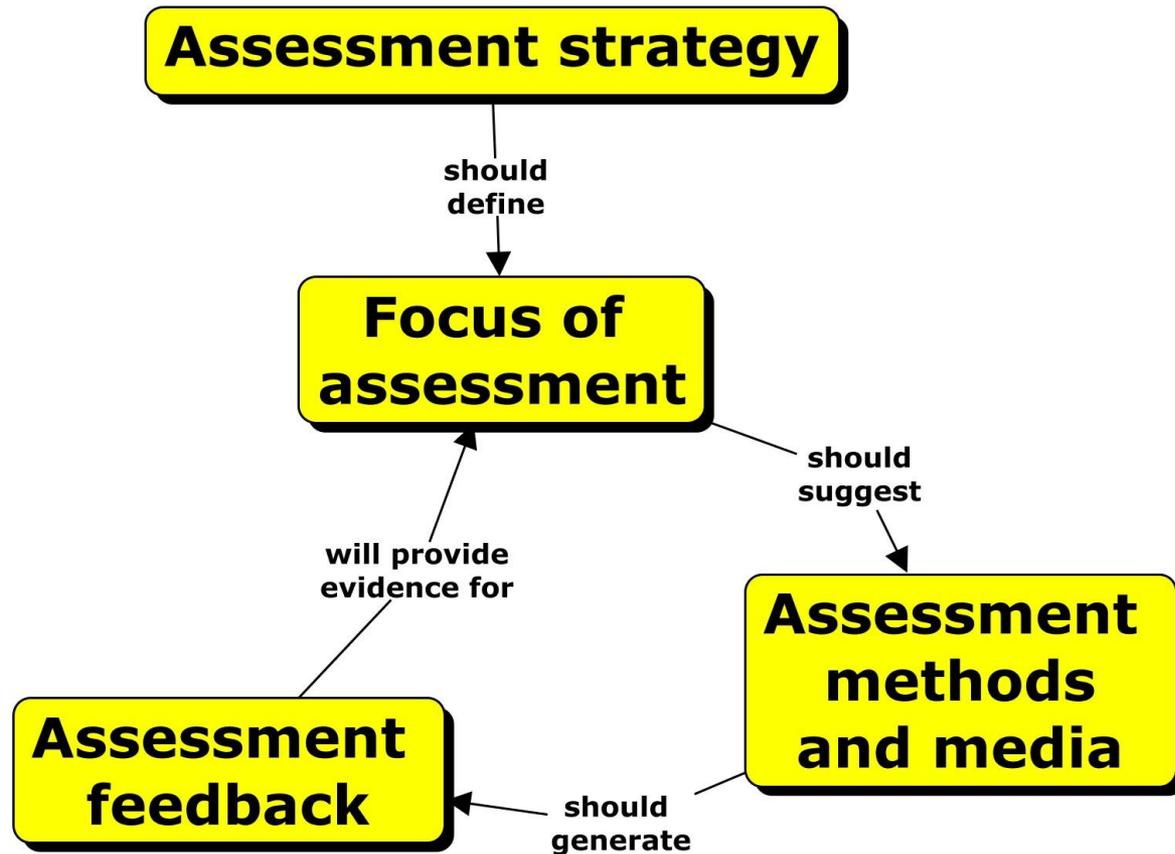
Investigating Assessment Strategy
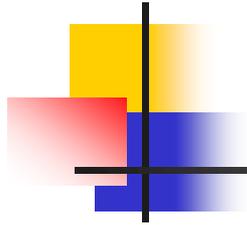
Programme Assessment Strategies (PASS)

This National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) funded project aimed to confront a fundamental issue for every Higher Education (HE) course/programme leader: how to design an effective, efficient, inclusive and sustainable assessment strategy which delivers the key course/programme outcomes.

The project outlived its funding period and is still very much alive with new and updated case studies, recent publications, and workshops in high demand.

Teams adopting programme focused assessment have been recognised nationally through Collaborative Awards for Teaching Excellence CATE.

> Attending a [PASS] workshop led interviewees to think about and evaluate what they were doing in terms of curriculum design and development, to see the positive aspects of programme focused assessment and to consider what they could possibly do better.

PASS website:
https://www.bradford.ac.uk/pass/

Transforming the Experience of Students through Assessment

Case Studies — A range of TESTA case studies for download

Workshops — Details of past TESTA based workshops

Resources — Browse the archive of TESTA resources for download

TESTA website:
http://www.testa.ac.uk

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The TESTA Methodology

75 PROGRAMME AUDITS

2000 ASSESSMENT EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRES

90 FOCUS GROUPS

Case Study

Programme Team Meeting
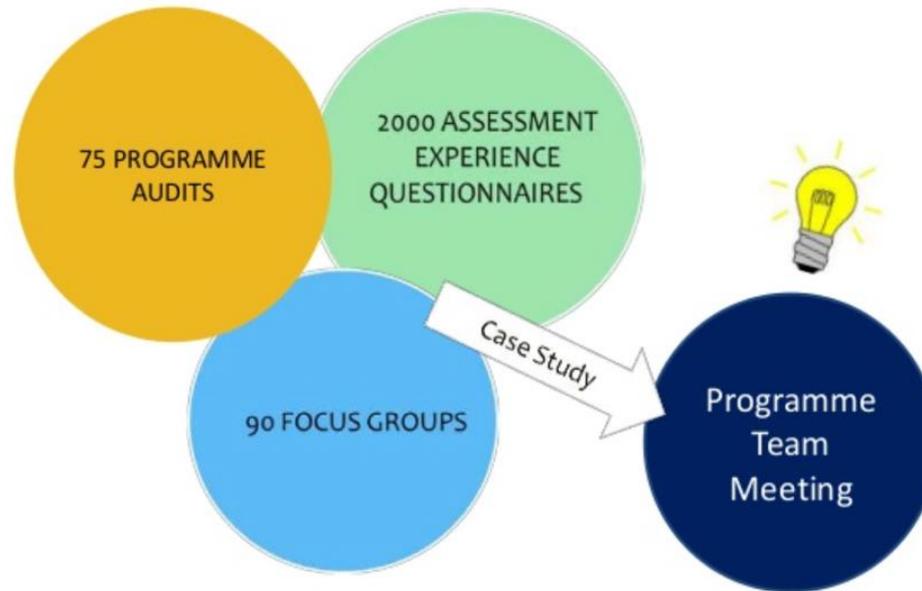
TESTA SEDA Keynote Spring 2016

147 views

3 of 46

http://www.slideshare.net/Tansy1962/testa-seda-keynote-spring-2016

NB As well as this keynote from Tansy Jessop, see other examples of TESTA implementation/development in the Spring 2016 SEDA Conference Programme. And two other excellent keynotes by Margaret Price and Ian Pirie.
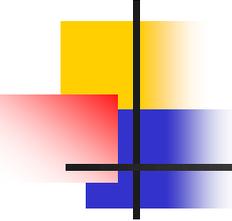
TESTA project findings:

- "consistent relationships between characteristics of assessment and student learning responses, including a strong relationship between quantity and quality of feedback and a clear sense of goals and standards, and between both these scales and students' overall satisfaction."

  - Tansy Jessop, Yassein El Hakim & Graham Gibbs (2013): The whole is greater than the sum of its parts: a large-scale study of students' learning in response to different programme assessment patterns,
  Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education.

Assessment environment: key dimensions

Characteristic	Range
Summative	
Formative	
Varieties of assessment	
Proportion of examinations	
Time to return marks & feedback	
Volume of oral feedback	
Volume of written feedback	

Assessment environment: range of variation

Characteristic	Range
Summative	12 -227
Formative	0 - 116
Varieties of assessment	5 - 21
Proportion of examinations	0% - 87%
Time to return marks & feedback	10 - 42 days
Volume of oral feedback	37 -1800 minutes
Volume of written feedback	936 - 22,000 words

Slide from
Tansy Jessop
keynote,
SEDA 2016.

ROUTLEDGE
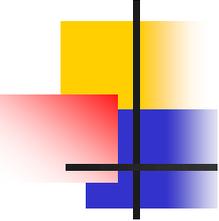
Formative assessment: missing in action in both research-intensive and teaching focused universities?

Qi Wu (iD) and Tansy Jessop (iD)

Solent Learning and Teaching Institute (SLTI), Southampton Solent University, Southampton, UK

ABSTRACT

In this study, we analysed survey data from 386 third year undergraduate students on 14 programmes within three UK universities. The universities are characterised as teaching-focused or research-intensive: a 'plate-glass' and 'red-brick' research-intensive; and a 'new' teaching-intensive university. We used the Assessment Experience Questionnaire Version 4.0 (AEQ 4.0), designed to understand students' perceptions of programme assessment environments. The AEQ contains scales constructed from theories about assessment, feedback and deep learning. We performed exploratory factor analysis on AEQ 4.0 and identified five salient domains: how students learn; quality of feedback; internalisation of standards; student effort; and formative assessment. These domains were compared across the three universities. Formative assessment was the weakest domain in all three university assessment environments, followed closely by students' internalising standards. Students at the new teaching-focused university had significantly higher scores on scales about deep learning, student effort and the quality of feedback than students in the two research-intensives. Findings show that theories about the virtue of formative assessment have yet to play out in practice; and that the teaching-focused university seemed to be encouraging deeper approaches to learning through its feedback and assessment tasks.

KEYWO

Formati
approac
feedbac

Most
recent
article
by
Tansy Jessop

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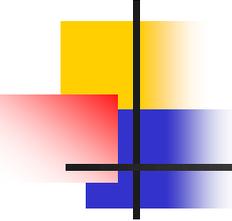
More from Tansy et al

- McKie, A. 2018 Study raises concerns over assessment methods in UK universities. *Times Higher Education*, 28 July 2018. https://bit.ly/2nTN9BZ

- Jessop, T and Hughes, G. 2018. 'Beyond winners and losers in assessment'. In *Teaching in Higher Education: Perspectives from UCL.* London. UCL Press. https://bit.ly/2HA32Vn

- Tomas, C. and Jessop, T. 2018. 'Struggling and juggling; a comparison of assessment loads in research and teaching-intensive universities'. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*.

- Joseph-Richard, P., T. Jessop, G. Okafor, T. Almpanis and D. Price 2018. 'Big brother or harbinger of best practice: Can lecture capture actually improve teaching?'*British Educational Research Journal*. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/berj.3336
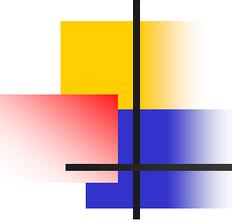
Programme-focussed assessment: PASS project

- NTFS group project over 3 years:
  - Two years of development and investigation and one year of implementation.
- Consortium:
  - Led by Bradford;
  - 2 CETLs – ASKE and AfL.
  - Plus Exeter, Plymouth and Leeds Met.
  - Plus critical friends.
    - www.pass.brad.ac.uk

The PASS project
What do we mean by PFA? #1
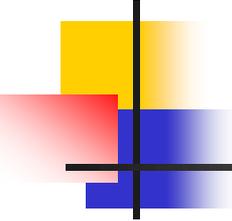
" the assessment is **specifically designed to address major programme outcomes** rather than very specific or isolated components of the course. It follows then that such assessment **is integrative in nature**, trying to bring together understanding and skills in ways which represent key programme aims. As a result, the assessment is likely to be more authentic and meaningful to students, staff and external stakeholders."

From the PASS Position Paper –

http://www.pass.brad.ac.uk/position-paper.pdf

What do we mean by PFA? #2

Varieties of PFA

High

Extent to which assessment covers all the specified programme outcomes

Typical module assessment

Low ⟷ High

Weighting of the assessment in the final qualification
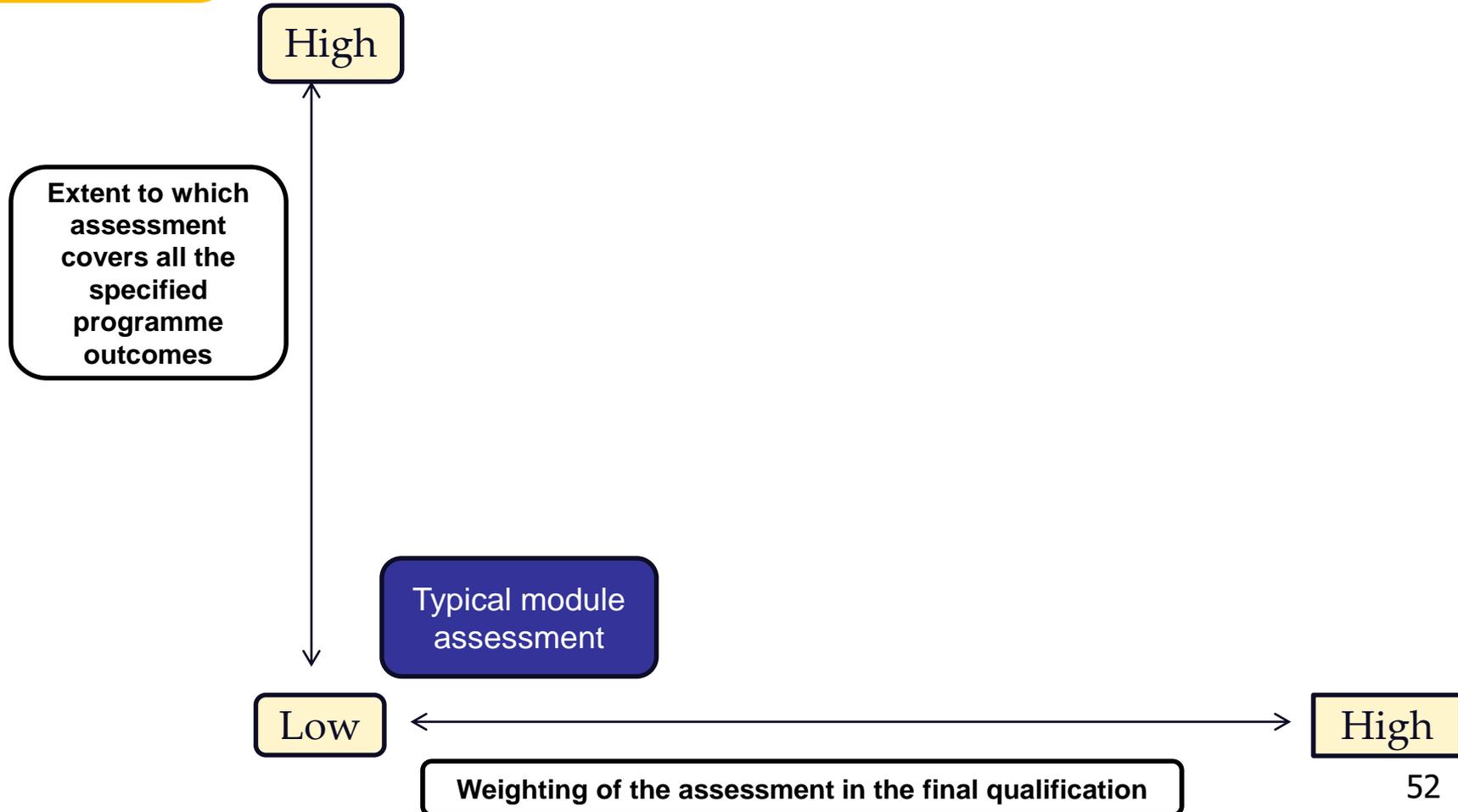
What do we mean by PFA? #3

Varieties of PFA

High

Extent to which assessment covers all the specified programme outcomes

Personal evidence against programme outcomes

Final heavily weighted integrative assessment

Integrative level/ year assessment

Integrative semester/ term assessment

Low ⟷ **High**

Weighting of the assessment in the final qualification

Do you PASS?

specifically designed to address programme outcomes

demonstrate that course/programme outcomes have been achieved

overcome the issues associated with modular programmes

integrative

is

Programme-based/focussed Assessment

helps to

enhance both subject/disciplinary achievement and/or employability prospects

more meaningful for all stakeholders (including students, staff, professions, disciplinary community, employers etc.

develop and maintain cohesive programmes

can be achieved in different ways, including:

Submission of evidence (e.g.in portfolio) to demonstrate performance and/or critical reflection

Integrative assignments across time/stages and/or subject areas

integrative projects

Integrated programme assessment: Biomed Sciences at Brunel

Assessment Blocks (120 cr)	Research Skills & Communic-ation (20)	Practical Skills 1 - Microscopy(20)	Practical Skills 2 - Biochemical Analysis (20)	Practical Skills 3 - Molecular Analysis (20)	Exam 1: Biomedical Sciences 1 (20)	Exam 2: Synoptic Exam 1 (20)

Study Blocks (120 cr)	Anatomy & Physiology (20)	Bio-chemistry (20)	Biology of the Cell (40)	Critical Thinking 1 (5) / Research Skills (15)	Practical Skills (20)

BSc BioSciences Level 1 Structure
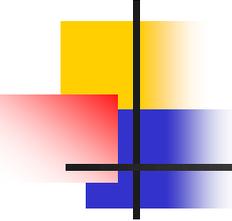
Some key features*

- Biomedical Sciences
  - Study and assessment blocks in all years.
  - Cut assessment load by 2/3rds; generated more time for class contact.
  - Synoptic exam in all three years.

*To be discussed in tomorrow's workshop

Biosciences win CATE award

Brunel University London

A team of 16 academics teaching on the **BSc Biomedical Sciences** programmes came together to eliminate the compartmentalised approach to learning experienced by students on modular programmes and to reduce the assessment load for staff and students.

The team consisted of staff from all levels within Biosciences. Some were recently appointed probationary academics whilst others were more experienced senior lecturers, readers and professors. Integrated Programme Assessment (IPA) takes a holistic and authentic approach to assessment that requires links to be made between subject topics, facilitates integration and application of knowledge and ensures that graduates are able to evaluate, communicate and make use of complex information.
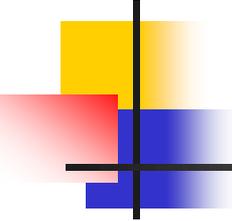
And the stats for Brunel

Seen in improved KPI metrics between 2013 (pre-change) and 2015 (all graduating students followed new assessment structures)

- NSS scores for Assessment and Feedback and Personal Development increased from 73 to 79% and from 82 to 87%, respectively, and the national subject ranking (2016) for Biosciences is 5th for Assessment and Feedback and 3rd for Personal Development;

- Students achieving good degrees increased by ~15%;

- Graduate-level employment increased by 18%;

- Students feel better prepared for employment.

  Extract from https://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/awards/integrated-programme-assessment/About
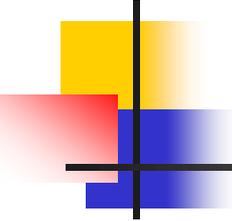
And now a practical guide

Integrated Programme Assessment

A Practical Guide

AMANDA HARVEY, DAVID TREE, MARIANN RAND-WEAVER

BRUNEL UNIVERSITY LONDON

- Includes:
  - useful workshop activities.
  - examples of integrated assignments.

    - https://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/awards/integrated-programme-assessment
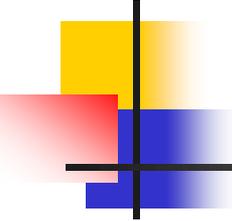
General reflections on PFA

- Benefits both staff and students.
- Needs cohesive course team.
- Needs management support.
- Needs a flexible approach to suit the course.
- Not a 'quick fix'.
- And you cannot just change assessment:
  - Implications for teaching/delivery.
  - Implications for regulatory framework.
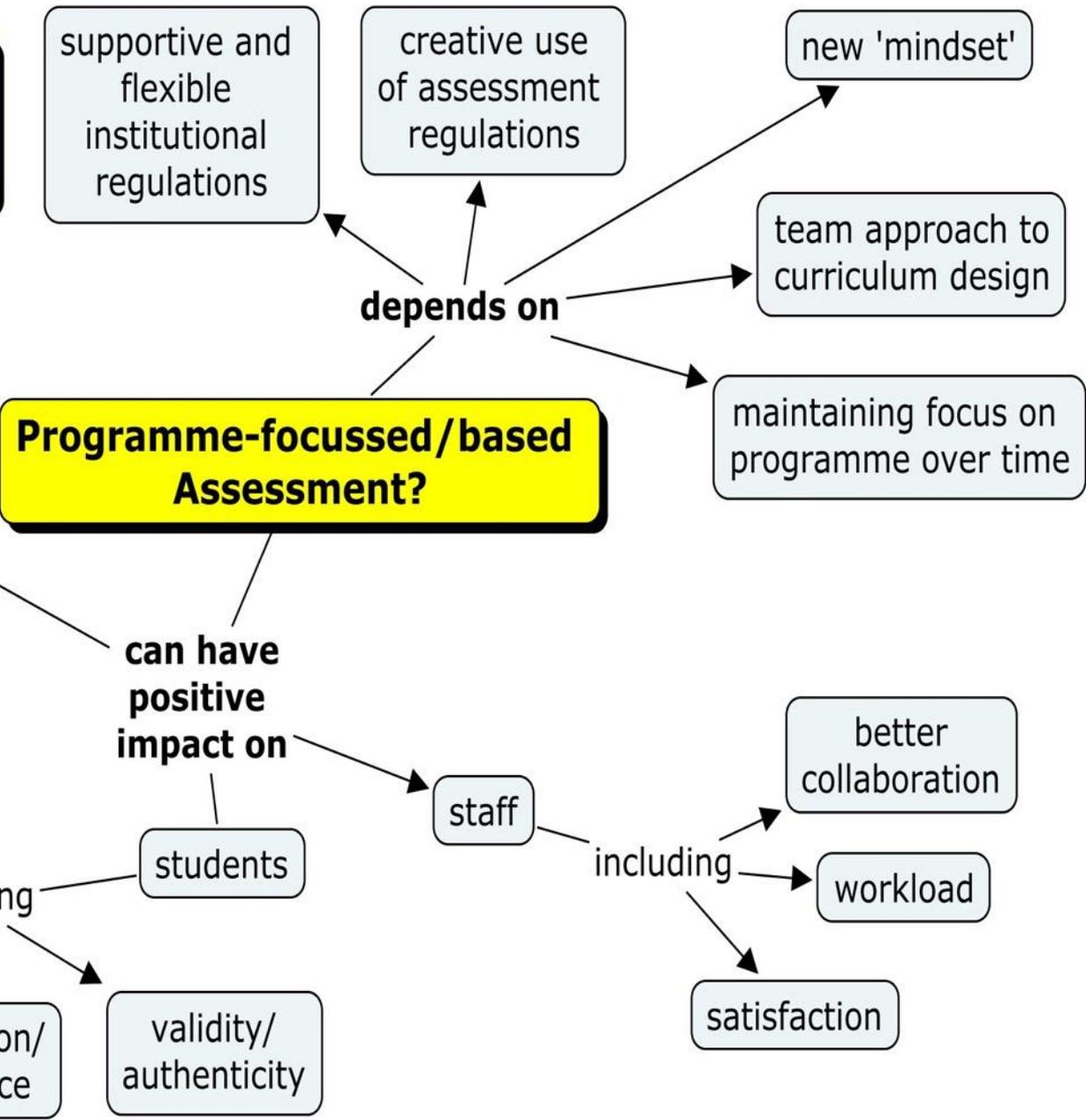
Programme assessment: other UK examples

Strong public commitment, e.g. University of Sheffield ➡️ **Plus several institutions exploring/piloting**
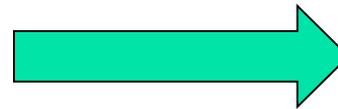
Learning and Teaching Services

Home > LeTS > Professional Development > Conference > Learning and Teaching Conference 2018

Innovative Curriculum Design: Taking a programme level approach to enhance student experience

Introduction to the Learning and Teaching Conference 2018

Wyn Morgan introduces the theme for the Twelfth Annual Learning and Teaching Conference, which was held on Tuesday 9 January 2018 in the Students' Union Building.

Find out more →
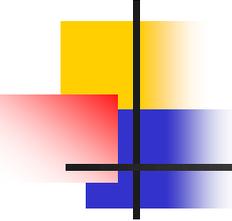
Rethinking assessment feedback – what do we mean?

- The 'original' meaning of feedback: 'enabling self-correcting behaviour towards a known goal.'
- This involves the 'feedback loop' whereby information must be 'fed back' so that it:
  - relates to the goal.
  - is received.
  - is correctly interpreted.
  - enables corrective action.
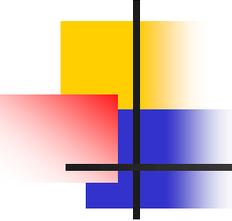
Rethinking assessment feedback – what do we mean?

- The 'original' meaning of feedback: 'enabling self-correcting behaviour towards a known goal.'
- This involves the 'feedback loop' whereby information must be 'fed back' so that it:
    - relates to the goal.
    - is received.
    - is correctly interpreted.
    - enables corrective action.
- For our students, what is 'the goal'?
  And how do we create the feedback loop?
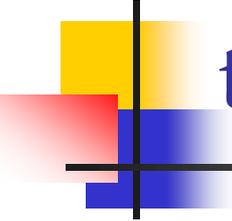
Factors Affecting Feedback Engagement: thematic analysis of research literature

- Students unable to understand feedback or apply it.
- The problems with feedforward.
- The problems with assessment criteria and feedback.
- Tutors (4a) and students (4b) not being explicitly trained to develop and use criteria and apply feedback.
- Lack of dialogue around feedback.
- Impacts of modularisation and course design on feedback engagement.
- Psychological factors affecting feedback engagement.
- The lack of student self-assessment and self-regulation and its effect of feedback use and engagement.

Research by Claire Moscrop (2018) "Factors affecting student assessment feedback engagement" CLT/Solstice Conference, Edge Hill University

Factors Affecting Feedback Engagement (V1)

Claire Moscrop, 2018

Factors Affecting Feedback Engagement (V3)

Impact of modularisation and course design (F6) — affecting → Staff → who need → Professional Development in assessment and feedback (4b)

Institutional regulations and policies — determine → Impact of modularisation and course design (F6)

Students — affected by → Lack of self regulation/self assessment skills (F8) — as they need → Student assessment literacy training (4a)

Professional Development in assessment and feedback (4b) — to develop → Student assessment literacy training (4a)

Which impacts upon → Psychological factors affecting feedback engagement (F7)

experience

to avoid

Lack of understanding of assessment criteria and issues with feedback not being related to criteria (F3) — which impacts upon → Psychological factors affecting feedback engagement (F7)

Feedforward issues (F2)

Lack of dialogue around feedback (F5)

leading to

Students not understanding/not being able to act on feedback (F1) — Which impacts upon → Psychological factors affecting feedback engagement (F7)

Claire Moscrop
& Peter Hartley, 2018
Further development
planned for 2019.

Assessment as communication? A need for further exploration.

- 'authentic' assignments
  - How do we define meaningful tasks?

- Defining audience for assignments.
  - Specific audience. (and defeating the 'essay mills')
  - Do our students know who they are writing for/to?
  - Is this why/how 'dialogic feedback' works?

- Using a range of media to improve communication of feedback, e.g. audio/video feedback.

did not edit
the recording

paused recording
if necessary

recorded in
one take

used consistent
overall structure

**what was my
personal
style?**

prepared by
reading assignment
and making short notes

Now:
Olympus
dictation
device
(easy to use)

next time:
the iPad
or Touch?

considering
embedding
audio
comments
in Word

**what was the
technology?**

**Reflections on
audio feedback as
communication
(Peter Hartley)**

used with two cohorts
on our PGCert for
new academic staff

generated much more feedback
(ranged from 5-15 minutes;
up to 100wpm)

outcomes

was able to give
much more
detailed explanations

did not save time;
did spend
about the same

enthusiastic
response from our
external examiner

Some very positive unsolicited
quotes from students including:
"best feedback I have
received in my life"

it is different:
'received'
as conversation
or tutorial

**is audio a 'better'
or different form
of communication?**

demonstrates how you
are arriving at
the judgement

does need the written grid
to supply the judgement

establishes or confirms
the relationship

supports an
interactive approach
to communication

Assessment as communication?

Giving students the necessary support:
3 key questions (after David Sadler)

a. Do you know what good work looks like?
b. Do you know what your work is 'worth'?
c. Do you know how to get from b to a?

NB Some really good ways of supporting this:
e.g. the work by Kay Sambell and Sally Brown which you can download from:
https://sally-brown.net/2016/05/12/stimulating-supportive-environment-seda-conference-three-cheers-ntf-2016/

An initiative well worth exploring: 3 slides from Naomi Winstone and Emma Medland, SEDA Conference November 2018: Educational Development Initiative of the Year

The Solution

FEATS
Feedback Engagement and Tracking at Surrey

Act upon and track the impact of your feedback

The FEATS e-portfolio

- **Section A: Feedback Review and Synthesis Tool**
- **Section B: Skill Development tool**
- **Section C: Action Planning Tool**

FEEDBACK
ENGAGEMENT
& TRACKING
UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

https://tinyurl.com/FEATSportfolio

The Impact

30 MINUTES
AVERAGE VISIT TIME PER STUDENT

"In the past I've struggled to put my feedback into action, whereas FEATS provides real guidance on how to identify your strengths and weaknesses and then points you to resources to develop your skills. The process feels very organic and personalised."

UG Student

"Before FEATS, the feedback process for many students stopped after reading their feedback. Now students can take control of their learning and drive their own development."

Learning Developer

"You use your feedback better by using FEATS. It helps you stay focused and ready to do what's next rather than sitting and worrying about the grade"

UG Student

3500
ACTIVE USERS
OUT OF 5000 STUDENTS IN PILOT YEAR

The Impact

"FEATS has taught me that it is essential for us to take responsibility for our own learning."

UG Student

"By using FEATS, I have been able to understand and overcome weaknesses in my writing"

UG Student

"As a result of this project, staff have developed their feedback practice by focusing on feedback as a conversation that develops students' self-regulation, not just as a justification of the grade"

Academic Developer

SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN FEEDBACK LITERACY

RELATIVE TO CONTROL GROUP

Feedback Literacy

$t(30) = 2.34, p = .03, d = 0.4$

$t(11) = .55, p = .60, d = 0.14$

Control   FEATS

Time 1   Time 2
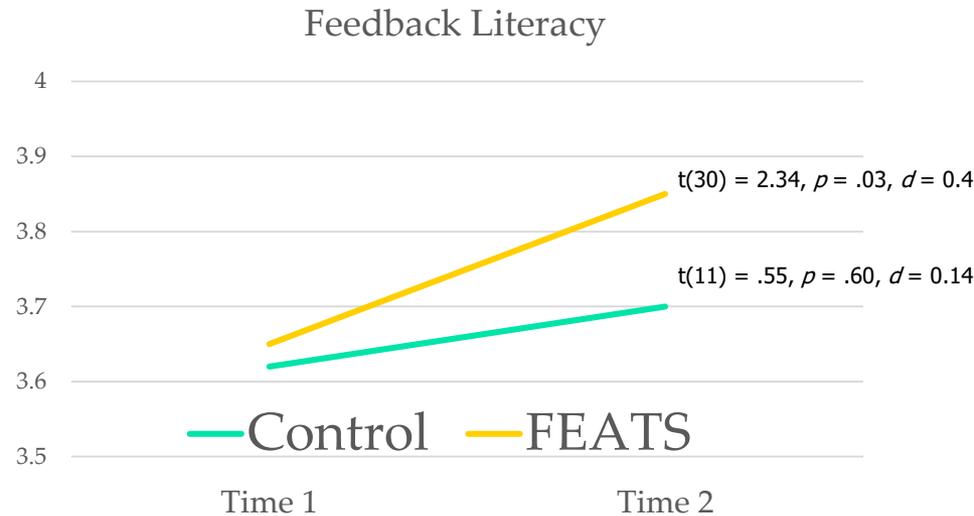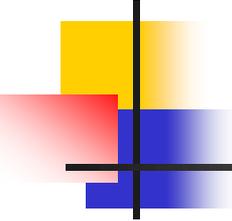
And finally … remembering the assessment/identity interface

Students as 'conscientious consumers' (Higgins et al, 2002).

- "While recognising the importance of grades, many of the students in the study adopt a more 'conscientious' approach. They are motivated intrinsically and seek feedback which will help them to engage with their subject in a 'deep' way."

But: personal identity as 'mediator'.

- e.g. apprentice ('feedback is useful tool')
  cf. victim ('feedback is another burden').

So we need to change the mindsets of some students?

# Rejuvenating assessment strategy - overview
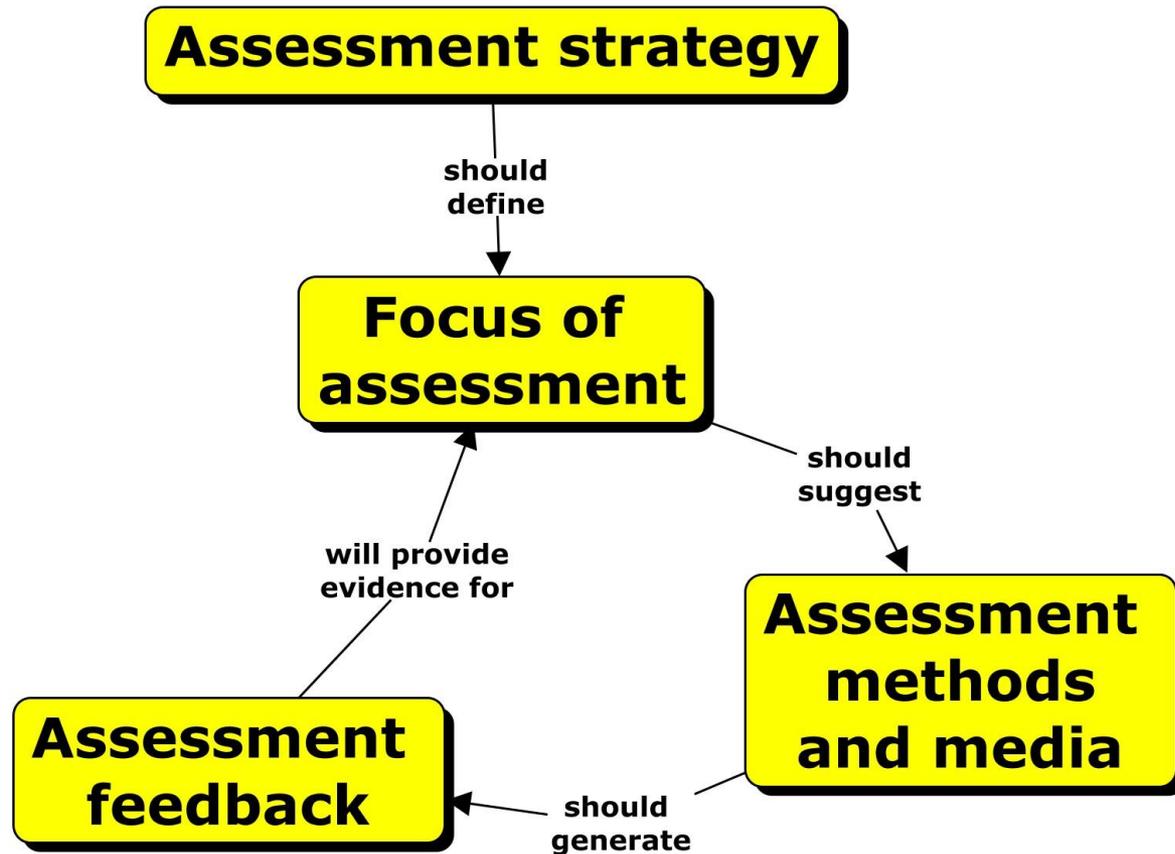
Rejuvenating assessment strategy – supporting details
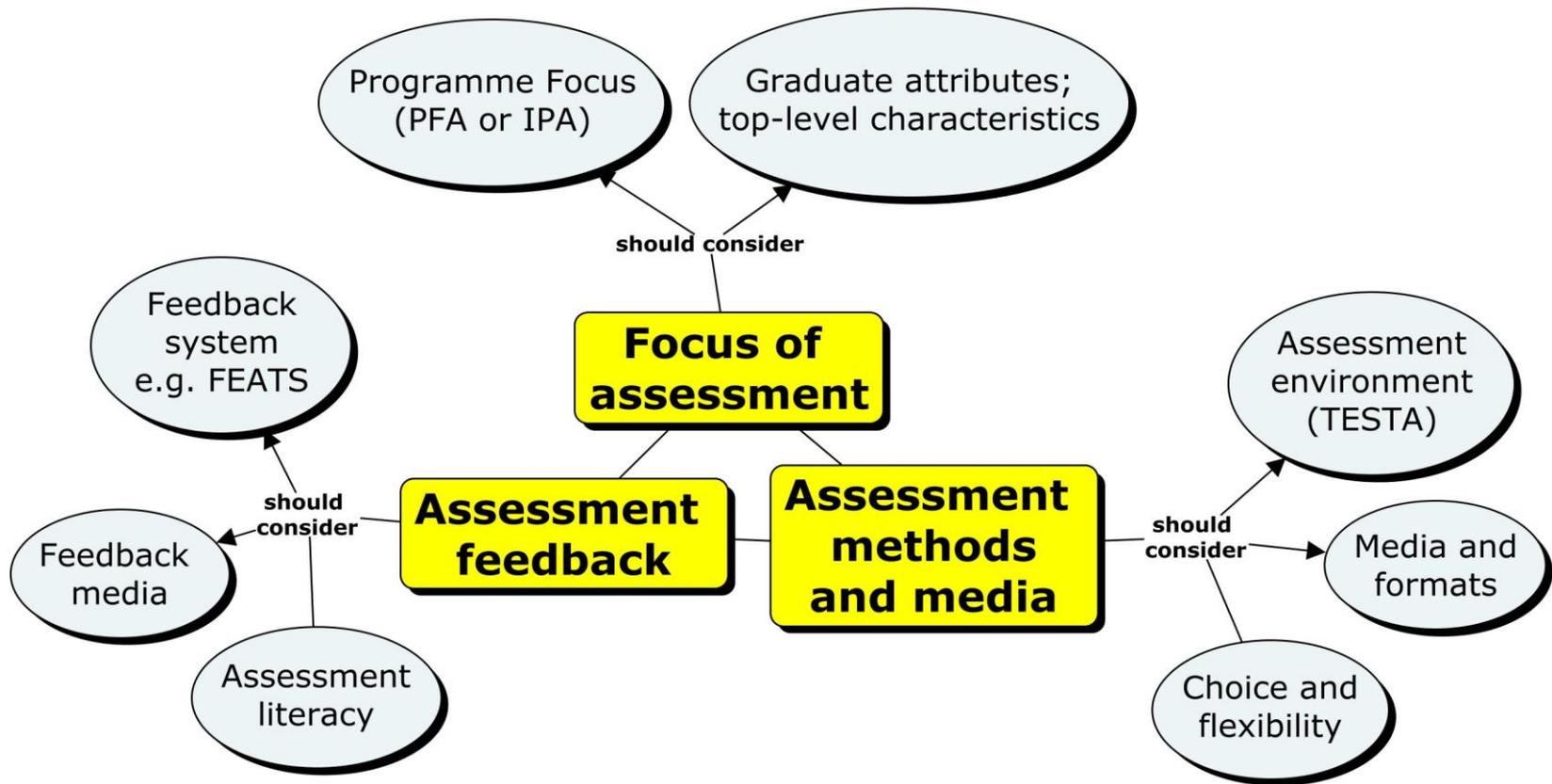
And where are we going?
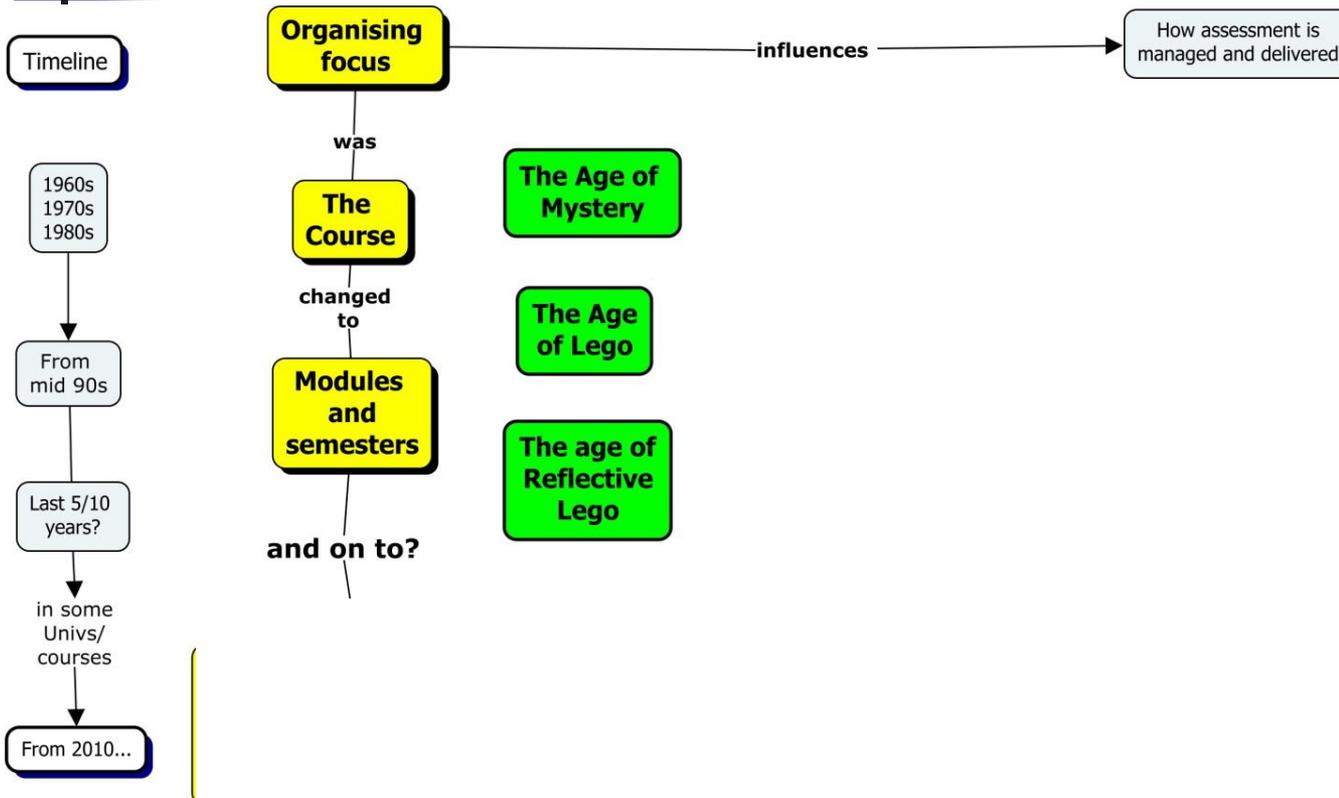
Timeline

1960s
1970s
1980s

From mid 90s

Last 5/10 years?

in some Univs/ courses

From 2010...

Organising focus —influences→ How assessment is managed and delivered

was

The Course   **The Age of Mystery**

changed to   **The Age of Lego**

Modules and semesters   **The age of Reflective Lego**

and on to?

The changing context of assessment in UK HE: a speculative model
Peter Hartley and Ruth Whitfield, June 2018.

A final model to ponder

Timeline

| Organising focus | | influences | How assessment is managed and delivered |

1960s
1970s
1980s

was

The Course

changed to

Modules and semesters

The Age of Mystery

The Age of Lego

The age of Reflective Lego

and on to?

From mid 90s

Last 5/10 years?

in some Univs/ courses

From 2010...

The Course as an integrated experience

The new 'age of Aquarius?'

characterised by

Programme Learning outcomes become the focus.

Assessment literacy linked to students' personal and professional development.

Feedback is 'cumulative feedforward', based on dialogue.

Assessment as an integral concern in curriculum (re)design from outset.

The changing context of assessment in UK HE: a speculative model
Peter Hartley and Ruth Whitfield, June 2018.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsxrGUJh-SY

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Your turn: Some key questions

- Which ideas and principles of PFA are most important and relevant to your context?

- How can you use PFA principles/techniques to develop your assessment practices?

- How/where are you going to start with PFA?

- What further support/info would be useful from initiatives like PASS?
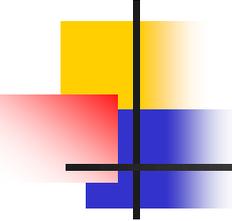
Any final questions/comments

- Thank you for your participation

  - Prof Peter Hartley
    profpeter@btinternet.com
    or
    profpeter1@me.com
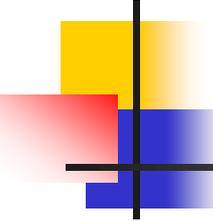
Specific references on PASS

- Whitfield R, Hartley P, 2018, *Assessment challenges for programme leaders – making the move to programme-focussed assessment* in Lawrence J, Ellis S, in Supporting programme leaders and programme leadershp, SEDA Special 39.

- Whitifield R, Hartley P, 2017, Whatever happened to Programme Assessment Strategies?, SEDA Educational Developments 18.1 ISSN 1469-3267

- Whitfield R, 2013, *Resolving assessment issues in higher education: learning from innovation in programme focused assessment* in Rust C, Improving Student Learning Through Research and Scholarship: 20 years of ISL, Oxford, The Oxford Centre for Staff & Learning Development, pp 67-82.

- Hartley P, Whitfield R, 2012, Programme Assessment Strategies (PASS) Final Report, HE Academy.

- Hartley P, Whitfield R, 2011, The case for Programme-Focused Assessment, SEDA Educational Developments Issue 12.4 ISSN 1469-3267
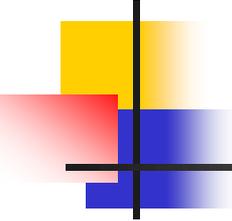
Selected references/sources #1

Some sources which have inspired/helped me, in addition to projects already mentioned like Testa and ASKe.

- Richard Arum, Josipa Roksa, and Amanda Cook (2016) *Improving Quality in American Higher Education: Learning outcomes and assessments for the 21st century*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Paul Bartholomew, John Branch, and Claus Nygaard (eds) (2016) *Assessing Learning in Higher Education*. Faringdon: Libri.
- David Boud and Elizabeth Molloy (eds) (2013) *Feedback in Higher and Professional Education.* London: Routledge.
- David Boud and Nancy Falchikov (eds) (2007) *Rethinking Assessment in Higher Education*. London: Routledge.

Selected references & sources#2
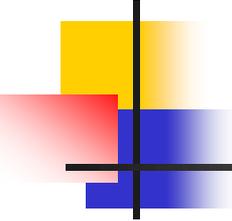
- David Boud & Rebeca Soler (2016) Sustainable assessment revisited, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 41:3, 400-413, DOI:10.1080/02602938.2015.1018133

- Sally Brown (2015) *Learning, Teaching and Assessment in Higher Education: Global Perspectives*. London: Palgrave.

- David Carless (2015) Excellence in University Assessment. London: Routledge.

- David Nicol - http://www.reap.ac.uk/Contacts/DavidNicol.aspx

- Margaret Price et al (2012) Assessment Literacy: the foundation for improving student learning. See review at https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02602938.2013.820564?journalCode=caeh20

- David Royce Sadler - http://researchers.uq.edu.au/researcher/6737

- Sambell, K., McDowell, L. and Montgomery, C. (2013) *Assessment for Learning in Higher Education,* London: Routledge.

Selected references & sources

Assessment as a means of focussing student effort and enhancing achievement

Northumbria University

6th April 2016

Sally Brown

PFHEA, SFSEDA, NTF

Emerita Professor, Leeds Beckett University

Visiting Professor: University of Plymouth, Liverpool John Moores University and University of South Wales.

These and other slides will be available on my website at http://sally-brown.net

Also worth checking the website of Phil Race: https://phil-race.co.uk
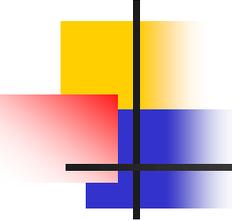
Some final thoughts from me

- (2001) "Getting the message across: the problems of communicating assessment feedback." (with Richard Higgins & Alan Skelton) *Teaching in Higher Education*, 6, 2.

- (2002) "The conscientious consumer: reconsidering the role of assessment feedback in student learning." (with Richard Higgins & Alan Skelton). *Studies in Higher Education*, 27, 1, 53-64.

- (2013) 'Best Practice in Assessment and Feedback: neglected issues.'
In Bilham, T. (ed) *For the Love of Learning*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.