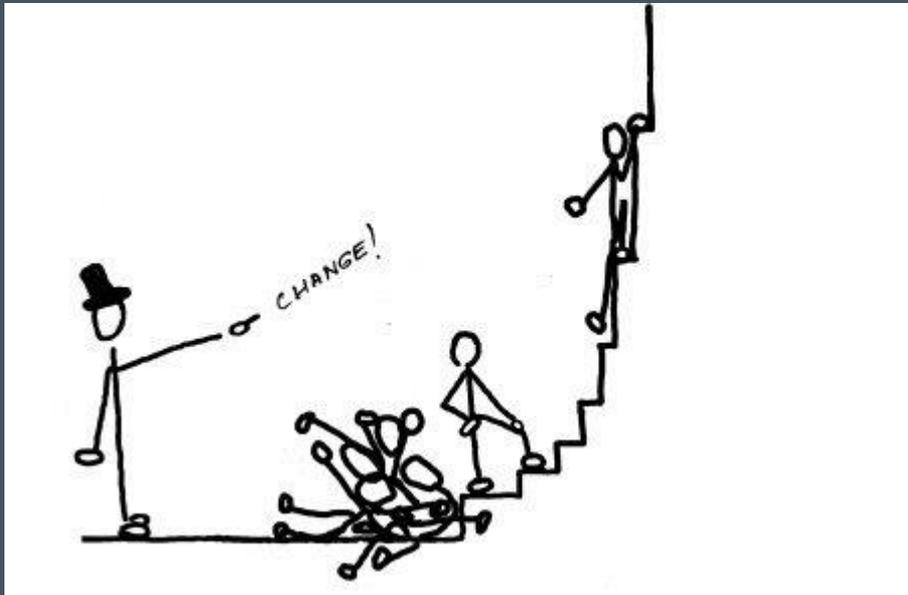


Help students to help themselves: developing assessment literacy



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<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske>

Why assessment literacy

Staff

- Assessment confidence (Handley et al,2013)
- Acknowledging professional judgement
- Discourse of assessment and feedback dialogue (Price, 2005)

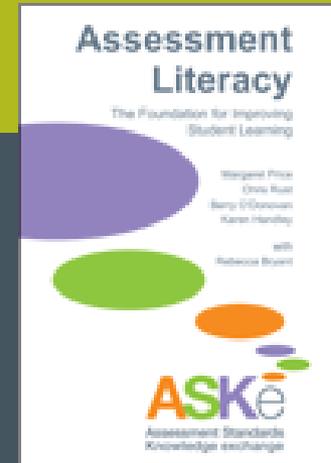
Students

- Self evaluative ability, independent learning and employability (Boud, 2009)
- Confidence and capability to participate
- Useful evaluation of experience (Price et al 2010)

Assessment Literacy

- appreciation of assessment's relationship to learning;
- conceptual understanding* of assessment
- understanding of the nature, meaning and level of assessment criteria and standards;
- skills in self- and peer assessment;
- familiarity with *technical approaches* to assessment
- possession of the intellectual ability to select and apply appropriate approaches and techniques to assessed tasks

(Price et al, 2012)



Intentional development of assessment literacy

What can we do?

1. Planning at programme level
2. Pre-assessment
3. Assessment activity
4. Feedback
5. Beyond the programme

Programme level approach

- Staff team need a programme view
 - Where there is a greater sense of the holistic programme, students are more likely to achieve the learning outcomes than students on programmes with a more fragmented sense of the programme.
 - (Havnes, 2007)
- Assessment strategy
 - A coherent plan of assessment and feedback across the programme
 - Deliberate development of assessment literacy
- Importance of interaction and participation in community
 - (Astin, 1993; Gibbs, 2007)

Programme level

Student expectations on entry to a business and management programme

A good teacher knows lots of 'right answers' and can:

- 1. Make things simple*
- 2. Help students memorise key points in interesting ways*

Assessment is about measurement and should be FAIR above all else.

Knowledge is certain and uncontested

There are 'right answers' and 'key points' that students must memorise

The knowledge you learn at school and university is mainly irrelevant to day-to-day life

Discussion with peers can be both muddling and time wasting

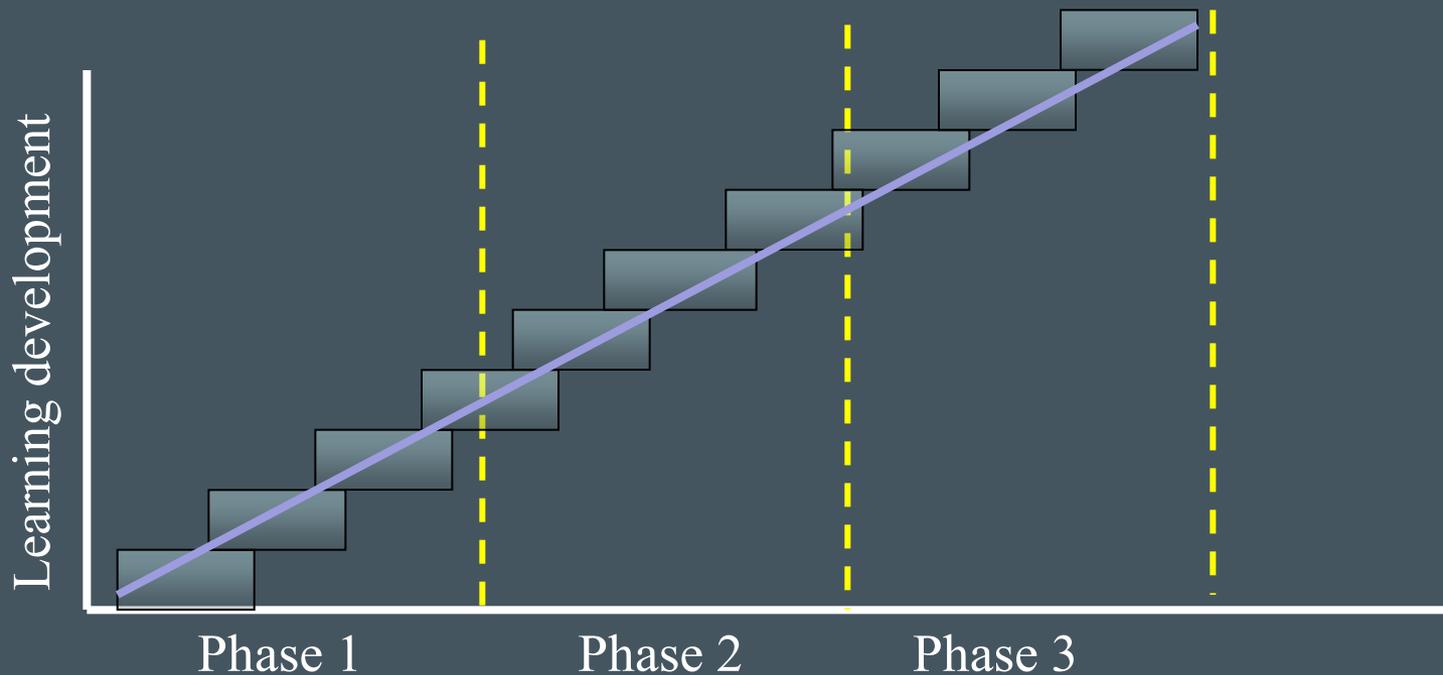


Student expectations (at transitions)

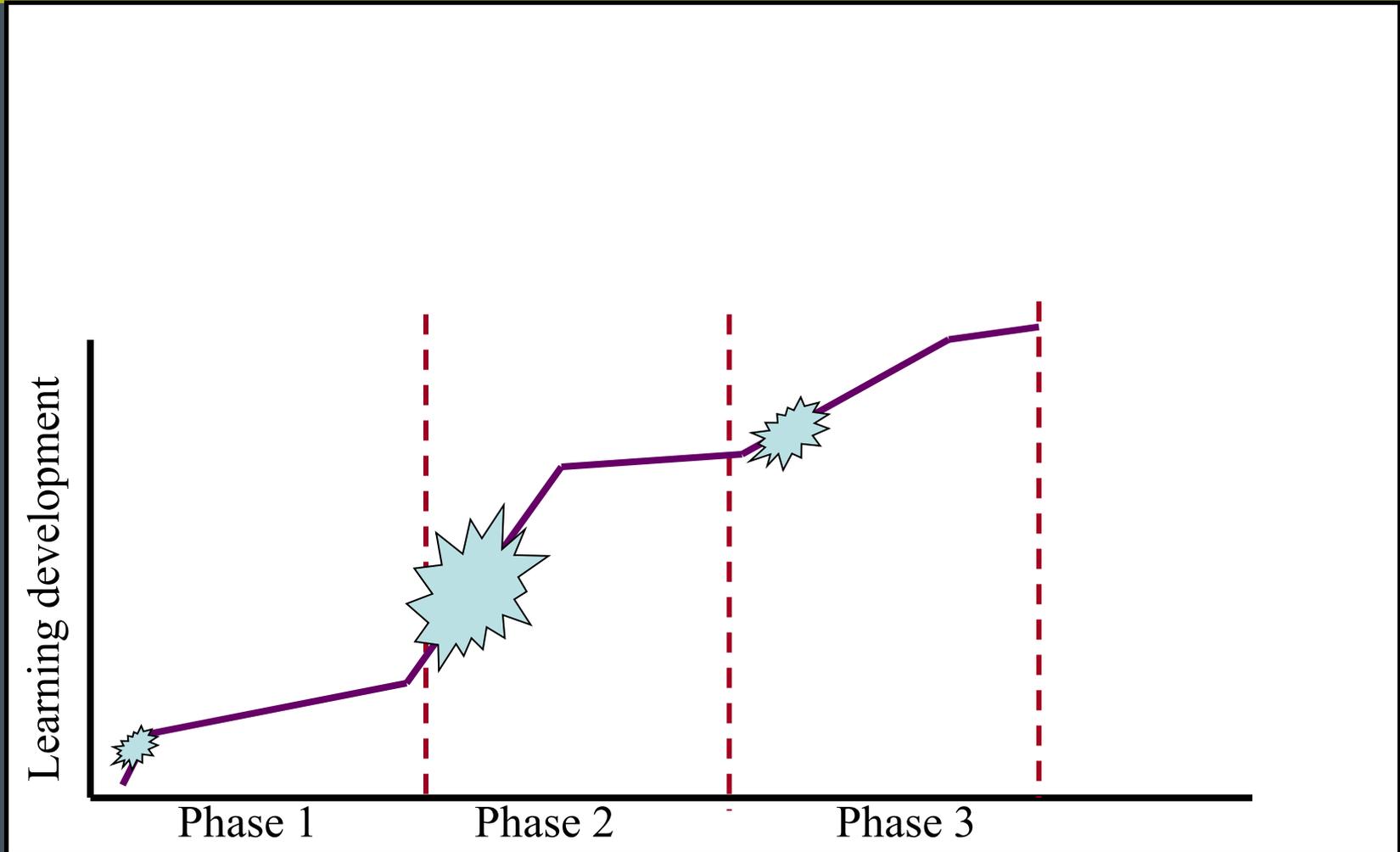
What are your students' expectations of learning and assessment

- when they first arrive in HE?
- When they enter transition between stages of study (e.g. years)
- What do you do to help structure those expectations? (fill in the table)

Perception of a modular programme?



Critical learning (threshold concepts, assessment and feedback moments)



Programme level approach

Variety in assessment is not always a good thing

“It is clear how disconcerting students find a large range of assessment activities. It is far better to limit these so students get better at using the feedback to improve performance.” (Gibbs, 2011)

“Some skills, literacies, conceptual understandings are ‘slowly learnt’ and need rehearsal throughout a programme” (Yorke, 2001)

Focus on reliability is not always a good thing

“This quest for reliability tends to skew assessment towards the assessment of simple and unambiguous achievements, and considerations of cost add to the skew away from judgements of complex learning’ (Knight 2002).

a declining use of deep and contextual approaches to study as students’ progress through their degree programmes

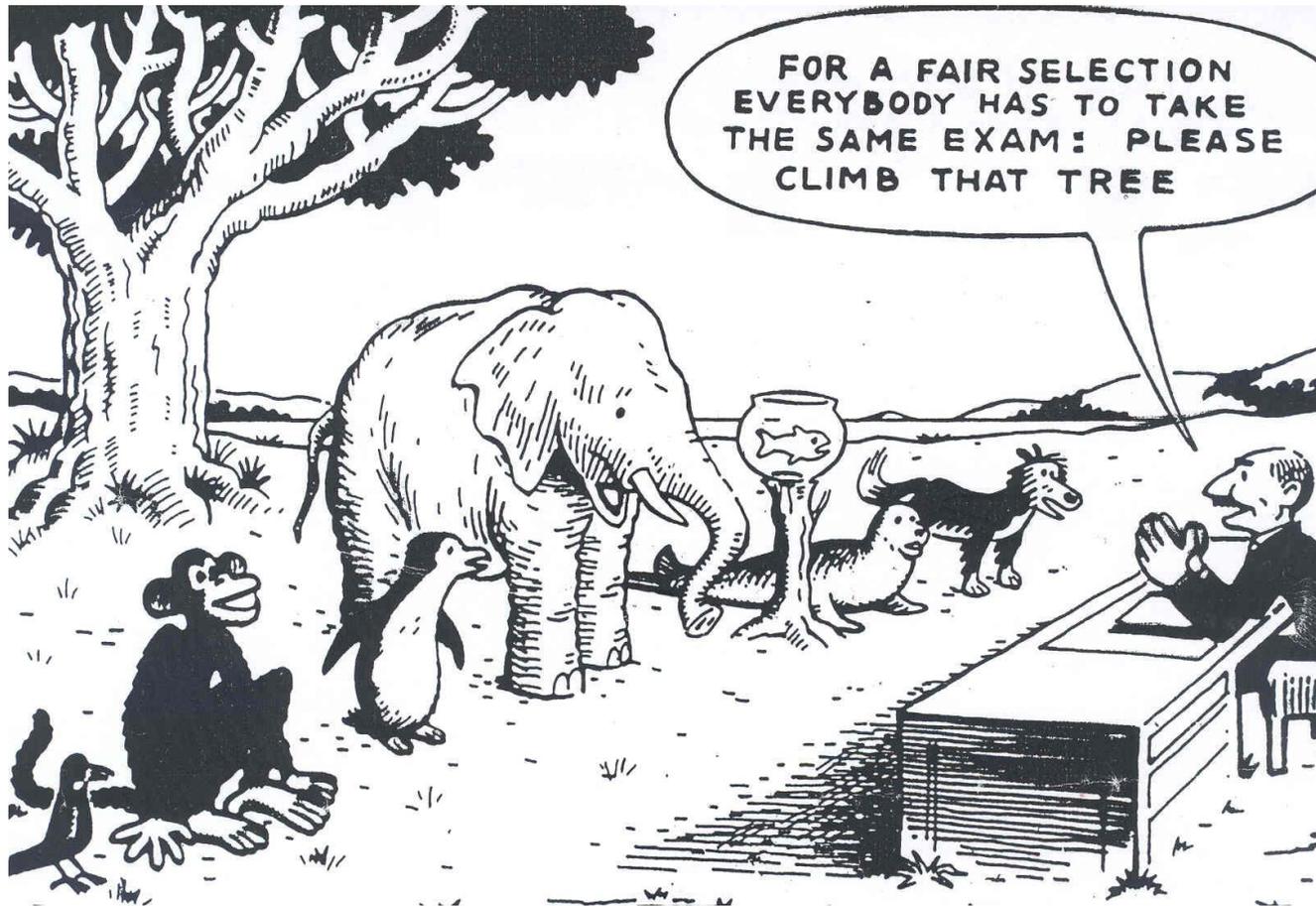
Watkins & Hattie, 1985; Kember et al, 1997; Zhang & Watkins, 2001).

Pre assessment

Students need to

- learn how to negotiate an assessment task
- understand expectations (standards)
- develop learn self efficacy (what questions should they be asking about assessment tasks)

What should the students ask?



Negotiating an assessment task

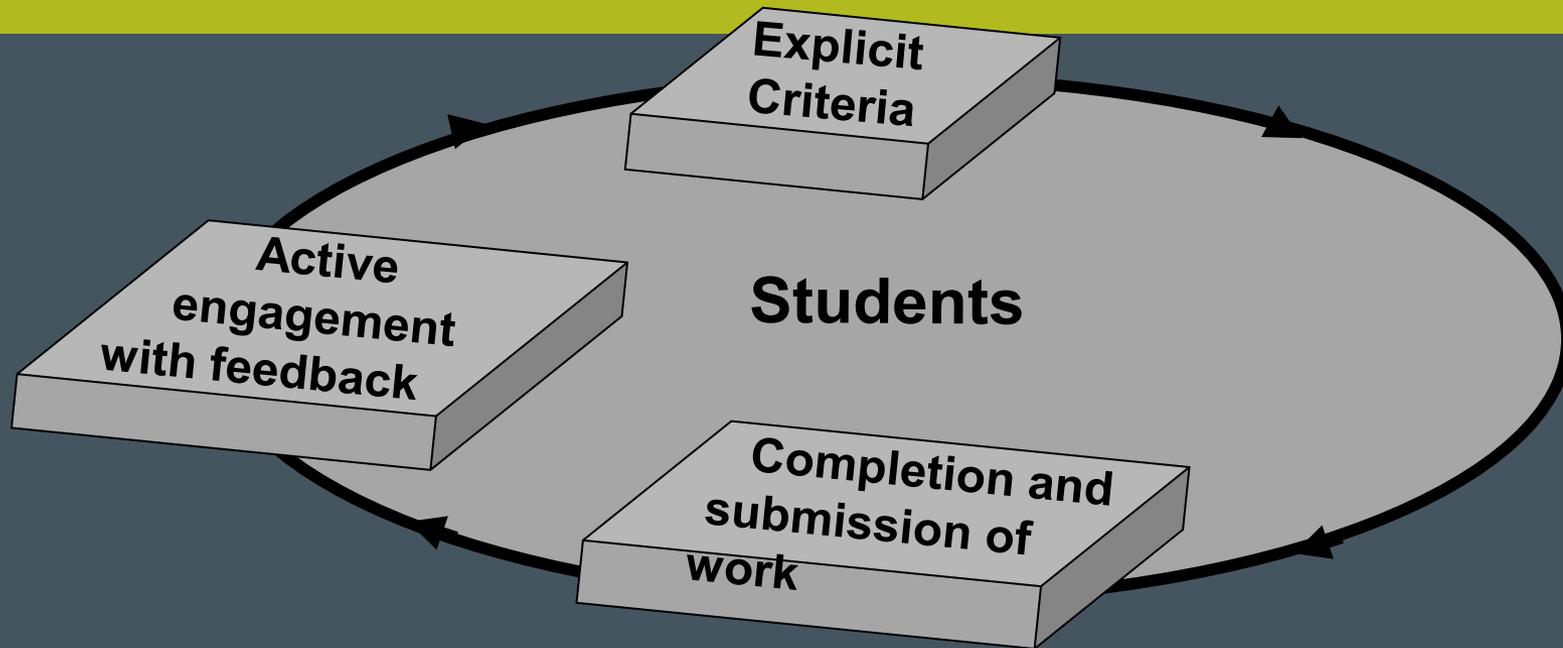
Pre requisites:

- Good assessment design
- Clear assessment briefs (including purpose)

https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/uploads/production/document/path/2/2559/assignment_brief_design_guidelines.pdf

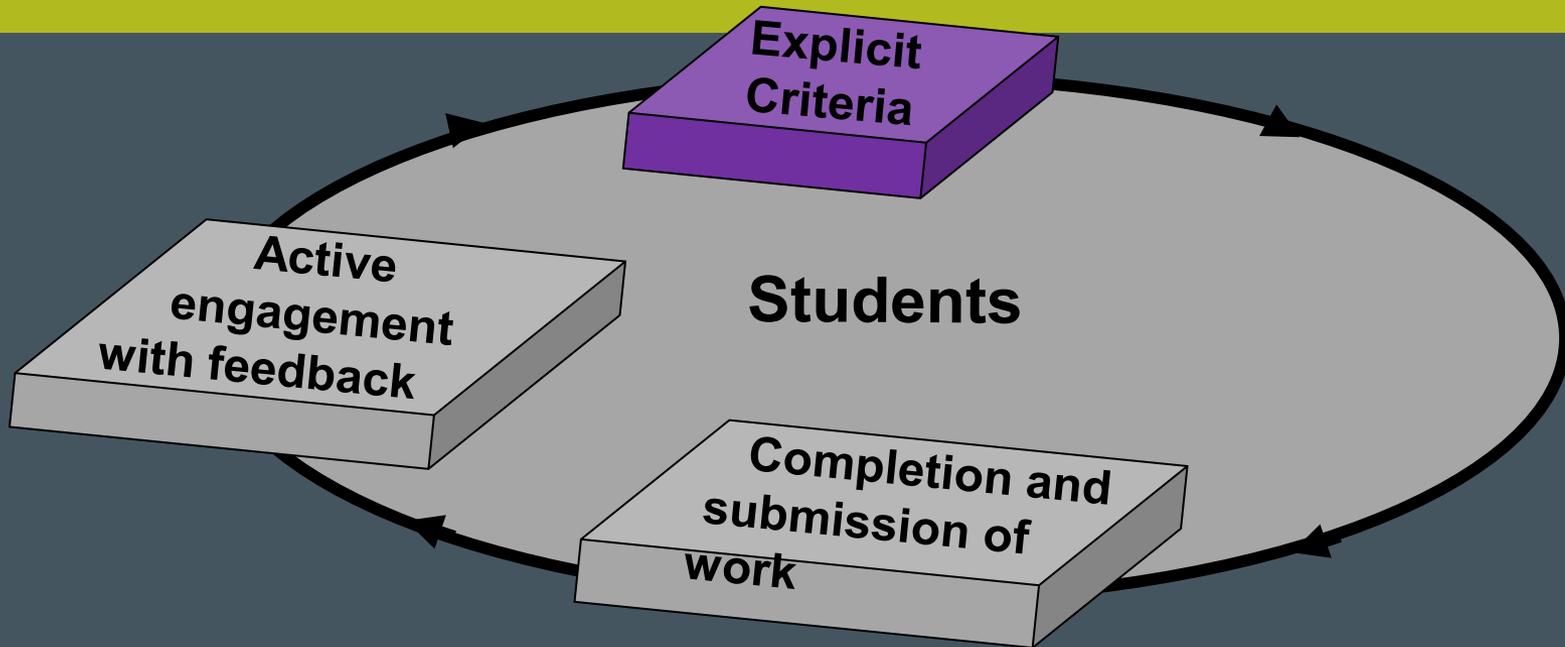
- Clarity about rules

Student experience



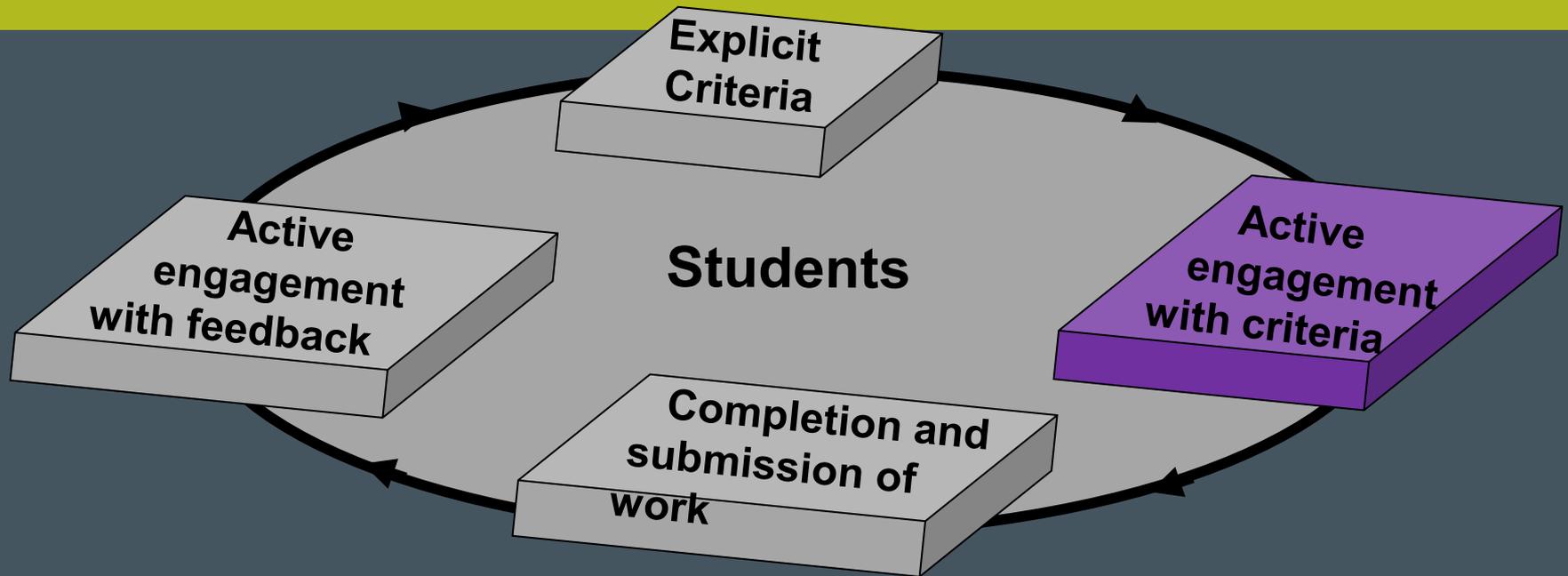
Rust C., O'Donovan B. & Price M. (2005)

Developing assessment literacy



Rust C., O'Donovan B. & Price M. (2005)

Developing assessment literacy - Pre assessment



Rust C., O'Donovan B. & Price M. (2005)

Assessment standards are difficult

Assessment judgements rely on local, contextualised interpretations of quality underpinned by tacit understanding of 'quality' shared by members of an assessment community

(Knight, 2006)

A key issue in assessment is that students often do not understand what is a better piece of work and do not understand what is being asked of them particularly in terms of standards and criteria.

(O'Donovan et al., 2001)

Assessment standards are difficult

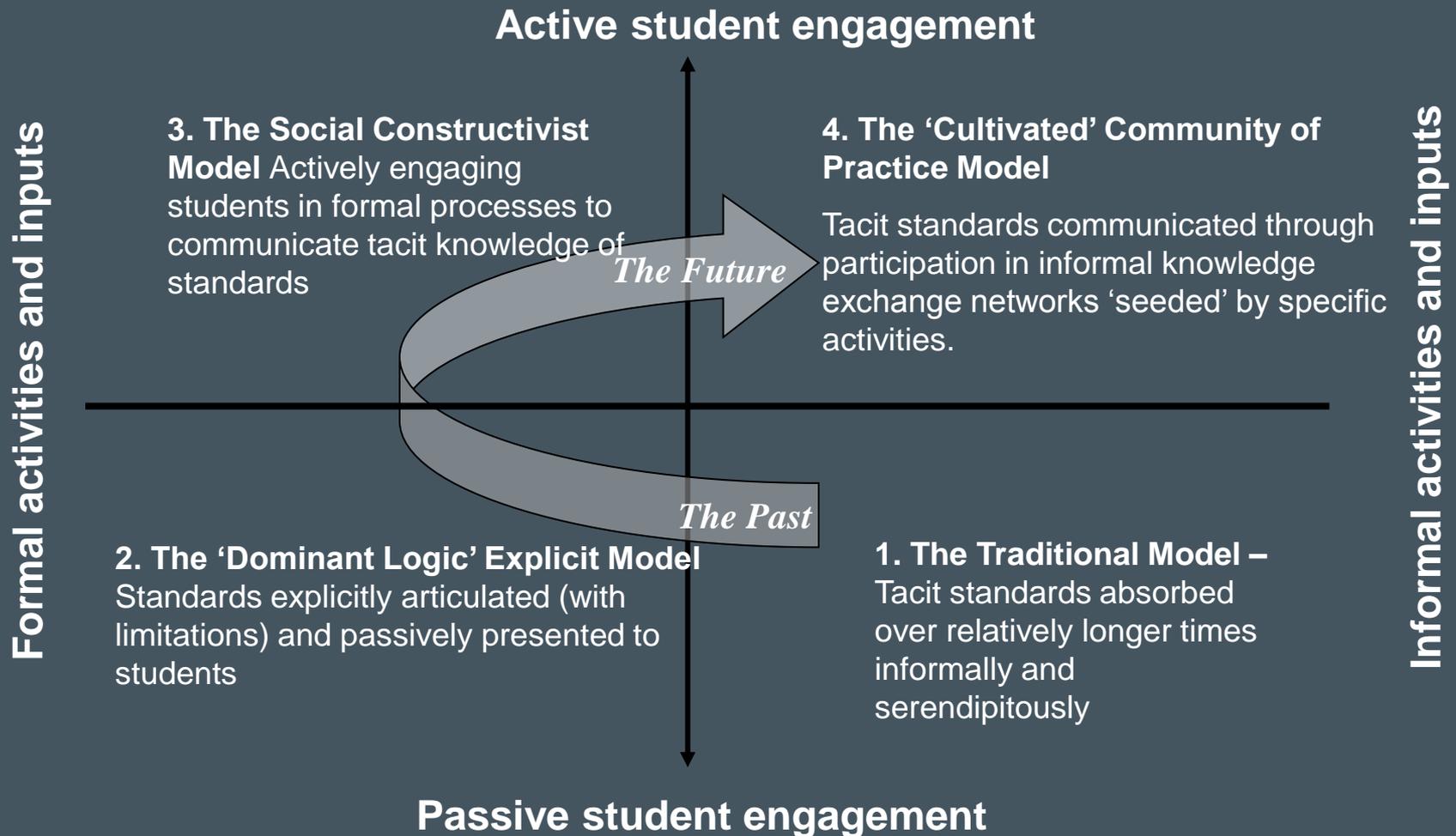
Assessors apply different interpretations of key words and phrases within written 'standards' (Saunders and Davis 1998; Ecclestone, 2001, Webster et al., 2000)

Written specifications cannot be applied mechanistically, judgement is required (Bloxham 2009)

“Standards are not conceptualised as having an existence or relevance separately from the context of the teaching team, the course as it was taught and its current students” (Sadler 2005 p190)

Greater precision is inherently self defeating (O'Donovan et al 2004)

Coming to understand standards



Active student engagement

Formal activities and inputs

3. The Social Constructivist Model Actively engaging students in formal processes to communicate tacit knowledge of standards

4. The 'Cultivated' Community of Practice Model

Tacit standards communicated through participation in informal knowledge exchange networks 'seeded' by specific activities.

The Future

The Past

2. The 'Dominant Logic' Explicit Model Standards explicitly articulated (with limitations) and passively presented to students

1. The Traditional Model – Tacit standards absorbed over relatively longer times informally and serendipitously

Informal activities and inputs

Passive student engagement

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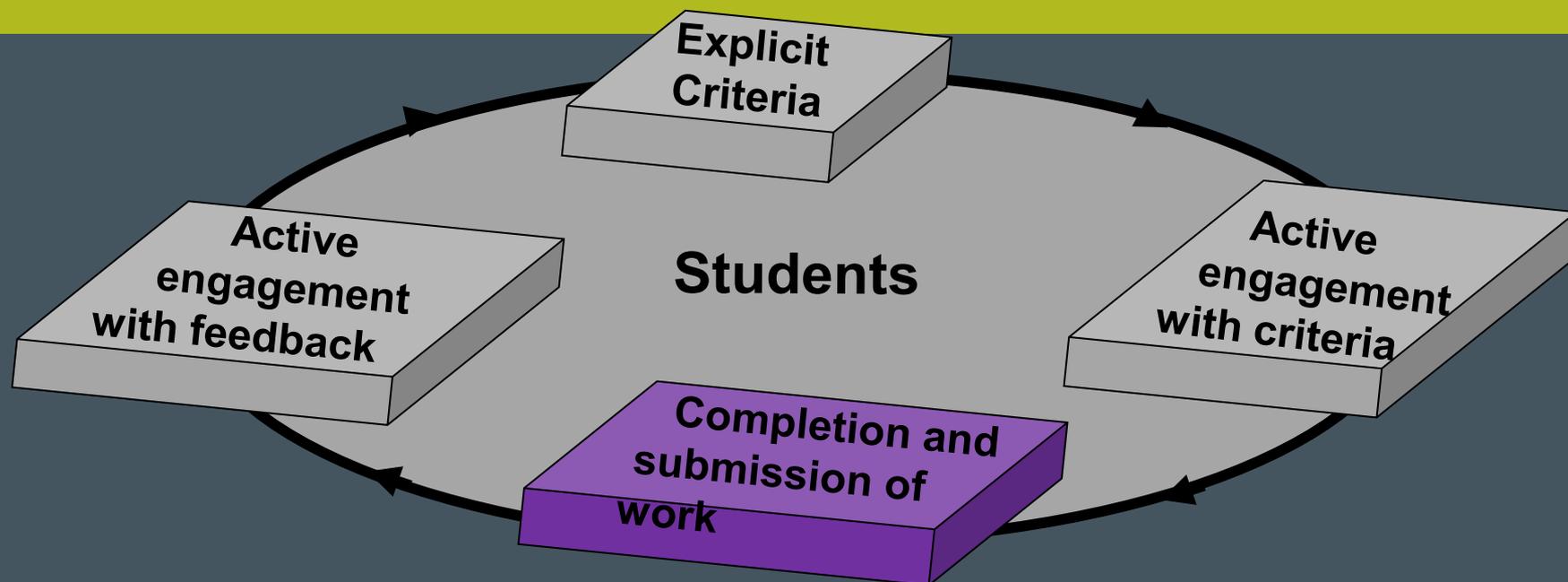
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Passive student engagement

Developing assessment literacy - Assessment activity



Rust C., O'Donovan B. & Price M. (2005)

Assessment activity

Students must learn to and identify their performance gap for themselves

'in the act of production itself' (Sadler, 1989, p121).

Self assessment

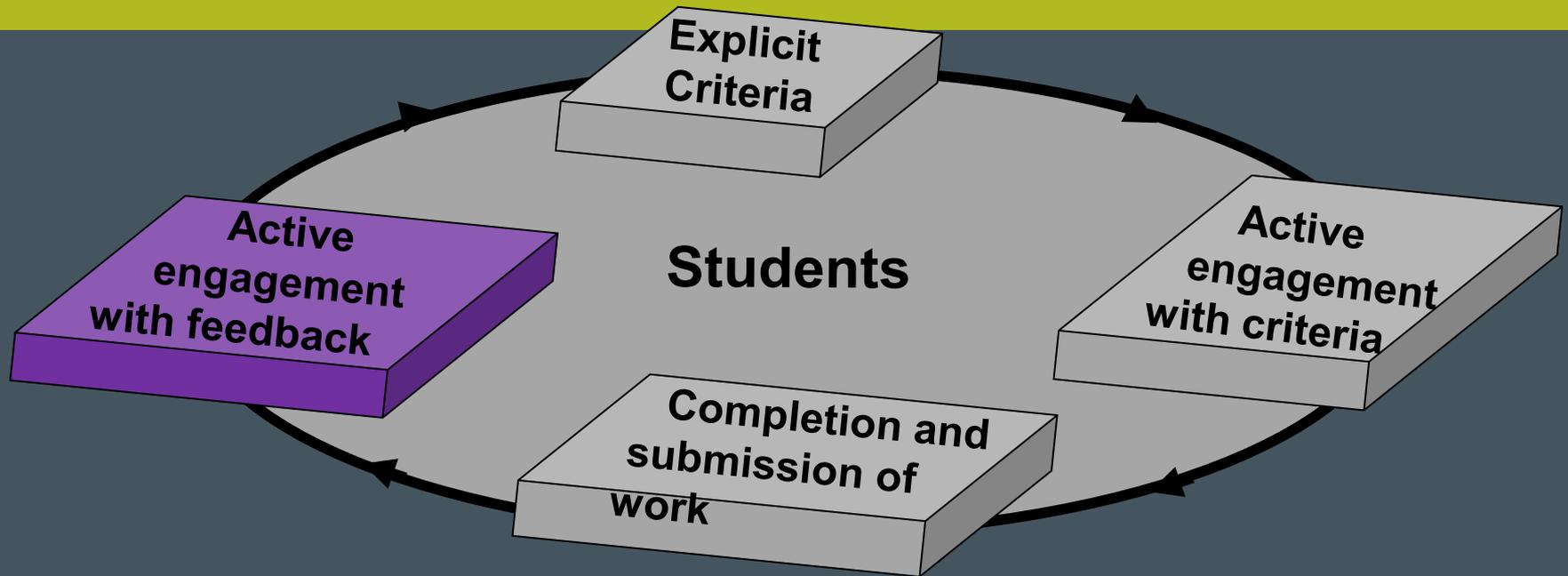
Drafting and redrafting

Peer review

Peer assessment

Peer assisted learning

Developing assessment literacy



Rust C., O'Donovan B. & Price M. (2005)

Relationships matter

Findings from FDTL Engaging Students with Assessment Feedback:

Clarity of purpose

Learning effectiveness (and student engagement) is strongly influenced by opportunity to apply feedback to future performance This relies on

- ability to understand feedback (legibility and interpretation)
- expectations of the utility of feedback
- perception of self efficacy

The relational dimension of feedback is key to student engagement

Dialogue supports understanding and engagement

(Price et al 2010)

Students' perceptions of feedback

Domains of influence to be discussed at

'What makes good feedback good?'

Day 2 1.30pm

Feedback – the importance of what has gone before and what is to come

1. Be clear about the purpose of the feedback ie what should students expect to get from it in particular instances.
2. Ensure students have had sufficient support in understanding criteria and standards to relate to the feedback provided.
3. Require students to self assess against generic/cohort feedback.
4. Model the process of feeding forward for the students.
5. Require students to demonstrate how they have used feedback in subsequent work.

Feedback moments to support assessment literacy

Where there is a clear need to apply feedback

Pre assessment

Reflection points

Identify them within each programme

Resources and effectiveness

Feedback methods:

- Dialogue (one to one/and feedback workshop)
- Oral/audio rather than written
- Exemplars/model answers
- Generic feedback

Require students to demonstrate how they have used feedback in subsequent work.