

# AHE Seminar Programme

Time	Session	Room
09.30	Registration	Gr Floor Hotel Foyer
09.30	Refreshments	Chester Suite
09.55	Welcome	Derby Suite
10.00	Keynote & Discussion: Professor Sue Bloxham	Derby Suite
10.40	Refreshments	Chester Suite
11.00	Choice of parallel sessions	
	Staff assessment literacy	Derby Suite
	<i>Chair: Kay Sambell</i>	
	<p><b>Transforming assessment and feedback in a business school: Improving student satisfaction with an ambitious change management programme</b>  <i>Sally Everett, Anglia Ruskin University</i></p> <p><b>Let's face it: A trans-disciplinary approach to exploring, articulating and striving for valid, reliable, aligned and transparent assessment</b>  <i>Karen Ford, University of Sheffield</i></p> <p><b>Staff assessment literacy and electronic management of coursework</b>  <i>Kate Litherland, University of Chester; Dr Karen Willis, University of Chester</i></p>	
	Students and feedback	Fairclough Suite
	<i>Chair: Nicola Reimann</i>	
	<p><b>Understanding students' experiences of feedback: Implications for institutional strategy and research agendas</b>  <i>Alasdair Blair, De Montford University; Samantha Shields, University of Hull</i></p> <p><b>Improving undergraduate written summative assessment feedback through powerful student engagement: A case study</b>  <i>Jane Rand, York St John University</i></p> <p><b>Half as much but twice as good: Constructing effective written feedback in any subject</b>  <i>Amanda Sykes, University of Glasgow; David Morrison, Plymouth University</i></p>	
	Driving assessment policy	Rolls Suite
	<i>Chair: Sue Bloxham</i>	
	<p><b>Institutional change and academic culture: A framework and principles-led approach to designing programme level assessment</b>  <i>Jessica Evans, The Open University; Simon Bromley, Sheffield Hallam University</i></p> <p><b>The transition to grade-based marking for assessing student work at university: Institutional change and challenge</b>  <i>Kamilah Jooganah, Nottingham Trent University</i></p> <p><b>Changing colours: What happens when you make enhancement an imperative?</b>  <i>Juliet Williams, University of Winchester</i></p>	

# AHE Seminar Programme (Contd.)

Time	Session	Room
11.00	Choice of parallel sessions (Contd.)	
	Involving students in assessment change <i>Chair: Pete Boyd</i>	Royce Suite
	<b>Assessment for empowerment: Using assessment criteria to create a transformative dialogic learning space</b> <i>Jennifer Bain, Goldsmiths, University of London; Lili Golmohammadi, Goldsmiths, University of London</i>	
	<b>Enhancing assessment via student change agents</b> <i>Jenny Marie, University College London</i>	
	<b>Students' positive experiences of assessment and feedback: What do we know about exemplary practice from student nominations for excellence?</b> <i>Jacqueline Potter, Keele University</i>	
	Assessing Student & Graduate attributes <i>Chair: Sally Jordan</i>	Lancaster Suite
	<b>Validating excellence in the context of course-wide learning outcomes</b> <i>David Boud, Deakin University, Australia</i>	
	<b>Using e-Portfolios to assess and strengthen student competencies at Bradford College</b> <i>Richard Nelson, Bradford College; Stuart Blacklock, Livetext</i>	
	<b>From essay to assignment: The challenges of reforming EAP written assessments</b> <i>Julian Yeo, BPP University; Jonathan Dunn, BPP University</i>	
12.00	Break	Chester Suite
12.10	Nano Presentations <i>Chair: Pete Boyd</i>	Derby Suite
	<b>Automated feedback and marking system in computing</b> <i>Suraj Ajit, University of Northampton</i>	
	<b>Lecturers' intentions and high achievers' interpretations of the performance feedback: What are the similarities and the differences?</b> <i>Mohd Nasri Awang Besar, University of Sunderland</i>	
	<b>Assessing short in-class written responses</b> <i>David Carless, University of Hong Kong</i>	
	<b>Pens to keyboards: Introducing secure online assessment across the institution. A project to service perspective</b> <i>Claire Irving, Newcastle University; Rebecca Gill, Newcastle University</i>	
	<b>The horses are still thirsty, but do they all want the same drink? Ongoing enhancement of assessment through an institution-wide programme</b> <i>Andy Lloyd, Cardiff University</i>	

# AHE Seminar Programme (Contd.)

Time	Session	Room
12.10	Nano Presentations (Contd.) <i>Chair: Pete Boyd</i>	Derby Suite
	<b>Busting assessment myths</b> <i>Teresa McConlogue, UCL; Mira Vogel, UCL</i>	
	<b>Developing a whole institutional, integrated and strategic approach to assessment and feedback</b> <i>Alastair Robertson, Abertay University</i>	
	<b>From fast food to a well balanced diet: Toward a program level approach to feedback</b> <i>Kimberly Wilder, Edinburgh Napier University</i>	
13.10	Lunch	Chester Suite
14.00	Choice of parallel sessions	
	Analysing and mapping assessment <i>Chair: Sue Bloxham</i>	Royce Suite
	<b>Making our mark: Transforming assessment at ARU Assessment Mapping: Experiences of a large Faculty</b> <i>Mark Kerrigan, Anglia Ruskin University; Sharon Waller, Anglia Ruskin University; Anne Devlin, Anglia Ruskin University</i>	
	<b>Building institutional assessment dialogue and development: A bricolage approach</b> <i>Caroline Reid, University of Bedfordshire; Cathy Minett-Smith, University of Bedfordshire</i>	
	<b>Beyond the words, beyond the modules: Visualising the programme assessment landscape</b> <i>Bryan Taylor, King's College London; Mark Russell, King's College London</i>	
	Fast feedback? <i>Chair: Sally Jordan</i>	Fairclough Suite
	<b>Self-assessment, Peer-instruction, and learning gain: Pedagogical design and evaluation</b> <i>Fabio Arico, University of East Anglia</i>	
	<b>Computer-based assessment and feedback: An evaluation</b> <i>Jill Barber, University of Manchester</i>	
	<b>An exploratory investigation of the use of Peer Assessment in a biomedical science programme</b> <i>Mary McGrath, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology</i>	
	Developing assessment policy and practice <i>Chair: Pete Boyd</i>	Rolls Suite
	<b>Comparative Judgement-based feedback versus the traditional approach: Similarities and differences</b> <i>Anneleen Mortier, Ghent University; Marije Lesterhuis, University of Antwerp; Peter Vlerick, Ghent University; Sven De Maeyer, University of Antwerp</i>	
	<b>Using authentic assessment in professional modules in teacher education in Vietnam: Potential changes from students' perspectives</b> <i>Huyen Nguyen, University of East Anglia</i>	
	<b>Re-thinking re-assessment</b> <i>Wayne Turnbull, Liverpool John Moores University; Marie Stowell, University of Worcester; Harvey Woolf, Ex-University of Wolverhampton</i>	

# AHE Seminar Programme (Contd.)

Time	Session	Room
14.00	Choice of parallel sessions (Contd.)	
	Feedback initiatives	Chair: Rebecca Westrup Derby Suite
	<p><b>Disappointment, gratitude and uncertainty: Initial findings from a critical discourse analysis of written feedback to students</b> <i>Liz Austen, Sheffield Hallam University</i></p> <p><b>Changing practice on feedback at an institutional level</b> <i>Sally Brown, Leeds Beckett University; Kay Sambell, Northumbria University</i></p> <p><b>The long way to change: The Italian teachers' resistances to assessment and quality assurance system</b> <i>Serafina Pastore, University of Bari; Monica Pentassuglia, University of Verona; Fausta Scardigno, University of Bari; Amelia Manuti, University of Bari; Antonietta Curci, University of Bari</i></p>	
	Aligned assessment for learning	Chair: Nicola Reimann Lancaster Suite
	<p><b>Scaling up assessment for learning: progress and prospects</b> <i>David Carless, University of Hong Kong</i></p> <p><b>Transformation through alignment</b> <i>Natasha Jankowski, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment; David W. Marshall, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment</i></p> <p><b>Engaging in Sectoral Enhancement of Assessment: An Irish perspective</b> <i>Elizabeth Noonan, National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching &amp; Learning in Higher Education (Ireland); Terry Maguire, National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching &amp; Learning in Higher Education (Ireland); Dr Geraldine O'Neill, Education Developer, National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching &amp; Learning (Ireland)</i></p>	
15.00	Refreshments	Chester Suite
15.20	Expert Panel: Question and Answer & Plenary: Reviewing key points from the day	Derby Suite
16.00	Close	

# Parallel Sessions

1

Staff assessment literacy

11.00-12.00

Derby

## Transforming assessment and feedback in a business school: Improving student satisfaction with an ambitious change management programme

**Speaker:** *Sally Everett, Anglia Ruskin University*

In 2012 the Higher Education Funding Council for England stated that despite demonstrable improvement in overall student satisfaction in the NSS, assessment and feedback consistently remains the area of lowest student satisfaction. Anglia Ruskin's Lord Ashcroft International Business School (LAIBS) was no exception, with a disappointing NSS 2013 score for assessment and feedback of 55.90% and overall satisfaction score of 72.6%. Something dramatic was needed to address this issue and transform our students' experience of assessment and feedback, and improve the 'only game in town' - the NSS. This paper presents an ambitious change management programme that was put in place between 2013-2015 which involved the rapid introduction of several practical initiatives and extensive staff training. The project included a completely new curriculum and assessment approach, 'big bang' implementation of Turnitin Grademark, dedicated workshops and conferences, the creation of faculty-wide feedback protocols, and the introduction of innovative approaches to formative feedback (including classroom response systems and online multiple choice testing). Quite astonishingly, the faculty saw its overall NSS 2014 assessment and feedback scores leap up by 20% (with some elements improving by 26%) and our overall NSS increasing by 15% to 87.6%. In NSS 2015, the faculty's scores rose again, including a rise of 5.5% for overall assessment and feedback to 81.2% which placed us well above the sector. We still have a way to go, but this significant improvement required a dramatic cultural shift and transformational journey that staff had to undertake. This paper therefore reflects on the work and resource that was required to support staff who found themselves embracing significant change in a very short period of time. This open and honest account of the rapid transformation focuses on the learning journey of staff in relation to the changes in practice around assessment and feedback. Research at the time explored how staff felt about the initiatives, the extent to which their practice changed, and their perception of the impact of these changes on assessment and feedback provided to students. Research into the impact of initiatives on staff and tutors remains relatively limited as much recent literature focuses on the student perspective (e.g. Boud and Falchikov, 2007, Bloxham and Campbell, 2010, and Evans, 2013). In offering a staff-centric perspective, it allows us to test the hypothesis that staff commitment to, and enthusiasm for, good practice in assessment and feedback is key to students' engagement and satisfaction, and can be extended into other learning and teaching priorities such as work to enhance assessment literacy, develop inclusive practices, and reduce incidences of assessment offences (Caldwell, 2010).

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## Let's face it: A trans-disciplinary approach to exploring, articulating and striving for valid, reliable, aligned and transparent assessment

**Speaker:** *Karen Ford, University of Sheffield*

Achieving a wider and more deeply rooted transformation of assessment practices beyond the individual to departmental, faculty or institutional level is arguably dependent on the parties involved developing a shared understanding of the challenges and practicalities associated with striving for (and hopefully achieving) more valid, reliable, aligned and transparent assessment to support learning. This presentation outlines a simple and unassuming approach that has been used to promote assessment literacy among a range of staff with assessment responsibilities (interestingly, the literacy assessment literature appears to focus primarily on student literacy e.g. see Deeley & Bovill, 2015). By undertaking a short fictitious marking activity, participants gain a shared marking experience which provides a mechanism for enabling meaningful and productive discussion, and candid sharing of practice (both sound and problematic) beyond disciplinary and structural boundaries encouraging a trans-disciplinary approach (see McClam & Flores-Scott, 2012; Ji & Jeong, 2010). The marking activity has been designed for those with any level of experience and highlights the issues that arise when endeavouring to ensure valid and reliable assessment and the processes and strategies which can support this. These include standardising assessors to the criteria before assessment, approaches to moderation and mechanisms for promoting transparency to support learning, such as providing opportunities for students to get to grips with the criteria. University policies and guidelines are also presented and considered in light of the processes and strategies that participants identify as being part of their departmental practices (or not). Aspects of Constructive Alignment (Biggs & Tang, 2011) in relation to assessment are also highlighted, in particular the crucial relationship among the intended learning outcomes, the assessment task (and brief) and associated assessment criteria. After participating in the activity, and the lively discussion and debates that typically follow, participants are encouraged to investigate their departmental practices in more detail and seek clarity where processes are unclear or implicit. While this is particularly important for those new to marking, more experienced participants with wider responsibilities have reported using the discussions for informing the development of assessment practices more widely in their department e.g. a consistent approach to standardisation across modules. This presentation will provide an outline of the scaffolded marking activity, the context in which it was developed and the design rationale - an experiential approach to promoting assessment literacy among staff. Participant responses and feedback to date suggests this activity has the potential to provide a first step to transforming practice beyond the individual from the ground up. This begs the question: could this rather simple trans-disciplinary approach offer a transformational starting point by creating the space and opportunity for colleagues to reach the shared understandings on which a more deeply rooted transformation of assessment practices beyond the individual depends?

### References

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## Staff assessment literacy and electronic management of coursework

**Speakers:** *Kate Litherland, University of Chester; Dr Karen Willis, University of Chester*

Mandatory online submission of all written coursework via Turnitin was introduced across the University of Chester and its partner institutions with effect from September 2014. This paper outlines some of the key practical aspects of managing the transition, but is not primarily concerned with the technical aspects of the change. Instead, the focus is on the insights into staff "assessment literacy" which were exposed as a consequence of the move to electronic management of coursework.

The short presentation begins with a brief outline of the approach taken to managing the transition to online submission, intended to ensure consistency and fairness in student experience whilst allowing for disciplinary variety where appropriate. The development and introduction of the new assessment policy occasioned discussions with staff across the institution in many areas of assessment literacy and feedback practice. As Forsyth et al (2015) have observed, the increasing focus on developing students' assessment literacy may not be equalled in terms of staff development, and this point resonates with many of the experiences discussed in this paper. The conversations about assessment and feedback revealed both a number of "institutional myths" (Jisc, 2013), and individual naïveties, particularly in the area of "digital assessment literacy" (Eyal, 2012). Although these understandings about staff assessment literacy emerged during discussions about electronic management of coursework, the tensions which were revealed are not confined to this context, and have implications far beyond it, as identified by Price et al. (2011). The suitability of various assessment types for online submission; marking and feedback practices, in particular, use of standardised marking criteria; the role of formative assessment (identified by Popham, 2009 as a key area of assessment literacy), and understandings of how online tools can support both formative and summative assessments, were topics which reoccurred frequently in conversations with staff in the transition period. All these issues needed to be tackled for electronic management of coursework to work smoothly, and in summarising both the issues and the approaches to dealing with them, this paper offers some reflections on the value of the process, not just for quality assurance, but also in terms of enhancements to assessment and feedback practices across the institution.

## References

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## Students and feedback

11.00-12.00

Fairclough

### Understanding students' experiences of feedback: Implications for institutional strategy and research agendas

**Speaker:** Alasdair Blair, De Montford University; Samantha Shields, University of Hull

Research on assessment and feedback has proved to be a fertile area of academic study. Despite the significant body of literature that explores student understanding of feedback, little focus has been given to the complexity of collecting data on students' experiences of feedback. Like other social groups, this data is not always easy to access and may give a partial view of students' experiences. The findings from the data are also shaped by the different student groups and cohorts, as determined by such factors as culture, educational attainment levels, prior experiences of feedback and subject discipline. This paper addresses this issue through a comparative investigation of existing articles on feedback over a ten year period from 2005-2015. Through a multi-method investigation, we discuss the complexities of gathering research data and identify recommendations to address these methodological limitations. One of the more striking findings of our research is that there is a dearth of a discussion surrounding the academic methodologies relating to the study of feedback. Thus, while much of the research into feedback practices has used a mixture of

questionnaires and interviews, we know relatively little about the comparative effectiveness of these approaches. This is not just the result of the absence of articles that specifically discuss these matters. Rather, it is because articles on feedback tend to just discuss the methods that have been adopted for the study concerned and do not engage in comparative discussions as to the appropriateness of the approach adopted in comparison to existing knowledge. This lack of discussion is a weakness of the literature as a whole. This is despite the fact that data collection is not necessarily a straightforward task. This is in part because the student experience may be very different amongst students due to the type of institution attended, the discipline studied and student demographic profiles. In short, it may be naïve to capture data about the student experience of feedback without understanding the context in which it is delivered and received. As a result, the very collection of this data can be problematic with particular student groups being more or less likely to participate in the research process. The paper argues that there is a need to view feedback findings through a wider context given the fact that the findings are inevitably shaped by the data collection process. Viewing feedback through this medium is important because it permits a clearer understanding of feedback through tackling an area of work that so far has been overlooked. This is achieved by first of all examining the methodological approach of the paper. Secondly, by exploring the methodological approaches that have been adopted. Thirdly, by comparing the findings. Finally, by discussing the nature of the findings and the implications for future research.

## References

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### Improving undergraduate written summative assessment feedback through powerful student engagement: A case study.

**Speaker:** Jane Rand, York St John University

This research was borne of a University Department short-life working group that focussed on written feedback on undergraduate summative assessment. The group developed an existing assessment feedback form and Departmental staff agreed to pilot the new form during an academic year. Key to the evaluation of the developed form was the combined centrality of student and staff perspectives. A significant feature of this research was the ambition to promote authentic student-centred evaluative practice. The project was supported by the University's Students as Researchers scheme, which meant that a student could be employed as a research assistant and be integral to both the design and operation of the study. Weaver's (2006) research into students' perceptions of written feedback proved pivotal; from this and other relevant studies (Mags 2014; McCann and Saunders 2009; Carless 2007; Glover and Brown 2006) three broad objectives were identified for exploration with students after they received Semester One written summative feedback. Focus groups were identified as an appropriate context within which the student researcher could gather data on:

1. How students engage with summative feedback. That is, how students understand, approach and experience it.
2. How comprehensive is students' understanding of the strengths and areas for development of their work as a result of the summative feedback?
3. What do students do as a result of receiving summative feedback?

Thirty (year one and two) students consented to participate in the research, representing four distinct programmes of study. Overwhelmingly, students reported locating their grade before reading the

written comments. Most students reviewed the written comments as a secondary activity, although many reported never reading the written comments, and often students reported delaying reading the comments particularly if they perceived the grade as 'bad'. Most students read the comments only once, sometimes because they felt it would have no relevance to subsequent assessments. Students described not understanding their feedback more often than understanding it, and themes of: inconsistencies, vagueness, desire for positive comments, and desire for personalisation emerged from the data. This presentation will outline our ongoing responses to the findings and argue that engaging students in, and within, evaluation of feedback processes is powerfully improving. Implications for practice will be considered.

## References

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## Half as much but twice as good: Constructing effective written feedback in any subject

**Speakers:** *Amanda Sykes, University of Glasgow; David Morrison, Plymouth University*

Have NSS scores in assessment and feedback got you down? Have you got another 400 assignments to mark this weekend...and you're pretty sure most students won't even pick them up? Are some students just making the same mistakes over and over? We can help! The LEAF project (Leading Enhancements in Assessment and Feedback) was a two-year, multi-university project which looked at ways to make assessment practice simultaneously less overwhelming for staff and more useful for students across a range of subjects. This work at The University of Glasgow spanned in-depth reviews of assessment and feedback in History, Biosciences, Economic, Mechanical Engineering, Business Management. Our outcomes draw on desk-based reviews and staff interviews of full-programme assessment practice in the subjects above; student interviews, focus groups, and surveys in each; interdisciplinary coordination and evaluation across subjects; and finally on existing empirical research on working memory, expertise development, and knowledge transfer. While each subject we reviewed appeared at first to have very different assessment types, teaching structures, and content needs for delivering feedback, taking a step back and looking comparatively showed more similarity than difference. At the same time, students in every subject expressed serious concerns about the incoherent variation in feedback across their own subject, and even more so across subjects. In this short presentation we will focus on one of the key outcomes of LEAF, defining a simple, but powerful approach to improving both the ease and effectiveness of written feedback. We will discuss how feedback can be approached systematically to reduce the time it takes to mark assignments, while simultaneously helping students make better use of the feedback given. We will also discuss what is known as 'ipsative' feedback, which helps develop a portfolio of feedback over the student's career to see patterns of progress or problems that isolated feedback may not show.

## References

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3

**Driving assessment policy**

11.00-12.00

Rolls

**Institutional change and academic culture: a framework and principles-led approach to designing programme level assessment**

**Speakers:** *Jessica Evans, The Open University; Simon Bromley, Sheffield Hallam University*

The HE sector seeks to support a more cohesive and holistic student experience (Harvey and Kosman, 2014), but the creation of frameworks and policies to support this can bring about sharp encounters with the practices and assumptions of individual course and module teams. There are recognised organisational processes that are more likely to lead to success in assessment innovation - for example, the curriculum mapping audit and enhancement process (O'Neill, 2009; Jessop, 2010) or the 'principles' approach of David Nichols and colleagues associated with REAP. However, defining the key principles that specify the overall objectives of an assessment framework and implementing them can still be difficult because of organisational structures that are not conducive to taking a holistic approach to teaching and therefore learning, as well as an academic teaching culture focused on the valorisation of disciplinary subject knowledge. This paper describes a major Faculty of Social Sciences scholarship-based change project that created an innovative set of policies and principles for assessment for a curriculum spanning ten programmes in social sciences and psychology. A curriculum mapping audit (O'Neill, 2009; Jessop, 2010) had revealed a repetitive and limited range of assessment methods with skills distributed arbitrarily over study levels. This project had the objective of assuring that modular learning outcomes contributed, coherently and developmentally across levels of study, towards programme-wide learning outcomes and graduate attributes. The Faculty needed a framework in which teaching staff could take a significant step towards providing students with the means of internalising assessment criteria and developing meaningful independent learning and key practical and professional skills. The paper describes the need, process and the outcome of the project, reflecting in particular on the obstacles encountered, such as the deep attachments staff had to a modular perspective on the student experience and the assessment of subject knowledge rather than to programme-wide outcomes, and the resistance by staff to thinking of themselves as teaching practitioners who should reflect on and evaluate their own work. A wider institutional barrier was that a number of change programmes orchestrated by senior University management, with weak relations to Faculties, meant that there was not only 'change fatigue' but also little support for those seeking strategic change in assessment practices beyond small existing pockets of innovation. To move academic teaching practice forwards, the new assessment policy had to create a cohesive and coherent assessment experience in a multi-disciplinary curriculum - but not restrictive, insofar as it had to allow for each programme's distinctiveness. It had to construct a policy primarily as a set of principles that were clearly flagged as consensus in the research, be written so as to be interpreted as non-contentious, but also be specific enough to be translated into changes in assessment design. The paper makes the case that these conceptual formulations and principles - the idiom in which the policy is written - needed to be workable within a modular structure where modules contribute to a range of different programmes. Furthermore, the paper stresses that if changes to assessment practices are to be sustainable then it is necessary to re-structure the teams and affiliatory units in which academics design and produce assessment.

## References

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### The transition to grade-based marking for assessing student work at university: Institutional change and challenge

**Speaker:** *Kamilah Jooganah, Nottingham Trent University*

The use of a percentage scale to mark student assessment at university is widespread across the Higher Education sector. Notwithstanding this, it has been argued that the use of numbers to make qualitative judgements about student work is based on flawed assumptions and reveals little in terms of student learning (Dalzeil, 1998; Rust, 2011; Yorke, 2011). In other words, the use of percentages is not fit-for-purpose and what is needed, as others would argue (e.g. Dalzeil, 1998), is a cultural shift in how we assess student performance. However, when introducing an improved assessment tool across an institution, contradictions within the tool itself can prevent this cultural and conceptual shift. This paper discusses the introduction of Grade-Based Assessment (GBA) across a Higher Education Institution. This new assessment tool aimed to enable better and more transparent judgements of student achievement, and effect changes to assessment practices to foreground the enhancement of student learning. Activity theory (Engeström, 2001) is used to provide a framework for interpreting institutional change and resistance. First of all it can help us understand that institutional transition in relation to marking practices can be a form of expansive transformation (Engeström, 2001). In this case enough key actors in the university community questioned the efficacy of the existing tool (the percentage scale). This led to the creation of a new activity system, GBA, which had the potential to radically redefine assessment practices across the institution. As well as being a useful conceptual tool for understanding changes in assessment practices, activity theory can also provide a sociocultural explanation of why changes to marking practices may be resisted. For example, Engeström (2001) writes that various factors may prevent a full expansive transformation from happening, such as when the introduction of a new tool (e.g. new approach to assessing students) fails to redefine the activity due to the contradictions within the tool itself. In this case to ease the transition to a grade-based system, grades were also assigned numbers - a situation which caused some academic staff to continue to conceptualise and approach student assessment in terms of percentages. This conceptual mismatch partially blocked the intended cultural shift, meaning the anticipated benefits of the GBA system could not be fully realised. The issues raised here will offer valuable insights regarding the process of implementing institutional change in relation to GBA that other universities can draw on, including those considering transitioning to the 15-point grade point average (GPA) scale as recommended by the Higher Education Academy and the Minister for Higher Education.

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## Changing colours: What happens when you make enhancement an imperative?

**Speaker:** *Juliet Williams, University of Winchester*

The TESTA Project started in 2009 on an opt-in basis at Winchester, with enthusiastic programmes signing up to take part. The TESTA process provides rich data surrounding the design of assessment and feedback across whole programmes through a variety of evaluative methods that focus on the student experience. As such TESTA acts as a catalyst for programme teams to make strategic changes to the design of assessment and feedback based directly on student feedback. For the programmes who engaged with TESTA it was highly effective, but many avoided engaging in case it brought unwanted suggestions of change. The external reputation of TESTA and internal glimpses of its value led our Vice Chancellor to mandate that TESTA should be undertaken on all re-validating undergraduate degree programmes. In 2014, our quality and enhancement units were merged into one department so that quality assurance could better serve enhancement. All re-validating programmes were made aware of the requirement to undergo TESTA as part of periodic review, but we feared that TESTA itself would change its colours; from an exciting enhancement initiative for enthusiasts, to a dull, homogenised tick box exercise with a whiff of managerialism about it. We were wrong. This presentation tells the story of why TESTA hasn't changed its colours, and explores how it has scaled up and become embedded in Winchester's revalidation process. Vivality, it asks the question why resistance to TESTA by fiat has been minimal. The answers are to be found in:

- programme buy-in to the approach as a self-evident 'good';
- its enhancement focus;
- its supportive and collegial process;
- programme teams take responsibility for reshaping the design in the light of TESTA.

As a result TESTA has had a direct impact on the re-design of programmes undergoing revalidation, predominantly through re-balancing formative and summative assessment, re-thinking assessment patterns to create planned cycles of learning for students across whole programmes, and providing students with more opportunities for formative feedback. Programmes who have undergone TESTA have commented on its usefulness in areas of student engagement, clarifying goals and standards, overcoming surface approaches to learning, and encouraging motivation among students. As well as its impact on the redesigning of programmes, TESTA has confirmed areas of strength, providing strong grounds for the continuation of good practice based directly on student experience and feedback. This presentation reflects on data provided by Programme Leaders surrounding the changes made to programmes resulting from TESTA. It demonstrates the effectiveness of using existing processes and systems to transform assessment and feedback across whole programmes in an institution-wide scale up. It answers the question why it has worked.

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### Involving students in assessment change

11.00-12.00

Royce

### Assessment for empowerment: Using assessment criteria to create a transformative dialogic learning space

**Speakers:** *Jennifer Bain, Goldsmiths, University of London; Lili Golmohammadi, Goldsmiths, University of London*

Higher Education (HE) assessment practice remains imbued with the principles of behaviourism. The use of learning outcomes and 'constructively aligned' assessment criteria are based on behaviouristic principles, often requiring educators and learners to conform to a model where learning is pre-determined, defined in a way that negates the need for discussion and instead creates a 'dialogic vacuum' around assessment (Bain, 2010). This can present a paradox for educators who seek to integrate more contemporary theories of learning, such as Transformative Learning (Mezirow, 2000) and Expansive Learning (Engeström, 2009), into their practice. Drawing on a research study spanning 2012 to 2015, this presentation seeks to examine this paradoxical dilemma by outlining an assessment approach that frames and uses assessment criteria in ways that seek to empower

learners. Presented by both 'teacher' and 'learner', it engages colleagues in considering dialogic assessment practice from these dual perspectives, threading theory and practice together to offer an illuminative case study on the impact of this assessment approach at HE departmental level. The case study focuses on using assessment criteria to help transform the 'dialogic vacuum' of assessment into a rich and vibrant community of practice, seeking to embody a set of principles that might be adopted as part of instigating incremental change to HE assessment practice (Bain, 2010). It examines the 'assessment vacuum' – the empty dialogic space that often surrounds assessment practice - and offers insights into how this might be filled with learning conversations and narratives, creating a transformative learning space that is internal to assessment itself (Bain, 2010). This approach draws on a conceptual model of Assessment for Becoming (Bain, 2010) that promotes assessment practice that must value and validate the experience students bring to the classroom, giving them a voice that has space, audience and influence (Leitch et al., 2005) and integrates assessment as a component of pedagogy that allows for collaborative and reflexive feedback and marking (Boud and Hawke, 2003; Hounsell, 2007). Insights shared from the perspective of the learner contrast the experiences of this dialogic practice in assessment, to prior experiences of being assessed in HE that followed more standard assessment patterns, highlighting ways that this approach constrained creative and critical thinking and impacted on longer term subject confidence (Boud and Falchikov, 2007). The learner perspective illustrates how using assessment criteria to focus learning conversations and narratives changed perception of assessment as an indistinct procedure exclusively enacted by others (Boud, 2007) to a transparent and inclusive process, revealing how a clearly outlined assessment framework gave a clarity that anchored thinking and removed the anxiety of being 'wrong' whilst freeing the learner to take risks and experiment with greater confidence. The presentation concludes by supporting colleagues in considering how the assessment principles and practice outlined through the case study might be applied in other HE contexts.

### Enhancing assessment via student change agents

**Speaker:** *Jenny Marie, University College London*

The large increase in UK student numbers over the past 20 years, combined with high levels of assessment arising from modularisation, has resulted in heavy marking loads for academic staff. This can result in staff feeling they do not have time to make enhancements to their assessment and feedback practices (Jessop, McNab, and Gubby, 2012). The increase in student numbers has also led to a greater diversity of student needs and expectations. Universities have increasingly used students as 'change agents' to adapt to these, as students provide additional capacity and insight into the student experience. It benefits students by empowering them, increasing their sense of belonging to their institution and counteracting a consumerism mind-set, which can be counterproductive for independent learning (Dunne and Owen, 2013). The 'change agents' model has been used to address university-wide assessment issues. The FASTECH project, run by the universities of Bath and Winchester, employed students to work with lecturers to enhance assessment through technology (<http://jiscdesignstudio.pbworks.com/w/page/51251270/FASTECH%20Project>). The University of Greenwich uses students to help run TESTA, which is offered on a consultancy basis (<https://magic.piktochart.com/output/8180064-testagreeniwch-so-far>). These projects demonstrate the effectiveness of using students as change agents for enhancing assessment and feedback. However, they do not address whether it is more effective for departments to participate voluntarily or for lowest performing departments to be compelled to participate. The latter may introduce this mode of working to parts of the university that most require it but it could also raise issues of commitment to partnership working and the outputs of the work. This paper seeks to consider these issues through the UCL ChangeMakers scholars scheme, which was set up in autumn 2015 ([www.ucl.ac.uk/changemakers/scholars](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/changemakers/scholars)). 27 students were recruited during the autumn term of 2015/16 to work with 19 departments, which constitutes approximately a quarter of the university. Participating departments were selected by the institution on the basis of their NSS results. Students and departments are currently (January 2016) negotiating what the students will do, based on their experiences of assessment and feedback in the department. Work already agreed varies from running focus groups, designing feedback proformas and creating student commentaries on samples of feedback. Work will continue until the end of the spring term. This paper will use the results of the scheme's evaluation to consider the effectiveness of interventions made in a context of compulsion.

The evaluation will occur via an analysis of the resources created and their use in departments, students' reflective diaries of undertaking the work and surveys completed by both students and staff.

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### **Students' positive experiences of assessment and feedback: What do we know about exemplary practice from student nominations for excellence?**

**Speaker:** *Jacqueline Potter, Keele University*

The discourse around assessment and feedback practices in UK Higher Education (UKHE) typically is focused on the need to improve practice (HEA, 2012) that derives from annual considerations of the National Student Survey data within and across institutions. That framing of assessment is often focused on negative student perceptions or experiences. By contrast, this presentation reports on a pilot project that sought: (i) to explore the feasibility of using student nominations for excellent teachers as a dataset to cast light on exemplary assessment and feedback practices; and (ii) to develop ways of sharing a positive discourse in one institution around exemplary assessment and feedback practices. The presentation presents themes around assessment and feedback that emerge from nomination comments submitted to the University's award scheme to recognise excellent teaching and considers how to share this data with others in the University. The work presented here aims to address the assertion by Skelton (2009) that teaching award schemes do little to raise overall performance (of teaching). Soliciting for student nominations, which are then used to evidence exceptional or exemplary practice by applicants for awards or by judging panels to choose award winners, has surged in UKHE in recent years. However, there has been very limited sharing of information from such schemes on what is valued and effective (but see Bradley et al., 2015) and there is no published information from such schemes on assessment and feedback practices. It could be expected that such schemes will gather relevant information that could be used to improve teaching because these schemes privilege conceptions such as, exhibiting certain teaching behaviours in a skilful way and implementing a student focus effectively or nurturing the development of individual students (rather than for example, valuing conceptions such as engaging in the scholarship of teaching, innovating in teaching or developing the teaching of others, see Gibbs, 2008). This work presents three themes of skilful behaviour that emerge from the nominations to an institutional award scheme. These themes are related to contemporary concerns of teachers and students in HE around fairness (Flint and Johnson, 2011), assessment literacy (Price et al., 2012) and assessment for learning. In each case, examples and notions of excellent practice are often linked to affective impacts of teachers' behaviours on their students. The work then considers how such 'positive stories' of assessment and feedback by some individuals can be used to inspire and support other educators to develop their practices. A range of ways that positive experiences of assessment and feedback have been used, or can be used, to develop and support the teaching practices of others are suggested and discussed.

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5

## Assessing student and graduate attributes

11.00-12.00

Lancaster

### Validating excellence in the context of course-wide learning outcomes

**Speaker:** *David Boud, Deakin University, Australia*

In a world of standards-based higher education, all graduates from a given course should have met the same threshold outcomes. However, students also need to differentiate themselves from others. While this may be in the co-curricular domain, universities have responsibility to validate academic work which shows distinctiveness and excellence. Employers are rightly suspicious of grade point averages and similar metrics as they provide no information about what a student can do. How then can we enable students to show their unique achievements? Deakin University has introduced what it terms, Deakin Hallmarks. These consist of credentials that complement formal assessment requirements. They indicate outstanding performance in the area of one of the university graduate attributes or course (programme)-level learning outcomes. Students well advanced in their course may choose at their discretion to submit work that exceeds that required to meet the specific learning outcomes of a unit or module. Recognition processes take place outside the normal grading process for assignments. A Hallmark takes the form of a digital badge issued with the authority of the University. They are unique in that they bear the insignia of the University and the criteria, evidence, and metadata associated with the conferral of the award are embedded within the hallmark. They recognise high performance without norm-referencing. The first award of a Hallmark was made in 2015 and different courses are currently trialling different processes for their generation. The presentation will focus on the concept, their place in a course, mechanisms for judging them and report from the early stages of this innovation.

### Using e-Portfolios to assess and strengthen student competencies at Bradford College

**Speakers:** *Richard Nelson, Bradford College; Stuart Blacklock, Livetext*

#### *Abstract*

e-Portfolios are a method of gathering direct evidence of deep learning that occurs among students. In this presentation, the structure and process of a co-curricular portfolio pilot with a self-reflective component are described. Using LiveText as the assessment platform, students at Bradford College upload artifacts documenting how their participation in student associations/activities, advocacy, research, community service, service learning and wellness activities contributes to their collaborative leadership abilities, communication skills, and formative development of professionalism. Considerations for creation of assessment rubrics, prompt design, and selection of appropriate checkpoints to maximize engagement are addressed.

#### *Extended Description*

Empirical evidence (Zimmerman et al, 2007) suggests that crucial skills for professional development, such as communication with diverse groups, are difficult to teach effectively through lectures in the health professions.

There have been efforts by institutions' co-curricular effectiveness committee to analyze anecdotal qualitative and quantitative evidence on achievement of communication as a learning outcome. From this work have come proposals to pilot a portfolio for the purpose of strengthening direct evidence of learning around leadership and collaboration, communication, and professionalism. This presentation focuses on the process of designing and piloting a co-curricular e-Portfolio project with a self-reflective component, supported by LiveText as an Assessment System to track participation in student associations, advocacy, research, community service, service learning and wellness activities.

There are several challenges in implementing portfolios for physical therapy and occupational therapy programs. First clinical experiences and internships are considered to be out of class experiences. Yet, such activities are integral parts of the curriculum aligned to both core values of the institution and to specialty programmatic accreditation standards around professionalism. Therefore, constructs need to be carefully defined. Student and faculty workload need to be taken into consideration, as well as the creation of appropriate activities and guidelines

The presentation will address design considerations for self-reflection on knowledge and skill development, as well as showing how Bradford College is able to standardise assessment to increase student learning at Bradford College. Intended to be tailored to a broad audience with an interest in portfolio implementation, participants will have the opportunity to critically examine the design of an assessment rubric containing performance criteria and the writing prompts around self-reflection so as to determine whether they enable meaningful documentation of personal and professional growth and interactions with peers and mentors (Mann et al., 2009; Plaza et al., 2007; Ash & Clayton, 2009).

## References

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### Session Learning Outcomes:

- (1) Identify activities that contribute to the formative development of professionalism, leadership and communication skills.
- (2) Relay practical considerations in piloting a co-curricular e-Portfolios.
- (3) Examine writing prompts for self-reflection.
- (4) Discuss appropriate performance criteria for assessment rubrics in co-curricular portfolios.
- (5) Describe how LiveText can be used as an Assessment System to support the implementation of co-curricular e-Portfolios.

## From essay to assignment: The challenges of reforming EAP written assessments

**Speakers:** *Julian Yeo, BPP University; Jonathan Dunn, BPP University*

This talk will be about the way that we are realigning the EAP department into a more central position within the university. Where traditionally EAP departments have been working in isolation and fundamentally working on improving and assessing students' language levels. We are working with subject teachers to gain an understanding of the wider needs of students in an EAP context. To this end we are developing assessments that match more closely the assessments done once on programme, and are placing more of an emphasis on process writing, research, academic malpractice and working to deadlines, rather than timed essays in exam conditions. We believe that this is a better preparation for the students and is more likely to help them to success in their academic careers.

When the School of English and Foundation Studies (SOFELS) at BPP University was founded in 2010, it started assessing international students writing through a timed written essay exam. Perhaps due to the influence of the IELTS written exam, this has become a common way to assess international students' level of written English. However, as the school has grown it has become increasingly clear that this was an insufficient way to test students' readiness to tackle higher education studies. In response to an expanding number of programmes, feedback from tutors and students, and also from the literature on this subject (Hyland, 2004; Johns, 1997) it was felt that a timed final written essay might not best prepare students to handle the written assignments they would face on their destination programmes. A move towards delivering programmes online has also prompted a rethink to assessing writing more through submitted assignment and portfolio work. We believe that these changes reflect a shift in the way that EAP departments operate and the way that they are perceived across the university: by working closely with other university departments we can promote consistency of approach and standards. We can ensure that the EAP courses are more tailored to student needs and that we are more carefully reflecting the process of academic research and writing (White and Arndt, 1991) that the students will be expected to undertake once on their destination programme. This presentation will give an overview of the changes, comparing the original with the current assessment design and explaining the rationale for the changes. It will then discuss the challenges that this change poses for the school, internally and externally. Internally these include developing appropriate guidelines and marking criteria (Coffin et al., 2003), retraining examiners and the impact of assessment changes on teaching (Weigle, 2002). Externally this has included the need to investigate the nature of assignments students will face in their destination disciplines, and to co-ordinate assignments with other subject modules on SOFELS' preparation programmes to ensure consistency and avoid overlap. It will conclude by looking at the lessons learned from introducing these changes to EAP written assessments.

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## Analysing and mapping assessment

14.00-15.00

Royce

### Making our Mark: Transforming assessment at ARU assessment mapping: Experiences of a large Faculty

**Speakers:** *Mark Kerrigan, Anglia Ruskin University; Sharon Waller Anglia Ruskin University; Anne Devlin, Anglia Ruskin University*

Beginning in March 2013 with a review of its institutional assessment and feedback practices, informed by the Higher Education Academy's framework, A Marked Improvement (HEA, 2012), Anglia Ruskin University has been focusing on the enhancement of assessment practice through an institution-wide initiative, 'Making our Mark: transforming assessment at ARU'. Through the collaboration of faculties, professional support services and external experts in the field of assessment and feedback, the initiative identified priority areas for improvement including the enhancement of staff and student assessment literacy and the development of a holistic student assessment experience. Linked to, and informed by this work, the Faculty of Health, Social Care & Education recently designed and delivered a large-scale assessment mapping programme, to promote faculty-wide change. These changes included a review of assessment type, timing, performance and student feedback. Assessment mapping is a core activity in effective curriculum design and delivery and is often included in validation documentation. Despite this, the staff and student experience of assessment is frequently a source of tension and is consequently of strategic importance to institutions. Indeed, holistic assessment design and the strategic use of feedback was articulated by the Jisc-funded ESCAPE project and then further explored in the Google-ALT-C prize-winning Map My Programme open educational resource (OER). The consequences of course assessment strategies are reflected in student responses to the assessment and feedback question group in the annual National Student Survey (NSS) which typically register lower satisfaction levels in comparison with other question groups. Consequently, the goal of the faculty initiative was to implement a large-scale assessment review programme, to promote faculty-wide change and enhance the student assessment experience. Furthermore, the successful completion of this initiative was seen as a vehicle to increase the number of students achieving good honours degrees. In this 10 minute presentation we will discuss our experiences of delivering a faculty-wide assessment mapping and review programme which impacted all departments and over 35 academic courses. The

session will explore successes as well as the challenges encountered and overcome and share lessons learned, the good practices that have resulted and the impact on student satisfaction. Delegates will be given access to the ARUM, the faculty-mapping tool, to take away and use in their own work.

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### **Building institutional assessment dialogue and development: A bricolage approach**

**Speakers:** *Caroline Reid, University of Bedfordshire; Cathy Minett-Smith, University of Bedfordshire*

Assessment and feedback at the University of Bedfordshire is identified by the NSS as a relative strength across the institution, but to maintain this and achieve on-going enhancement of the staff and student experience of assessment requires open sharing of practice and the creation of a developmental dialogue. To these ends 2015-16 has been framed the 'Year of Assessment' at Bedfordshire, with colleagues at institutional, faculty, department and course level encouraged to engage in a broad and deep exploration of our assessment practices. Recognising assessment as a 'touchstone of educational values' (Neumann et al., 2002) where the selection of what to assess and the means by which to assess understanding depend on the conceptual map of the discipline and the epistemological values underpinning this can present a real challenge when considering how to operationalise an institutional assessment project. The 'Year of Assessment' addresses this by offering a matrix approach, where assessment may be explored within disciplinary domains, but also across four main institutional themes focusing on:

1. Assessment for learning (including our assessment practices)
2. Engaging students (in assessment and feedback)
3. Effective assessment strategies
4. Using technology

To marry both institutional and disciplinary approaches we decided to adopt a 'bricolage' approach, a process of undertaking research, projects or actions that brings together a range of multidisciplinary theories and approaches to make meaning and 'move beyond the blinds of particular disciplines and peer through a conceptual window to new knowledge production' (Kincheloe 2005). Creating a bricolage facilitates the gathering of a plurality of innovative and effective assessment and feedback practices and processes, such as snapshots of innovative assessment tasks or feedback modes, to larger curricular developments or re-examination of accepted regulatory processes. This broad and inclusive bricolage presents a series of products and processes as a catalyst for assessment and feedback dialogue that prompts us to revisit and review accepted practices and critically construct new meanings and new approaches that will refresh and further enhance our assessment practice.

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## Beyond the words, beyond the modules: Visualising the programme assessment landscape

**Speakers:** *Bryan Taylor, King's College London; Mark Russell, King's College London*

The detail of assessment design is typically the work of module teams. They will align the module's assessment with the teaching and the intended learning outcomes. Module myopia, however, can hinder the coherence of an holistic (programmatic) assessment design and limit the benefits of feedback for students. Indeed, focusing on the module without considering the assessment as a programme-wide design can also lead to unintended consequences; this might include an imbalance of assessment methods, bunching of assessment and presenting assessment as a series of discrete and unconnected learning opportunities. Such unintended consequences are not always evident in reading the assessment narratives presented within programme handbooks. We argue that benefits arise if the narratives are teased out and presented using additional (visual) formats. A university-wide pilot project at King's College London has developed and implemented a series of graphical tools to represent the assessment and feedback dimensions of taught programmes of study. The project team has collaborated with academic and professional services staff from a number of disciplines. The tools have been adopted in programme deliberations, review and communications, and adapted with student and staff feedback. The tools are useful with a variety of audiences, and take several approaches:

- They show assessment and feedback activities and their interrelationship as temporal entities; objects on a timeline, which may combine to create an unexpectedly large workload all at once for students or staff.
- They depict assessment activities as module components, with an emphasis on their contribution to the overall module mark. We use the terminology of 'no-stakes' and 'low-', 'medium-' and 'high-stakes' to reinforce the approach we take of considering the design from the student perspective, where the 'stakes', in terms of attainment in an assessment activity, may be more meaningful than the terms 'formative' and 'summative' assessment.
- They show the blend of assessment types across a programme, on a module-by-module basis, allowing programme teams to reflect on the balance between method and weighting of assessment.
- They demonstrate feedback and 'feed-forward' links between assessment activities, within and across modules, weighted to credit score, throughout a programme. These can help in validating design assumptions around these activities' purpose as measurements of learning and means by which knowledge and skills are developed.

The project team is now engaged upon several streams of activity to develop and embed the tools, chief among them the 'assessment landscape', around the university. Accessibility is also a core activity; the team is working on a means of facilitating wider, non-expert access throughout the university to some of the tools' features, using commonly-available university IT systems, such as Sharepoint. By sharing the project's work so far, setting the endeavour in the context of a university undergoing significant strategic change, we hope to show how a combination of informal networks, socialisation of ideas and deployment of 'quick wins' can bring change in a complex environment. Crucially, by beginning and developing an institution-wide conversation around this work, we can discuss an increasing engagement among staff with assessment. This is leading, in many cases, to enhanced assessment literacy among academic staff, professional staff and students.

**Self-assessment, Peer-instruction, and learning gain: Pedagogical design and evaluation**

**Speaker:** *Fabio Arico, University of East Anglia*

This presentation details the principles of a teaching methodology that combines Self-assessment and Peer-instruction with the aim to mutually re-enforce the positive effects generated by both pedagogies, and devise useful metrics to measure dimensions of student learning gain. In the first part of the presentation, we outline how Self-assessment and Peer-instruction (Mazur, 1997) can be seamlessly blended within a teaching algorithm that alternates a class-discussion and collaborative learning component with a reflection and self-regulation component. The second part of the presentation outlines the results of an empirical evaluation of our pedagogical approach. Our contribution addresses a number of issues in the current HE pedagogical debate. We observe that whilst investigation on Self-assessment practices is still underdeveloped in HE (Taras, 2015), rigorous studies on Peer-instruction effectiveness are still restricted to a limited number of disciplines. With our analysis, we contribute to the evaluation of Self-assessment and Peer-instruction practices by combining the two pedagogies within a coherent framework, scalable to different contexts. With the aim of improving students' self-reflection skills, we modify the standard Peer-instruction algorithm, introducing a Self-assessment component. In line with Nielsen et al. (2014), we argue that the benefits of Peer-instruction can be magnified if students are led to reflect on their abilities prior to engaging in collaborative discussion. At the same time, we also support Boud's view that: 'organising self-assessment with an element of peer discussion or feedback can be very desirable' (Boud, 1995:200). According to our algorithm, students: (i) provide a first response to a formative assessment question, (ii) self-assess their performance, (iii) compare and discuss their answers with their peers, and (iv) give a second and final response to the question asked. Thus, our approach aligns more closely to Kolb's (1984) learning cycle, alternating experience and reflective observation. In the second part of the presentation, we empirically test the implications of our approach. We exploit a rich dataset collected over multiple sessions within a large-class undergraduate module. Data recorded through SRS track student responses over the stages of Peer-instruction. To measure self-assessment performance, we investigate the association between correct (incorrect) answers to questions and confident (not-confident) self-assessment statements. To measure learning gain, we compute the difference between the proportions of correct responses to questions, as they were given before and after Peer-instruction; this represents another indicator of effectiveness of our teaching algorithm. Our results display a synergy between self-assessment performance and learning gain, suggesting that embedding Self-assessment practices within the Peer-instruction algorithm increases the teaching effectiveness of both pedagogies.

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## Computer-based assessment and feedback: An evaluation

**Speaker:** *Jill Barber, University of Manchester*

In the Manchester Pharmacy School, we first adopted summative on-line examinations in 2005. Since then, we have increased the range of question types to include short answers, short essays and questions incorporating chemical structures and we achieve time savings of up to 90% in the marking process. Online assessments allow two novel forms of feedback. In "All Student Feedback" an anonymised spreadsheet containing all the marked exam scripts is made available to all students. This enables students to see a variety of answers than are awarded good marks, rather than a single model answer. Secondly, 'Smallvoice' a novel app provides confidential personalised feedback. Feedback statements, though written by the instructor, are selected by a computer in response to various aspects of a student's performance. Current developments involve setting up a feedback loop, in which students follow up feedback by sharing the actions they will take in response to feedback. Evidence of improved student satisfaction comes from the unit questionnaires and from the National Student Survey. Evidence of improved learning comes from comparing pre- and post-feedback assessments (typically course tests and end of unit examinations).

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## An exploratory investigation of the use of Peer Assessment in a biomedical science programme

**Speaker:** *Mary McGrath, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology*

The Irish 'National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030' places an emphasis on educators using methods of teaching and assessment that enhance student engagement and encourage the development of active and reflective learners (Hunt, 2013). It has been widely demonstrated that students are 'cue' conscious and that a programme's assessment strategy plays an important role in driving and shaping learning. As such, it would seem obvious that the role of assessment be extended to include 'for learning' (Rust, 2002; Bloxham et al., 2011; Hernández, 2012; Scouller, 1998). Aligning assessment strategies to both module and programme learning outcomes and having a holistic approach to assessment can improve both the learning and teaching of a programme (Taras and Davies, 2013). Peer Assessment (PA) is an example of an assessment method that has the potential to enhance the students' learning experience. The main aim of this research project is to investigate the current landscape in undergraduate Medical Science education with respect to PA and to potentially offer a framework that will support both learners and academics in enhancing student learning through more formative processes. This paper reports part of the first phase of the research, a review of the programme documentation followed by a survey of the academics teaching in the area. The main focus of the qualitative search of the documents was to gain an insight into the assessment methods detailed and to investigate the visibility of peer assessment in these documents. An online anonymous survey was used to collect data from the educators regarding their assessment practices and whether or not peer assessment is a methodology they employ. Respondents were asked to give brief details of the peer assessment activity. The module documentation demonstrated limited information on the application of assessment methods. Class tests, laboratory reports and laboratory exams were the most visible of assessment methods in the documentation. The survey responses demonstrated that in practice a more diverse assessment strategy was being employed. Peer Assessment was evident in a number of different modules and was applied in a number of different ways. This review demonstrates that PA is being employed in this programme by individual module leaders but is not visible in the documentation. We believe the programme and the students would benefit from a more structured approach to the inclusion of this assessment tool. The next step in this project will be to interview academics and students on this programme regarding their

perceptions of and use of assessment. A detailed analysis of the use of PA in this programme is also warranted.

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## Developing assessment policy and practice

14.00-15.00

Rolls

### Comparative Judgement-based feedback versus the traditional approach: Similarities and differences

**Speakers:** *Anneleen Mortier, Ghent University; Marije Lesterhuis, University of Antwerp; Peter Vlerick, Ghent University; Sven De Maeyer, University of Antwerp*

Traditionally, assessing and feedbacking students' tasks are mostly done one task at a time (= classic method). This method allows educators to give comments in the text (= classic feedback). However, given the rise of an alternative assessment method (Comparative Judgement - CJ), in which two tasks are compared with each other, the question arises if this method is perceived as easy to provide feedback. Additionally, comparing this method to the classic method, the question also arises how CJ-based feedback differs from the classic method in content. Therefore, this study tried to fill this gap, studying both assessment methods, using quantitative and qualitative measures. CJ is an assessment method where multiple assessors compare two tasks and decide each time which of those two demonstrates the best performance of the given competence (Pollitt, 2012). These tasks are ranked on a scale relatively to each other from worst to best performance (Bramley, 2007). Previous research demonstrates superior reliability and validity over the classic method (Lesterhuis et al., 2015; Pollitt, 2012). Also, CJ-based feedback is perceived as reliable, honest and relevant (Mortier, Lesterhuis, Vlerick, & De Maeyer, 2015). Nevertheless, this feedback has not been investigated in relation to alternative assessment methods. Given this, our study investigated the following research questions:

1. Does CJ-based assessment lends itself more to give feedback to assessees, according to assessors, in comparison to the classic assessment method?
2. How is the content of CJ-based feedback different from classic generated feedback?

#### Method

Eleven second year students (= assessors) in the Dutch teacher training program graded and feedbacked letters from 12 first year students in the Dutch teacher training program. Assessors feedbacked the letters in the classic way. Additionally, using CJ, they rated the letters and gave feedback expressed as 'what is good about this letter' and 'what needs to be improved'. The assessment order was contra-balanced. Next, they filled out a survey and participated in focus groups.

### Results

Results indicated that the CJ-method is perceived as more difficult to give feedback in comparison to the classic method ( $M=3.5$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ). Focus groups revealed that assessors in the CJ-condition did not go into micro-detail. However, they appreciated the positive approach in CJ, forcing them to also give positive comments, which they were not inclined to do in the classic method. This was also confirmed by content analysis: ( $\chi^2(1, N = 4) = 113.91$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cramer's  $V = .45$ ). Additionally, further analyses revealed that CJ-based feedback was more focused on style, structure and lay-out, while the classic feedback was more focused on spelling, punctuation, and phrasing ( $\chi^2(1, N = 13) = 138.23$ ,  $p < .001$ , effect size: Cramer's  $V = .48$ ).

### Conclusion

This study suggests that the CJ assessment method, in comparison with a traditional assessment method, is perceived by assessors as less easy to provide feedback. Moreover, the content of the feedback differs between both assessment methods. Further research is needed to determine whether CJ-based feedback is perceived by students as more useful in comparison with more classic generated feedback.

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## Using authentic assessment in professional modules in teacher education in Vietnam: Potential changes from students' perspectives

**Speaker:** *Huyen Nguyen, University of East Anglia*

### Introduction

Authentic assessment has come to the attention of researchers as a desirable assessment tool since the 1980s against the backdrop of the strong criticism that standardised tests were facing at that time (Archbald, 1991). The strength of authentic assessment derives from its potential to develop students' professional skills and because it aims to assess these skills with real-life tasks and criteria (Archbald, 1991, Gulikers et al., 2004). The most recent reform of teacher education in Vietnam suggested to focus on prospective teachers' professional skills therefore the adoption of authentic assessment may be a potential strategy to achieve such goal. In the processes of educational change, students have proved to be a crucial change agent (Havelock, 1973) because they are the subject of teaching, learning and assessment (Marks and Onion, 2013). Therefore, listening to their voices before implementing change is highly recommended. This paper – part of a larger study – addresses how Vietnamese student teachers experienced authentic assessment in one of their professional modules.

### Methodology

This paper presents results of an intervention in which role-play and group assignments are used as authentic assessment methods for formative assessment. The intervention was carried out in two classes in one University of Education in Vietnam. From these two classes, fourteen students (5 females and 9 males) volunteered to take part in semi structured interviews. The interviews aimed at eliciting their perspectives on the assessment they had experienced. The data was audio recorded and fully transcribed and thematic analysis was carried out on the transcripts (Creswell, 2005).

### Results

The organising network resulting from the analysis of the interviews presents five dimensions: content, context, result, students' involvement in authentic assessment process and its effect to students' learning. Participants appreciate the content of the authentic tasks because it reflects teachers' duties in practice and it improves their understanding of the professional life. Although in role-play the tasks take place in a simulated context, the students were excited about the opportunity to come close to putting their professional competences in practice. They were satisfied with the oral and written feedback they received from lecturers and peers but still they were concerned about the marks they received. Most of the students valued having their own voice heard in the assessment process therefore they were pleased to be involved in many stages of assessment process. However, they also expressed doubts regarding their competences in self and peer assessment. The main finding however is the way in which students describe the change that this item of authentic assessment brought about in their learning: they believe that they changed from being passive to active learners. Finally some concerns were also expressed in terms of the heavy workload of the authentic assessment tasks.

### Conclusion

The findings of the study explore Vietnamese student teachers' views of authentic assessment and the potentiality that this assessment has in fostering professional development in a vocational course. It also opens the possibility to use this new assessment approach in teacher education in Vietnam.

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### Re-thinking re-assessment

**Speakers:** Wayne Turnbull, Liverpool John Moores University; Marie Stowell, University of Worcester; Harvey Woolf, ex-University of Wolverhampton (on behalf of The Northern Universities Consortium (NUCCAT) & The Student Assessment and Classification Working Group (SACWG))

While a great deal of thought and effort is devoted to developing assessment strategies, policies and processes, there is little evidence that the re-assessment of students who fail to meet the learning outcomes/assessment criteria at the first attempt receives the same level of scrutiny. SACWG has recently tried to fill this gap by investigating institutions' re-assessment regulations (Stowell et al., 2015). SACWG, in conjunction with NUCCAT, is now taking this work further by exploring the success rates of undergraduates who have had Level 4 re-assessments. A single cohort of students from the participating institutions will be categorised into four groups according to whether they:

- Passed all Level 4 modules at the first attempt;
- Passed all L4 modules after a re-assessment attempt (re-assessment)
- Were awarded credit to facilitate progression (compensation)
- Were permitted to progress without attaining 120 credits (trailing).

The degree classifications of the four categories will be compared to identify whether any there are any systematic differences in performance across the four groups. The results will also be analysed in the context of the institutions' academic regulations to examine the relationship between regulations and outcomes. In addition to the analysis of quantitative data and institutional regulations, the research will incorporate interviews with key staff in the institutions. One of the purposes of this research is to understand more explicitly how re-assessment policies can contribute to the retention, continuation and success of students, one of the metrics referred to in the Higher Education Green

Paper, Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice. The presentation will describe the development of the project, suggest how assessment board data can be used to provide an empirical basis for a course team, department or institution's re-assessment policy and consider the implications of the project's findings for such a policy and the associated assessment regulations. A central tenet of any (re-)assessment policy should be that all students are treated equitably and fairly (Stowell, 2004). The presentation will consider some of the principles on which a re-assessment policy might be developed, and the extent to which it is possible and desirable to ensure regulations are explicit, in order that they can be applied consistently without local interpretation or discretion. It is our contention that re-assessment policies are based on necessary compromises between competing practical pressures and demands.

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## Feedback initiatives

14.00-15.00

Derby

### Disappointment, gratitude and uncertainty: Initial findings from a critical discourse analysis of written feedback to students

**Speaker:** *Liz Austen, Sheffield Hallam University*

This presentation discusses the initial findings from a critical discourse analysis of 136 pieces of written tutor feedback on summative student assessments (assessment commentaries). The assessment and feedback mechanisms vary in format, and the sample covered all three levels of an undergraduate programme (four courses) in one case Department. The overall aim of the research was to gather data on the sample characteristics of feedback given to students in light of external examiner comments and NSS results which questioned the clarity and consistency of feedback practices within the programme. Similar criticisms have been identified in the wider HE context (Nicol, 2010). The data had been analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively by a student research assistant to enhance the authenticity of the interpretations. Initial findings of comment type are in line with the previous categorisations by Hyatt (2005) and Orsmond & Merry (2011). This presentation will critique the 'transmission' or 'monologue' model of feedback (Nicol, 2010, Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006) by discussing issues in power dynamics between marker and student and the language used to assert academic convention (Lea 1998); the lack of modelling in the written text; and the occurrence of affective codes representing the interpersonal aspect of feedback, such as gratitude, disappointment and uncertainty (or 'praise, criticism and suggestion' Hyland & Hyland 2001). Examples from these assessment commentaries will be provided as empirical data. Suggestions will then be made which relate to the development of academic skills, helping students to understand and interpret written feedback (see Chanock, 2000), whilst encouraging alternative forms of feedback to enhance staff-student dialogue. To triangulate the findings and add weight to the researcher's interpretation of meaning and impact, focus groups will be conducted with students in early 2016.

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### Changing practice on feedback at an institutional level

**Speakers:** *Sally Brown, Leeds Beckett University; Kay Sambell, Northumbria University*

Concentrating on giving students detailed and developmental feedback is the single most useful thing we can do for our students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, who may not understand the rules of the higher education game (Brown, 2015). As two researchers who have worked to change assessment practices at an institutional level at Northumbria (Sambell and Brown), Leeds Beckett (Brown) and Anglia Ruskin (Brown, working with Margaret Price and Sharon Waller on ARU's major assessment improvement strategy), we argue that changing feedback at an institutional level is possible if such change is approached strategically, supported by evidence-based scholarship and led with passion and persuasiveness. Building on our almost 20 years of work together, initially on the Impact of Innovative Assessment Project (Sambell et al, 1997), which included work on innovative feedback mechanisms, we will in this short session outline our strategies to build good practice across whole universities, and how we can review impact in the short, medium and long term.

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### The long way to change: The Italian teachers' resistances to assessment and quality assurance system

**Speakers:** *Serafina Pastore, University of Bari; Monica Pentassuglia, University of Verona; Fausta Scardigno, University of Bari; Amelia Manuti, University of Bari; Antonietta Curci, University of Bari*

The dissemination of outcome-based education highlights how it is important to review educational policies, higher education systems organization, and instructional design. In the European area, the widespread diffusion of Dublin Descriptors (following the Bologna Process, 1999) has led to an assessment process more transparent and aligned with learning outcomes. Hence the need to define a different assessment model for the teaching-learning process that can be integrated and coherent with these new requirements. The emphasis on measurement and assessment of learning has darkened further purposes related to assessment and reduced the role and the importance of the main subjects involved in the teaching-learning process (Rust, Price, O'Donovan, 2003). The assessment should not be aimed to determine what students have acquired in terms of contents at the end of a module or program (traditional and instrumental view). Assessment should allow teachers to provide students with information about their learning so they can become 'more effective, self-assessing, self-directed learners' (Angelo, Cross, 1993: 4). A considerable scientific literature

about feedback and assessment emphasises the influence of the assessment in the teaching-learning process (Hattie, 2009; Popham, 2008). However, sometimes assessment seems to be irrelevant and not supportive for teachers and students (Taras, 2010; Brown, 2006; Warren, Nisbet, 1999; Torrance, Pryor, 1998). Starting from this consideration, we share the rationale and the research design of the IDEA project (Improving Feedback Developing Effective Assessment for Higher Education) and present an analysis of the role of assessment and feedback within the Italian higher education quality assurance system. The IDEA research project is the first Italian project aimed to implement an assessment model that, in one hand, can be able to enhance the role of feedback for the improvement of the teaching-learning process, and, on the other hand, can produce relevant evidence within the higher education quality assurance system. It is an ANVUR (Italian National Agency for University Quality Assurance) approved and granted research project. Within this framework the paper presents results of a case study aimed to explore faculty use and representations about assessment and feedback. These are the main questions:

- What kind of feedback the Italian university teachers provide to students?
- Is feedback aligned with learning outcomes and instructional design?
- Is feedback functional to the improvement of the teaching-learning quality?
- What are the key factors for an effective feedback practice?

Results were based on focus group interviews with 20 faculty teachers at University of Bari (South of Italy). We have found that teachers do not use assessment and feedback for teaching improvement purposes. They have a very bureaucratic view of assessment. No variations have been found in teachers' use of feedback as a result of different background, experience, and subject matter. Although the context of this paper is the Italian higher education system, we think the paper has relevance to international debate on teaching, learning, and assessment practices in the higher education context.

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## Aligned assessment for learning

14.00-15.00

Lancaster

### Scaling up assessment for learning: Progress and prospects

**Speaker:** *David Carless, University of Hong Kong*

This paper is based on synthesizing and reinterpreting literature on assessment for learning (AfL). Its main aims are to discuss the extent of implementation of AfL over time and across geographical locations; and chart some key issues in relation to the potentials and challenges for the scaling up of AfL. The methodology used to synthesize relevant literature involved three steps: the use of key databases, ERIC, PsycINFO, ProQuest, Scopus and Academic Search Premier; further searches of the journal *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*; and recommended literature from a small number of selected experts. AfL is defined in relation to its key purpose of promoting student learning. Four main AfL strategies are identified from the synthesis of literature: productive assessment task design; effective feedback processes; developing student understanding of the nature of quality; and providing opportunities for students to make judgements. Implementation possibilities across these strategies are sketched, including the role of technology-enabled AfL. Scaling up is conceptualized as comprising four interrelated dimensions: spread, depth, sustainability and shifts in ownership (Coburn, 2003). The analysis suggests that there has been considerable AfL research activity spread across a variety of locations since the 1990s, although it is difficult to gauge how deeply AfL practices are embedded within the fabric of higher education pedagogy. The impact of AfL on policy appears relatively limited in that university assessment documents tend to focus on procedures, grading issues and tackling malpractice (Meyer et al., 2010). Three elements which might facilitate or impede deeper and broader implementation of AfL are discussed. First, quality assurance may prompt a compliance mentality; may take away time from more purposeful work; but may also identify sub-optimal practices which could provide some leverage for AfL. Second, leadership at various management levels is a potential lever for assessment change. Management might develop strategies supporting AfL including prioritisation of resources, rewards and incentives. Third, assessment literacy often seems to be in short supply (Norton, Norton & Shannon, 2013) which

acts as a barrier to scaling up AfL. The potential of various strategies for enhancing assessment literacy are discussed, including exploring assessment at the wider program level and developing communities of assessment practice. The main significance of the paper lies in analyzing scaling up of AfL in relation to research and policy; and charting what might be done to encourage wider and more sustained implementation. Some future research directions in these areas are also suggested.

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## Transformation through alignment

**Speakers;** *Natasha Jankowski, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment; David W. Marshall, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment*

Work will be shared from efforts undertaken at the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) in the United States to examine the alignment of assessment throughout an institution from module to department to institution-wide. Findings and discussion of processes on how different colleges and universities have aligned their learning outcomes approaches and refined assignments utilized as assessments of larger learning outcomes will be explored through the example of collaborative alignment processes linked with curriculum mapping. Alignment is a process undertaken by faculty to link across modules and departments the desired student learning outcomes as evidenced by in module assignments. The results from the assignments are then aggregated to reflect institution-wide student learning on intended learning outcomes. Faculty participate in collaborative peer review processes focused on assignment design to better align their module-embedded assignments to specified learning outcomes, involving feedback from other faculty, students, and employers. Refined assignments are then tested and revised a second time. The placement and identification of assignments occur through the mapping of the curriculum across the institution including in module work, outside of class activities, and on campus employment. The picture presented to students and faculty is then one of a learning path through an institution with multiple points of formative feedback built in along the way, such that when a student reaches graduation it is clear how they have performed and advanced on each of the learning outcomes in question.

## Engaging in Sectoral Enhancement of Assessment: An Irish perspective

**Speakers:** *Elizabeth Noonan, National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education (Ireland); Terry Maguire, National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education (Ireland); Dr Geraldine O'Neill, Education Developer, National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning (Ireland)*

Ireland's National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education is a national academically led advisory body, established by Ministerial Order in 2012, with a remit for sectoral enhancement in Irish higher education. Since 2013, the Forum has been building its portfolio of activities and engagement with the Irish sector through research and scholarship, disciplinary networks, projects on building digital capacity and an emerging professional development framework. These activities have been centred on an enhancement theme approach. A new enhancement theme, Assessment of/ for/ as Learning has been agreed to guide the work of the Forum in the period 2016-2018. This paper will report on the design and early steps in sectoral transformation of assessment being led by the National Forum. The scope of the Forum's work will focus on the possibilities of assessment in teaching and learning activities, to develop:

- Principles underpinning assessment in Irish higher education ;
- A picture of the range and type of assessment strategies currently being used across the sector and across disciplines
- The potential for innovation and enhancement in assessment and feedback for student learning and an openness to innovation in assessment practices
- A pragmatic perspective on issues to do with resourcing and sustaining effective assessment practices
- Building student engagement and partnership engaging students in key aspects of assessment
- The rich potential technology might bring to enhance approaches to assessment.

The Assessment theme launch in December 2015 marked the primary consultation phase to identify sectoral priority areas for development. Three consultative questions were used:

- What are the 3 main things that you would like to change about assessment in your institution?
- Do you think that students can be more involved in the planning and delivery of better assessment practices?
- Scenario: Its 2018 and the Forum's Assessment Enhancement theme has been hugely successful.

How different do assessment practices look now – both locally and across the sector? Analysis of responses suggests that overall there is a strong desire for enhanced coordination and management of assessment this includes: developing a programme rather than module assessment perspective; a reduction in the volume of assessment; greater range of assessment methods which are authentic and reward students' knowledge; opportunities for staff to use more creative assessment methods and enhanced feedback to students. There appears to be support for student involvement in assessment with a range of suggestions including methods such as peer assessment, as well as progressive engagement of students as co-creators. Identified measures of success include creativity in assessment; integration of assessment methods; integration of technology for assessment; greater involvement by students in assessment, emphasis on assessment for learning and manageable assessment workloads. The first phase of sectoral theme will run from January to June 2016. This paper will report on the overall architecture of the Assessment theme and projects underway and identify emerging challenges and issues. National Forum Enhancement Theme 2016-2018: Assessment of/for/as Learning.

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# 'Nano' Presentations

**3 minute round table 'nano' presentations sharing practice in institutional development of assessment and feedback.**

12.10-13.10

Derby

## **Automated feedback and marking system in computing**

**Speaker:** *Suraj Ajit, University of Northampton*

The recent National Student Survey (NSS) results for taught courses in Higher Education Institutions have once again revealed that assessment and feedback have obtained the lowest scores when compared to other aspects such as teaching, academic support, organisation and management, learning resources, personal development and overall satisfaction. This pattern is consistent with the scores obtained over the last ten years. It is imperative that universities need to look into ways of improving these scores. The Computing department at the University of Northampton have developed and used a tool to provide automated instant feedback to formative assessments for modules teaching programming. Initial evaluation of the tool by students has produced encouraging results and led to following research questions: a) What is the state-of-the art in automated marking? b) Can automated marking and feedback systems enhance student learning, engagement and experience? c) Could they be developed for other areas in STEM? d) Could they be used for summative assessments? e) Is the quality of automated feedback superior to manual feedback? Preliminary findings of this research project will be presented.

## **Lecturers' intentions and high achievers' interpretations of the performance feedback: What are the similarities and the differences?**

**Speaker:** *Mohd Nasri Awang Besar, University of Sunderland*

Guessing people's thought in feedback session is not easy. Every dialogue chosen by the lecturer in the feedback session contains explicit and implicit purposes. At the same time, the feedback has to be well interpreted by the students. Ideally, the connection between lecturer's intention and student's interpretation should be aligned to produce intended positive impact. However, in practice, there are possibilities that students do not correctly interpret lecturers' intentions. The objective of this study is to identify the similarities and the differences between lecturers' intentions and high achievers' interpretations of lecturers' feedback during the performance feedback session.

A qualitative methodology using a semi-structured phone interview was adopted for this cross-sectional case study which was held at the Department of Family Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, the National University of Malaysia. 17 high-achieving final year medical students with average grade points of between 3.50 and 4.00 (in all the subjects throughout their previous four-year academic session) and their respective examiners (14 Family Physician lecturers) were selected using stratified purposive sampling. Mini-Clinical Evaluation Exercise (Mini-CEX) is a performance work-based assessment which requires the student to perform a clinical task, observed by the lecturer as an examiner and completed with a feedback session. The transcript from the audio recorded mini-CEX feedback session was distributed to the high achievers and their respective lecturers to be used as a reference during the interview session. The interview questions were based on the selected dialogues in the feedback transcript which was assigned to the feedback strategies namely, self-assessment, self-improvement plan, self-rating, praise, plan for improvement, inform rating, justification of rating and invite inquiries concerning the lecturer's intentions and the high achiever's interpretations. An inductive approach was used in the thematic analysis.

The result identified that most of the feedback strategies have more than one intention or interpretation. The result also showed that high achievers accurately interpreted 11 out of 15 lecturers' intentions (73%). Both lecturers and high achievers had acknowledged the relation between self-assessment, self-improvement plan and justification of rating with that of promoting self-regulated

learning. On the other hand, lecturers' intentions and high achievers' interpretations towards a plan for improvement were related to improved performance discrepancies. Even though there are some differences in the other four feedback strategies, namely praise, self-rating, invite inquiries and inform rating, high achievers were still able to interpret at least one of the lecturers' intentions.

As a conclusion, a mismatch between lecturers' intention and high achievers' interpretation is inevitable. This study had proved that misinterpretation of the lectures' intentions still existed. All elements of similarities and differences between lecturers' intentions and high achievers' interpretations should be highlighted to all students as one of the feedback roles to maximize the positive impact. Further study needs to focus on the source and solution of misinterpretation to enhance the role feedback to the student.

### **Assessing short in-class written responses**

**Speaker:** *David Carless, University of Hong Kong*

In the process of researching the assessment practices of winners of awards for teaching excellence, I observed a history teacher using an innovative strategy of weekly one-sentence handwritten responses to an issue that would be addressed in the following class (Carless, 2015). Students reported positive perceptions and at the first available opportunity I carried out similar processes in my own Master of Education class. Each week students completed a short response of about 25 words which counted for 10% of the module assessment. Qualitative student data suggested that the impact of this innovation was largely positive in that it promoted increased engagement; reflective thinking; concise communication; and preparation for the upcoming class (Carless & Zhou, 2015). Short written responses are relatively simple to carry out and have a wide-range of possible modes of implementation in various disciplines, including online or via mobile technologies. Some issues in relation to marking, grading and teacher workload are also discussed.

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### **Pens to keyboards – Introducing secure online assessment across the institution. A project to service perspective**

**Speakers:** *Claire Irving, Newcastle University; Rebecca Gill, Newcastle University*

The OLAF (Online Assessment and Feedback) service at Newcastle University began as a small scale project in 2010-11 running secure online exams through the institutional VLE Blackboard. Since then it has grown, and in January 54 OLAF exams were run over 72 exam sittings, in this three-week period over 8000 students took an online exam supported by the service. OLAF exams have been run by 18 schools and we continue to get interest from colleagues who have not previously run online exams to grow this further. By developing in-house a specific use of our existing technology, the Blackboard tests functionality, the university has been able to provide the option of secure online exams which can be managed by invigilators in a similar manner to traditional paper exams. Initially a pilot project in one academic area, the OLAF service was handed over to the Learning and Teaching Development Service (LTDS) to run as a service. Demand for online examinations came from academic schools, and been met by working in collaboration with the relevant central services and academic areas. The OLAF service relies heavily on the IT service, Exams Office and LTDS, and all three parts need to work closely to ensure the pedagogical, technical and practical elements of running a large number of online exams go smoothly. Just as crucial is the relationship with academic schools and staff, and LTDS in particular works closely with the module leaders and school support staff at each stage of the process. The nature and level of this support has changed as service has grown, requiring a shift in culture and flexibility on the part of all staff involved across the university. This presentation will focus on the ways in which OLAF exams have been supported and

embedded into the assessment practices of Newcastle University. In particular it will address the many challenges that we have faced up to this point, the processes and procedures that were, and continue to be, developed to address these and the institutional support and governance which has enabled us to grow the service. Demand for OLAF exams is still growing and going forward we face a number of issues around staff capacity, competing demands on physical space, and calls for a wider range of questions to be built into online exams. In response we are investigating ways to grow our capacity whilst maintaining a secure setting and the rigour of our processes, and the possibilities that other technologies or software open up, and the expectations of staff and students.

### **The horses are still thirsty, but do they all want the same drink? Ongoing enhancement of assessment through an institution-wide programme**

**Speaker:** *Andy Lloyd, Cardiff University*

This paper will give an update on the presentation given to the 2015 AHE Conference (Lloyd, 2015), which outlined the lessons learned from a four-year institution-wide project designed to improve consistency in the management of assessment and enhance academic feedback to students. Having explored the challenges that arise in managing assessment-related change across an institution (Deneen and Boud, 2014), the paper will report on ongoing work at one Russell Group institution, a new assessment and feedback project having been established in 2015 as part of a large institution-wide initiative to transform learning and teaching across the University. The paper will focus on a range of enhancements that are being made to assessment and feedback across the institution and consider how these fit together. It will examine the ways in which the four priorities for improvement (below) were identified, through a synthesis of research evidence, stakeholder views, and student feedback. The four priorities identified in which enhancement is being focused:

- The nature and volume of assessment;
- Partnership between staff and students;
- Staff development, and;
- Better quality feedback.

A significant driver in the project has been that assessment and feedback remains the area of their learning experience that students are least satisfied with (HEFCE, 2014). The work of the project has also drawn on the research that identified the need for staff to consider the complex and multiple factors that can impact on and influence student perceptions of 'good feedback' (Price et al., 2015). Support for the priority areas and for the ongoing enhancement of assessment and feedback is further being provided by significant capital investment in technology enabled assessment tools and infrastructure, recognising the capacity that technology has to support enhancement in this area. The paper will also report on the ways in which project management tools and techniques have been employed to support this work. It will highlight the value gained from identifying the needs of a complex range of different stakeholder groups and describe the benefits of working in partnership to support enhancement. It will also set out how the project used 'appreciative enquiry' (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005), to help identify and focus on future needs and requirements and consider the importance of taking an active approach to the management of risk.

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## Busting assessment myths

**Speakers:** *Teresa McConlogue, UCL; Mira Vogel, UCL*

Myths about assessment and feedback abound, and impede change. The UCL Connected Curriculum initiative, <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/connected-curriculum>, is instigating curriculum change through mythbusting, engaging staff through regular events and an expert panel. An online forum invites staff queries and sharing practice. For example, a misunderstanding about assessment regulations was publicly and authoritatively addressed; another about students' use of aids in exams stimulated lively discussion on the forum with some staff pointing out obstacles while others described successful practice. Sometimes there is one answer, sometimes a range of interpretation. Staff are encouraged to post and vote on questions online in advance of the mythbusting events. On the day, the expert panel interacts with a live audience, responding to each question and follow up questions from the floor. Participation is high and the evaluation shows these events are highly valued. Taken together these initiatives provide a rich resource, highlighting staff concerns and flushing out many examples of assessment practice across the institution. We plan to develop resources from these discussions such as FAQs and case studies of good practice to support staff in changing assessment. These resources will support staff who wish to experiment and facilitate change across the institution.

## Developing a whole institutional, integrated and strategic approach to assessment and feedback

**Speaker:** *Alastair Robertson, Abertay University*

### *Introduction*

At Abertay we have transformed our assessment and feedback strategy, policies and practices through the development and implementation of our new Teaching and Learning Enhancement (TLE) strategy. The strategy, approved in December 2013, has three key priorities: reforming our curriculum, incentivising student performance and raising the status of teaching. We have taken a new integrated approach to the second priority, incentivising student performance, which has involved transforming all aspects of assessment for the University including formative assessment, summative assessment and recording student achievement. We have gone back to first principles, drawing upon the relevant academic literature but contextualised for Abertay and refined in extensive consultation with staff and student representatives through seminars, workshops and the University's formal committee structure.

### *Implementation*

Over the last two years, we have developed and implemented:

- a) a new pedagogical-based academic calendar, including mid-term 'feedback weeks'
- b) a new assessment policy and literal grading scale
- c) a new dual Grade Point Average/Honours classification for categorising degree awards
- d) the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)
- e) full electronic management of assessment (EMA)
- f) a completely new set of academic regulations

Change management approach as mentioned above, we decided to go back to first principles and developed a set of ten principles which are intended to guide all our assessment policies and practices. There are several other examples in the literature which informed our work (1-4) but our set was contextualised for Abertay and shaped by staff who would be responsible for putting them into practice. For all our recent academic reforms at Abertay, we have adopted a 3Ps approach to change management and policy development (5). In other words, what is the purpose of any change initiative, what are the associated underpinning principles or objectives and finally what are the practical implications. It is also important to highlight the importance we have placed on listening to and involving key stakeholders to influence and shape our principles and practices. This has had the benefit of securing better buy in from colleagues which means that implementation is more effective and has allowed an extent and pace of change which are sector-leading.

