

Balancing the interest groups: individual activity

Collection: Assessment

Resource: What is assessment for?

Approximate duration

1 hour

Learning outcomes

To have thought in detail about the attitude to assessment of different interest groups, and thus to have a finer awareness of the different and potentially clashing issues behind the choice of specific assessment forms in a module.

Introduction

Assessment is a crucial part of any degree programme--many people would argue it is *the* crucial part. Accordingly, various different interest groups have a considerable stake in it. The issues for each group overlap, of course, but not completely--sometimes they will seem to clash. The student need for swift feedback might clash with the administrative processes of a department, for example; institutional (or departmental) requests for comparability between modules might play havoc with lecturers' desire for assessments that creatively extend their students' skills and knowledge; employers may want students to have mastered specific 'key skills', while lecturers and departments might prefer to extend the students' range in other ways.

This exercise will help you develop a sense of HE assessment in the round, as it is perceived by representatives of some of the different groups of people it affects. The activity should help you to engage more effectively with the key issues when planning and running assessments in your modules.



1 | This resource is part of a set of professional development resources for Higher Education English (including English Literature, English Language & Creative Writing) called 'The Pool'. The resources were developed by the English Subject Centre in 2011 as part of a JISC/HEA Open Educational Resources (OER) Project.

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The activity

1. Think about the way in which each of the following constituencies might think about assessment at HE level. You may like to explore some of the links listed in the 'Links & references' section below to round out your ideas.
 - Students
 - Lecturers
 - University administrators
 - Heads of department
 - Educational developers
 - External bodies
2. For each group of people, write down no more than five things that it might say assessment was for.
3. Look at your list. Where do the concerns of the different interest groups overlap? Where do they potentially come into conflict? Write down your thoughts.
4. Are there conclusions to be drawn that might affect your attitude towards assessment in future? Write down your conclusions.

Links & References

- Gordon Joughin and Rana Macdonald, [A model of assessment in higher education institutions](#) (Higher Education Academy). A position paper by two educational developers.
- [Assessment and feedback - student views](#) (Higher Education Academy). 'Vox pop' video about student attitudes to assessment.
- Audio interview with Dr. Lesley Coote (University of Hull). Interview with an English lecturer who uses innovative assessment methods.
- [QAA code of practice for assessment in Higher Education](#)
- [English Subject Centre assessment area](#)

Relationship to the Professional Standards Framework

- **Areas of Activity 3:** Assessment and giving feedback to learners



- **Core Knowledge 2:** Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme
- **Core Knowledge 5:** Methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching
- **Professional Values 1:** Respect for individual learners
- **Professional Values 3:** Commitment to the development of learning communities
- **Professional Values 4:** Commitment to encouraging participation in higher education, acknowledging diversity and promoting equality of opportunity

More information about the Professional Standards Framework can be obtained from the summary factsheet in the *Subject & Pedagogy* collection in HumBox.

<http://humbox.ac.uk/2731/>

Resources in the Assessment Collection

- Assessment: introduction to the collection
- Assessment audit: resource overview
 - Auditing English: individual activity
 - Auditing English: group activity
- Designing and running innovative assessments: resource overview
 - Creative assessments in Literature: outcomes, criteria: individual activity
 - Creative assessments in Literature: outcomes, criteria: group activity
- Assessment SWOT analysis: resource overview
 - SWOT analysis: individual activity
 - SWOT analysis: group activity
- Mix and match: resource overview
 - Matching assessment to outcome: individual activity
 - Matching assessment to outcome: group activity
- Creative assessment: resource overview
 - Creative criticism
- Feedback and marking strategies: resource overview
 - Marking exercise: individual activity
 - Marking exercise: group activity



- Computer-aided assessment: resource overview
 - Writing multiple-choice questionnaires: individual activity
 - Writing multiple-choice questionnaires: group activity
- What is assessment for? : resource overview
 - **Balancing the interest groups: individual activity (*you are here)**
 - Balancing the interest groups: group activity



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