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Assessment for, of and as Learning: An international perspective

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Constructive Alignment

The learner constructs meaning
The tutor aligns the learning

Learning outcomes

Expressed as verbs that students have to enact
Verbs chosen to reflect level of course

Teaching / learning activities
Controlled by teacher, self or peer, as best suits context

Assessment tasks
Evaluate how well intended learning outcomes are demonstrated

(Adapted from Biggs & Tang 2007)
A Marked Improvement: transforming assessment in higher education

Tenet 1: Assessment for learning
Tenet 2: Ensuring assessment is fit for purpose
Tenet 3: Recognise that assessment lacks precision
Tenet 4: Constructing standards in communities
Tenet 5: Integrating assessment literacy into course design
Tenet 6: Ensuring professional judgements are reliable
Assessment in Higher Education

https://aheconference.com/

Biennial Conference - Manchester
June 28\textsuperscript{th} and 29\textsuperscript{th} 2017

Call now out, deadline 9\textsuperscript{th} Jan
e.g. QMUL Graduate Attributes

Vision
• Engage critically with knowledge
• Have a global perspective
• Learn continuously in a changing world

Realisation
• Rounded intellectual development
• Clarity of communication
• Research capacity
• Information expertise

http://www.qmul.ac.uk/gacep/statement/index.html
For example:
TESTA (Transforming...)
• Qualitative audit
• Assessment experience questionnaire
• Focus groups
• Teaching team workshops
http://testa.ac.uk/index.php
## Purposes of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Knowledge and certification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socialisation</td>
<td>Preparation for family life, citizenship and employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjectification</td>
<td>The opportunity to develop as unique human beings and ‘singular beings’ able to respond creatively</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gert Biesta (2011) Good education in an age of measurement
## Purposes of Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>‘of’ learning – demonstrating understanding and skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socialisation</td>
<td>‘for’ learning – developing skills and knowledge for life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjectification</td>
<td>‘as’ learning – freedom to develop subjectivity as a unique being</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Quality Assurance
+ Accountability
The Age of Accountability

‘I did not really get an A Level in Geography...
I got an A level in how to get an A grade...in A Level Geography’

George (aged 19)
Procedures of Assessment

Institutional assessment efforts may be focused on procedure not on the quality of the student work and on developing assessment literacy

(Sue Bloxham 2012)
Are learning outcomes the cutting edge of Neoliberal education policy frameworks?

When tightly defined they provide a basis for measuring learner progress...

(Hussey & Smith 2002; 2003)
Avoid the relativist fallacy – integrate academic skills, employability and graduate attributes...avoid generic degrees!

Social Realism:
Durkheim – sacred and profane
Bernstein – vertical and horizontal
(Michael F D Young 2008)
Vertical Domain of public (published) knowledge – foregrounds theory, research, professional guidance, policy

Professional Learning as 'interplay'

Horizontal Domain of practical (local) wisdom – foregrounds ways of working here

Assessment Literacy

Grading student work:

- Holistic rather than analytical judgements
- Many tutors use written criteria for post hoc check
- Norm referencing is important

To what extent do we share with students that grading is not analytical and objective?

(Mark My Words: Bloxham, Boyd & Orr 2011)
The Taxonomy Table

(Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001; Anderson 2003: 29; Boyd & Bloxham 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Dimension</th>
<th>The Cognitive Process Dimension</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Remember</td>
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<tr>
<td>Factual</td>
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<td>Conceptual</td>
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<td>Procedural</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
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Design, moderation and development by teaching teams
Authentic Assessment

The RTKE nexus

Social Justice and Assessment

Is ‘fair procedure’ sufficient as a basis for social justice?

Is there a tension between dialogue and anonymous marking?

Does attention to aggregate student evaluative feedback drown out individual difference and experiences?

(Jan McArthur 2015)
Does the process of formative assessment require an element or stage of summative assessment?

(Madalena Taras 2009)
The Spirit of AfL

Are teaching teams applying the techniques of AfL but not creating a positive learning culture that embraces struggle and mistakes in a supportive learning environment?

(Marshall & Drummond 2006)
Teaching teams lead curriculum development through scholarly inquiry (beyond procedures)...

1. Integrate graduate attributes into the subject discipline
2. Align modules to programme learning outcomes
3. Include some freedom for creative responses from students within module learning outcomes
4. Invest in low stakes assessment activities
5. Integrate assessment literacy into programmes
6. Debate the quality of work to evaluate teaching
7. Recognise that assessment is a holistic judgment
8. Strengthen the RTKE nexus
9. Question social justice consequences
A teacher should ask each day and through sustained professional inquiry:

What is my impact on learning and on learners?


Sue Bloxham (2012): ‘You can see the quality in front of your eyes’: grounding academic standards between rationality and interpretation, *Quality in Higher Education*, 18:2, 185-204.


