Rethinking assessment practices

How technology can help
Overview

» The Why – the assessment and feedback landscape and rationale for change
» The How - setting out a vision for change: a principled approach
» The What - some examples

The full story
Programme Report: http://repository.jisc.ac.uk/5450/
Context

» Jisc Assessment and Feedback Programme (2011 – 2014)
» 20 projects and over 30 institutions across the UK, involving 2,200 staff and 6,000 students
» 3 strands of activity: institutional change, research and technology transfer
» Exploring large-scale changes to assessment and feedback practice through technology

#jiscassess
The Why....
Rethinking assessment practices
The rationale for change

» Evidence that assessment, rather than teaching, has a major influence on students’ learning

» Increasing consensus of the importance of developing judgement and self-regulation in learners as critical skills for life and employment

» But existing assessment practices often focus on the demonstration of knowledge and memory recall rather than the processes of learning

» So...... are we best preparing learners for a lifetime of learning and employment?

» Focus here on assessment for learning approaches, and of technology as an enabler of change
A challenging landscape

- highly devolved responsibility & inconsistent practices
- lack of developmental focus
- traditional practices dominate
- timeliness, quality and consistency of feedback
- learner in passive role
- lack of relevance to world of work
The How....
A starting point for change: a principled approach

» Importance of defining the purpose of assessment and feedback
» Need to articulate that underpinning vision before embarking on change
» Principles are a good way to articulate and operationalise this
  › Provide a synthesis of the research
  › Action oriented
  › Evaluation device

Resources
Overview of principles:
http://jiscdesignstudio.pbworks.com/w/page/40343419/Assessment-and-feedback-principles
REAP principles

Good assessment and feedback should support the development of learner self-regulation

» Clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, standards)
» Facilitate the development of reflection and self-assessment in learning
» Deliver high quality feedback to students: that enables them to self-correct
» Encourage peer and student-teacher dialogue around learning
» Encourage positive motivational beliefs & self esteem through assessment
» Provide opportunities to act on feedback
» Provide information to teachers that can be used to help shape their teaching (making learning visible)

Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006)
Putting principles into practice

**Viewpoints approach**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clarify good performance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide clear definitions of academic requirements before each learning task.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide explicit marking criteria and performance-level definitions.</td>
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<td>Provide opportunities for discussion and reflection about criteria and standards before learners engage in a learning task.</td>
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<td>Ask learners to reformulate in their own words the documented criteria before they begin the task. This could be submitted with the assessment.</td>
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<td>Model in class how you would think through and solve exemplar problems.</td>
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<td>Provide learners with model answers for assessment tasks and opportunities to make comparisons against their own work.</td>
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<td>Explain to learners the rationale of assessment and feedback techniques.</td>
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<td>Before an assessment, let learners examine selected examples of completed assessments to identify which are superior and why (individually or in groups).</td>
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<td>Organise a workshop where learners devise, in collaboration with you, some of their own assessment criteria for a piece of work.</td>
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<td>Ask learners to add their own specific criteria to the general criteria provided by you.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work with your learners to develop an agreement, contract or charter where roles and responsibilities in assessment and learning are defined.</td>
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Adapted from the QAA Enhancement Themes: The First Year Experience: Transforming assessment and feedback: enhancing integration and empowerment in the first year. [http://viewpoints.ulester.ac.uk/resources](http://viewpoints.ulester.ac.uk/resources)
Putting principles into practice

e-Affect, Queen’s University, Belfast
Putting principles into practice

e-Affect, Queen’s University, Belfast

Diagram:
- Class test: Students complete 1 part of a four part test in class
  - Tests screened and uploaded to PeerMark
  - Coursework: Students take away full test to complete in own time on paper and using LUSAS
  - Staff review peer reviews
  - Class Test - Pass/Fail
  - Examination (50%)

- Self-review
  - Student receives feedback on coursework and peer review

- Coursework marked
  - Student receives feedback on class test
Aligning technology with principles
Some examples
Moving to a longitudinal view of student development

» Feed forward
» Ipsative approaches
» More formative opportunities

» Technology enhancements:
  › Storage of feedback across a programme
  › Creating conditions for student/staff dialogue
  › Using tools to analyse the timing of assessments
  › Developing tools to analyse and audit feedback
Peer review

» Most significant shift towards assessment for learning
» Students need to be convinced of benefits
» Tools available e.g. Peerwise, WebPA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MAC Self Review</th>
<th>MAC Engage</th>
<th>MAC PDP</th>
<th>MAC Peer Review</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student completes online questionnaire &amp; survey in e-Reflect system. System</td>
<td>As above but student additionally writes a reflective passage in light of</td>
<td>As above but tutor and student hold a specific meeting (face to face or</td>
<td>As above, and includes staged formative feedback including peer feedback/review.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>processes responses to generate feedback report customised to student responses.</td>
<td>the feedback report and shares this with tutor for input, comment</td>
<td>online in order to place the feedback + engagement in the wider context</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student left to independently utilise the output.</td>
<td>online.</td>
<td>to the student's course and personal development. A specific output is</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>a personal plan for going forward.</td>
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<td>Engages students with</td>
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<td>● ● ● ○ ○ ○</td>
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<td>the assessment criteria</td>
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<td>Stimulates dialogue</td>
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<td>Focuses on student</td>
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<td>development</td>
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<td>Ensures feedback leads</td>
<td>● ● ● ○ ○ ●</td>
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<td>to improvement</td>
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<td>Considers student and</td>
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<td>staff effort</td>
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<td>Supports personalised</td>
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Emerging - feedback ‘hubs’

» Requirements emerging for a way of aggregating feedback at a programme level

» Tools already in existence

» Proposed benefits:
  › Students benefit from aggregated view of their feedback to **support self-reflection on progress**; lecturers see a more holistic view of students’ progress to support tutoring discussions and **better understand an individual’s progression** to identify where intervention or support is needed.
Key points

» Assessment design needs to reflect the skills, behaviours and competences that enhance student employability

» Importance of students and (staff) developing ‘assessment literacies’ – and recognising the key importance of self-regulation skills

» Curriculum design needs to ensure sufficient opportunities for formative assessment and a timetable that permits time for feedback to be acted on in time for next assignment, and monitoring of actions

» For effective change – there is a need to clarify your pedagogical stance before considering what technology is used – principles provide a way of doing this
Briefings and case studies

» Changing assessment and feedback practice with the help of technology
» Electronic assessment management
» Enhancing student employability through technology supported assessment and feedback
» Feedback and feed forward: using technology to support learner longitudinal development
Discussion

» How can we best support the development of student (and staff) assessment literacies?

› To help students understand the value of activities such as peer review and actively engaging in dialogue and reflection on feedback?

› And the relationship of these activities to the workplace