
Involving students in assessment: developing understanding of assessment standards within a community of assessment practice

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This workshop will engage participants in a series of activities which challenge some commonly held views about assessment and assessment standards. The activities will allow participants to explore how assessment standards can be communicated to students and participants will be invited to critique a variety of approaches in order to draw conclusions about their effectiveness.

The work of ASKe (Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange) CETL, which aims to improve student learning through more effective communication of assessment standards between staff and students, will provide a theoretical underpinning to examine the success of approaches to communicating standards. A matrix framework (theoretical model) will be used to map and describe the evolution of approaches using examples from an on-going research project being undertaken within Oxford Brookes University. Participants will be invited to provide examples of assessment initiatives from their own institutions and locate them on the matrix in order to develop a picture of the current practice in higher education.

The emphasis of the workshop will then move to the improvement of practice. ASKe 1,2,3 leaflets (providing 3 easy steps to improve practice in a variety of aspects of assessment) will be used to stimulate participants to consider their own practice in communicating assessment standards prior to assessment and through feedback to student. These leaflets are based on proven practice. In addition some time will be devoted to discussion of ways of encouraging students to take a greater role in our academic community and several initiatives for involving students in academic life will be discussed with participants.

An indicative outline of the workshop is as follows:

00 – 10 mins. Why assessment standards are important for staff and students.

10 – 30 mins Activity (individual and group): Defining standards and level.

30 – 45 mins Discussion of the usefulness of assessment criteria and level descriptors.
Introduction to the ASKe matrix

45 – 55 mins Activity (pairs): Plotting examples from practice on the matrix

55 – 70 mins Presentation of pre-assessment intervention (1,2,3 leaflet). Discussion about relevance to own practice (pairs)

70 – 85 mins Discussion of 1,2,3 initiatives and ways to engage more closely with the learning community

85 – 90 mins Final questions

Supporting text / bibliography

O'Donovan B, Price M, and Rust C. (2001) 'The student experience of the introduction of a common criteria assessment grid across an academic department', *Innovations in Education and Training International*, Vol 38, Iss.1, pp. 74-85

Price, M. & Rust, C. (1999), The experience of introducing a common criteria assessment grid across an academic department, *Quality in Higher Education*, Vol 5, Iss 2 pp. 133-144.

Rust, C., Price, M. & O'Donovan, B (2003) Improving students' learning by developing their understanding of assessment criteria and processes *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, Vol. 28, Iss. 2, pp. 147-164

Rust, C., O'Donovan, B. & Price, M. (2005) 'A social constructivist assessment process model: how the research literature shows us this should be best practice', *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* Vol 30 (3)