

Title: **Overcoming barriers to electronic feedback**

Presenter: **Joelle Adams**
Bath Spa University

Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- identify key issues in using electronic feedback systems
- consider solutions to barriers to electronic feedback
- reflect on implications of the session for their own professional practice

Session Outline

This session examines arguments for and against using tools such as Blackboard's Grade Centre to provide and store student feedback. Using case studies from Bath Spa University, we will investigate possible barriers and objections to using electronic feedback, as well as suggest potential solutions and benefits.

Using tools and guidance resulting from the TESTA project (2010), this research first took an ethnographic approach to examining staff and students' experiences of creating, distributing, analysing, and applying feedback on written assignments. Focus groups and questionnaire data from 10 3rd-year students and questionnaire and interview results from 10 members of staff highlighted potential problems with using the technology and identified attitudes about feedback.

Based on issues raised by staff and students, as well as findings from Hepplestone (2008), JISC (2010a and 2010b), and Siebert (2009) guidelines were created for lecturers and students using Blackboard's Grade Centre tool to provide and receive feedback on assessments. In addition to practical guidance, the advice to lecturers builds on Gibbs' 'principles of assessment' (2010a) and guidance for effective feedback (2010b). Two lecturers used the approach over two terms; at the close of the academic year the research team will again ask staff and students about their experiences. The intended outcomes for the project include a set of guidelines for pedagogically-sound, efficient, and effective feedback processes using Grade Centre; recommendations for further investigation; and technological support guidance.

Participants will be asked to contribute their arguments for and against using online tools for providing student feedback (both practical and pedagogical), devise strategies for breaking through barriers to ineffective feedback cycles, and consider the implications of both this and the TESTA project on their own professional practices.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

10 minutes: Introduction to team and project

15 minutes: Small groups - participants discuss objections and consider solutions

10 minutes: Large group discussion about how to overcome barriers to e-assessment

5 minutes: Results of the project and next steps

5 minutes: Participant reflection – implications for practice

References

Gibbs, G. (2010a) *Principles of Assessment*. Testa Project Best Practice Guides. Available from: <http://www.testa.ac.uk/resources/best-practice-guides>.

Gibbs, G. (2010b) *Feedback Guide for Lecturers*. Test Project Best Practice Guides. Available from: <http://www.testa.ac.uk/resources/best-practice-guides>.

Hepplestone, S. (2008) 'Masking marks: Encouraging student engagement with useful feedback'. HEA Resources. Available from: http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/events/annualconference/2008/Ann_conf_2008_Stuart_Hepplestone

JISC, (2010) *Effective Assessment in a Digital Age*. Available from: <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/programmerelated/2010/digiassess.aspx#downloads>

JISC, (2010) *Effective Practice with e-Assessment*. Available from: <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/elearningpedagogy/assessment.aspx>

Siebert, S. (2009) 'Feedback on assessment via Gradebook (Electronic coursework submission system)', Business, Management, Accountancy and Finance case study. HEA Resources. Available from http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/business/projects/detail/trdg/2008-09/0809trdg_Sabina_Siebert_GLC

TESTA Project (2010) www.testa.ac.uk