

Title: **Reflections on assessment: a Faculty experience of engaging staff and students with the principles of ‘assessment for learning’.**

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Session Learning Outcomes

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

- map the strengths and weakness of a Faculty wide curriculum enhancement project from the perspective of generating staff engagement across the Schools within the participating Faculty
- identify appropriate strategies for establishing staff/student collaboration in a curriculum enhancement project
- apply appropriate ways to actively engage a range of staff and students in a Faculty wide curriculum enhancement project to enhance the student experience of assessment
- reflect constructively on the process of initiating and supporting curriculum change in a Faculty wide context

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

- establishing a collaboration across the Schools within the Faculty
- maintaining staff and student collaboration over an extended period of time
- overcoming barriers to curriculum change.

The University of Kent is currently engaged in an assessment reflection process to explore the student experience of assessment and feedback within Schools in the Social Sciences Faculty. The aim is to address common themes around the design of individual assessments and the coherence of assessment structures within programmes that are working against the principles of assessment supporting learning as discussed by Gibbs and Simpson (2004), and Gibbs and Dunbar-Goddet (2007).

Steps in the project include:

- Establishing a collaboration across participating Schools and student representatives
- Expanding the implementation of our assessment reflection process within the Social Science Faculty
- Engaging staff and students in the analysis and interpretation of the collected evidence

- Developing a Faculty Assessment Profile in accordance with the University of Kent's Institutional Strategic Plan (2012-15) and Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (2012-2015)
- Establish an online assessment tool for staff and students to access the Faculty Assessment Profile to facilitate the clarity and transparency of assessment design and to promote consistency of practice and coherent programme assessment structures.

During this session, presenters will outline the development of this enhancement project, including how to target common barriers to change in such change initiatives, particularly those associated with the engagement of staff and students by applying insights from Communities of Practice literature (e.g., Lave & Wenger, 1991; Fontaine, 2001; Wenger, McDermot & Snyder, 2002; Schenkel & Tieglund, 2008; Agterberg, van den Hooff, Huysman & Soekijad, 2010),

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

1. Introduction of project
2. Outline of project planning process, particularly how potential barriers were identified and addressed early in the project timeline
3. Discussion of the contribution of students and their engagement with the project stages
4. Short discussion of the project process, including engagement of participants, unexpected aspects in the process and lessons learned
5. Application of Communities of Practice theory to understanding the development of the curriculum enhancement project

Each short topic will be introduced by one presenter with the opportunity for participants to share experiences and discuss their own projects. In particular, presenters' experiences will be examined from the perspective of how the project has been managed, adjusted, developed and promoted to staff and students in order to maintain engagement with the design of assessments in the Faculty of Social Science at the University of Kent.

Lessons learned from this project during 2013-2014 will be considered in terms of Communities of Practice theory in order to develop a framework for educational developers to reflect on their own practice in relation to engaging wider university staff and students with curriculum enhancement projects.

References

Gibbs, G. & Simpson, C. (2004) 'Conditions under which assessment supports students' learning', *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*, Issue 1.