Workshop	16b

Title: **Student Views on Assessment Workload and activities**

Presenter: **Pam Parker, Rachael-Anne Knight, Julie Attenborough, Laurence Solkin**
City, University of London

Session Learning Outcomes

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

- Identify priorities that might be used to undertake a review of assessment across all programmes
- Discuss the assessment mapping process used to support this review
- Explore the guidance currently being used for assessment volume in modules and programmes
- Debate the data related to student effort to prepare for different assessments

Session Outline

Assessment and feedback have been key issues in all universities for at least the last decade but, despite this, there are still issues being raised by both staff and students. We also know that assessment is an area within the National Student Survey where institutions often have lower positive student responses. In response to NSS feedback and a review of other areas such as student progression and staff comments about workload and marking, our institution engaged in a project to review assessment in undergraduate programmes. One aspect of the project was to require all programmes to have an assessment map that clearly linked every assessment back to the programme learning outcomes. The map allows staff to review if all learning outcomes are being assessed and, conversely, if any are being repeatedly assessed.

It is well known that one consequence of modularisation has been the increase in the number of assessments, due to ensuring each module learning outcome is assessed, but the student effort required has not always been considered. We realised that we really did not have any clear sense of the number of hours it takes students to complete different types of assessments. We reviewed other institutions' websites for information about volume of assessment as well as looking at publically available blogs (such as this one by Alan Fielding http://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/ltia/issue17/fielding.php (accessed 27/10/17)), but whilst there have been some studies undertaken to look at student effort (e.g. Crook and Parkes, 2004; Kember and Leung, 2006) there is limited evidence about this area. We therefore submitted an ethics proposal to undertake empirical data collection of our own about student effort for specific assessments through both focus groups and some

records of their activities whilst preparing assessments. We will present the data we have gained from our students and discuss our next steps

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

The outline of the workshop is a follows;

5 minutes   introduction to the speakers and overview of the project

10 minutes   discuss the assessment maps we used for the programmes and share examples of these asking the participants if they have maps like this for their programmes in a whole group discussion

5 minutes   outline the study methodology and participants and some key results from the study

15 minutes   ask participants to form small groups of 5 and using our guidance on volume of assessment discuss how this links with our data from students but also their own experiences in their institutions.

5 minutes   whole group feedback about the guidance for volume of assessment and the participants' experience in their institutions

5 minutes   outline our next steps and any questions

References

Crook A C & Park J R (2004) Measuring assessment: a methodology for investigating undergraduate assessment, *Bioscience Education*, Vol 4 No1 p1-14

Fielding A (2008) Student Assessment Workloads: a review *Learning and Teaching in Action: Assessment* Vol. 7 Issue 3 p 7-15

Kember D & Leung D Y P (2006) Characterising a teaching and learning environment conducive to making demands on students while not making their workload excessive, *Studies in Higher Education* Vol 31 No2 p185-198