

Title: EDPAL Project - Investigating Educational Developers' Perceptions of Assessment Literacy.

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Session Learning Outcomes

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

- Learn about the outcomes of the EDPAL project, identifying the key issues in assessment literacy as raised by educational developers in 2015-6 across the UK sector through an online questionnaire survey and subsequent focus group sessions.
- Evaluate how these perceptions fit in with the key issues as reported in the literature.
- Discuss and analyse the emerging issues around assessment literacy as they apply to their learning and teaching context

Session Outline

There is a growing acceptance of the importance of assessment literacy among key stakeholders (e.g. Popham, 2009).

This session provides an opportunity to learn about and discuss the outcomes of the SEDA funded EDPAL project in 2015-16: this comprises a study of the literature, also findings from an online qualitative survey of educational developers across the sector and a focus group activity where educational developers contributed and shared their perceptions and suggestions.

The literature review traces the subject of staff assessment literacy from its origins in US schools more than 25 years ago to its more student-centred, HE focused meaning today: the main challenges emerging focus on a number of key issues, including professional judgement, tacit knowledge, communal standards, slowly learned threshold concepts as well as experience of staff.

The survey data collate responses from educational developers from more than 20 HE institutions: these suggest that assessment literacy is a contested term among this group. As well as exploring definitions, the data shed light on which concepts within assessment literacy are best understood and prioritised by educational developers, and reveal a range of challenges faced: these include overcoming tradition, innovative design, technology, resources, marking, and embedding constructive alignment.

Building on this, the focus group data point towards solutions and suggestions, such as seeing professional development as immersive practice rather than one-off events, and more practice-based and experiential, also making timely interventions to challenge existing practice, and taking steps to deal with resourcing issues.

The project builds on the theoretical underpinnings for assessment literacy for academic staff and students (Price et al 2012), and asks specifically how this relates to educational developers. In addition, it draws on the Higher Education Academy document "A Marked Improvement", and the core tenets of effective assessment in the Manifesto for Change (HEA, 2012).

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

1. Summary of background to the EDPAL research project – setting the context (5 minutes)
2. Lessons from the literature (5 minutes)
3. Methodology and data collection – principles and lessons learned (5 minutes)
4. Data analysis and findings (10 minutes)
5. Application, discussion and questions (15 minutes)
6. Summary and conclusion (5 minutes)

References

- Higher Education Academy. 2012. *A marked improvement: transforming assessment in higher education*. Available online <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/node/3950> (last accessed May 2015)
- Popham, W.J. 2009. "Assessment literacy for teachers: faddish or fundamental?" *Theory into Practice*, 48: 4-11.
- Price, M., Rust, C., O'Donovan, B. and Handley, K. 2012. *Assessment literacy: the foundation for Improving student learning*. Oxford: OCSLD.