

**Title:**                    **Updating a Taxonomy of Assessment Domains for staff and students: modernising it to enhance academic practice and student learning**

**Presenter:**            **Susan Smith**  
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*\*\*\*\*\*delegates will need a wifi enabled device to participate\*\*\*\*\**

### **Session Learning Outcomes**

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

1. Understand how an institution- specific Taxonomy of Assessment Domains can be used to support curriculum design, outcomes based assessment, a wider context of valid assessment practice and standards (QAA, 2013; QAA, 2014) and enhance the capability of staff to specifically embed three core graduate attributes (GAs) in undergraduate (UG) courses.
2. Share and explore our rationale and process for updating our original Taxonomy and recognise how the new Taxonomy can specifically support the writing of levelled learning outcomes, assessment design and the building and assessment of GAs through the UG courses
3. Have the opportunity to i) explore the tool in its varied forms to address different learning needs (printed grid handout / interactive web based, accessible versions for students and staff and ii) access the different resources linked to each of the domains at each academic level. (The resource collation is still work in progress).
4. Consider if i) this development might be a useful innovation at their own University ii) seek advice and share practice about the practicalities of the collaborative, reflective process we used to support all disciplines and subject areas

\*Participants are requested to bring a mobile device to this session so they can try out the Taxonomy tool individually

### **Session Outline**

Outcomes based assessment is core to curricular design and Taxonomies of Assessment Domains based on Blooms (1956) work have helped staff design curricula effectively for many years.

A survey of staff at Leeds Beckett found that using our Taxonomy

- i) supports them in developing skills for critical analysis and deep learning with their students
- ii) clarifies assessment for external examiners .

- iii) enhances the consistency of module objectives and levelled learning outcomes and makes apparent the precise words required to describe activities which support the design of assessment.
- iv) facilitates the grading of assessments.

Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) identified six developing levels within the cognitive domain and was designed to be a classification of student behaviours which represent the intended learning outcomes of the educational process i.e. outcomes based assessment (Heywood, 2000). Over the years it has been adapted by others Biggs and Collis (1982); Anderson et al, (2001); Heer, (2012) and Churches, (2008).

A review of all our courses necessitated a more systematic, aligned approach to course design. The adoption of three summatively assessed GAs (digital literacy, having a global outlook and being enterprising) meant that GA related wording had to be explicitly integrated into outcomes at every level.

A working group was formed to update our own version of the Taxonomy of Assessment Domains which had been used at the University for 30 years. Its language was regarded as outdated, it was only patchily used by staff and many couldn't always see its value and meaning.

The session will explore the process used to inform, design and implement the updated taxonomy and will specifically address some of the challenges encountered in our evaluation and its dissemination through different media. Issues around inclusivity, staff development and the need to be contextually sensitive to suit all disciplines will be addressed.

### **Session Activities and Approximate Timings**

The outline of the workshop is as follows;

*Stage 1: Outline of the rationale, research to date, examples of other Taxonomies which informed our rationale for the project – approx. 3 mins*

*Stage 2: Outline of the rationale for timeline, focus on collaboration, selection of working group members, generation of ground rules, challenges and consideration of contextually sensitive issues /language so all disciplines could find the new Taxonomy of value, iterative approach to evaluation and feedback on model – approx. 4 mins*

*(Time for questions/clarification) -approx. 2 minutes*

*Stage 3: Outline of key changes to new Taxonomy specifically focussing on domain titles, design level appropriate language, peer review for plain English and GA supporting text - approx. 4 mins*

*Participants will be given individual copies of the new Taxonomy and GA grid and will be able to follow the changes and ask questions simultaneously.*

*Stage 4: Demonstration of the interactive tool on main screen –approx. 2 mins.*

*Participants can also access this on their mobile devices if they wish and explore different sections of it based on their needs/interest.*

Stage 5: Discussion: Participants will be asked to think and discuss the following questions: Do they have a similar Taxonomy in their own institution? Are they happy with it? What do they use it for/is it visible to staff?

There will then be an opportunity to give feedback verbally or later by email on our work in progress– approx. 8-10 mins.

## References

Anderson, L. Krathwohl, D. Airasian, P. Cruickshank, K. Mayer, R. Pintrick, P. Raths, J. & Wittrock, M. (2001) A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. NY, Longman.

Biggs, J.B. and Collis K.F. (1982) Evaluating the Quality of Learning: The Solo Taxonomy, Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes, London, Academic Press.

Bloom, B.S. 1956. Taxonomy of educational objectives. Handbook I: The cognitive domain. New York, NY: David McKay.

Churches, A (2008) Bloom's Digital taxonomy. <http://edorigami.wikispaces.com>

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Heywood, J. (2000) Assessment in Higher Education. London and Philadelphia. Jessica Kingsley Publishing.

QAA (2013) The Quality code Chapter B6 Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning. QAA (2014) UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Part A. Setting and

UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Part A. Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards. The Framework for HE Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies.