Northumbria Research Link

www.northumbria.ac.uk/nrl

northumbria
UNIVERSITY NEWCASTLE

Kay Sambell and Linda Graham, Northumbria University, Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning: Assessment for Learning.

Biographical details

This chapter has been written collaboratively by Professor Kay Sambell and Linda Graham, who both work in Northumbria University's Centre for Excellence (CETL) in Assessment for Learning. Kay is a National Teaching Fellow and Director of Assessment for Learning Enhancement in the CETL, while Linda has acted as a CETL Student Liaison Officer, Student Development Officer and MA student. We have worked together to establish a range of student communities targeted on improving teaching and learning. Nationally, we helped establish the Student Learning & Teaching Network, and in our own university we have supported the launch of a Student-Led Learning Hub, large-scale peer-learning schemes and student-led publications, conferences and events.

The students whose published materials directly contributed to this chapter include Bernice Wake and Holly Watson, although many others' ideas, too numerous to name individually here, have deeply influenced our thinking about and approaches to AfL. Without their generous and creative contributions, we'd definitely be lost.

Towards an Assessment Partnership Model? Students' experiences of being engaged as partners in Assessment for Learning (AfL) enhancement activity.

[A]Introduction

This chapter explores second-year undergraduates' experiences of an option module, designed by the lead author, which enabled them to explore the topic of Assessment for Learning (Black and Wiliam, 1998). The module was created to offer students a chance to learn about the body of scholarly work investigating the impact of assessment on student learning in higher education. Since its inception in 2005, the module has been offered annually, as part of a portfolio of options on the Joint Honours programme in the School of Health, Community and Education Studies at Northumbria University. On this particular Joint Honours programme, students choose two part-routes which have an applied social focus (such as Early Years, Childhood Studies, Disability Studies, Advice & Guidance). The routes take an analytic, discursive approach to these subject-areas, rather than offering a license to practice.

Having explicitly studied various philosophies, principles and debates surrounding the Assessment for Learning (AfL) agenda, students choosing the option (about 20 each year) were then invited to produce enhancement materials designed to enable other students and staff to engage with relevant concepts. Some of their materials, which are discussed in this chapter, have subsequently been used to help staff and students at course and university level begin to interrogate and enhance their own assessment practices.

Our chapter draws attention to students' perceptions of the relevance of getting 'behind the scenes' of university assessment. It suggests that these students' experiences of the module

1. Strongly resonate with Baxter Magolda's (2004) Learning Partnerships Model (LPM)
2. Suggest that involving students extensively in an Assessment Partnerships Model (APM) could offer a useful way forward for AfL enhancement activity

To highlight key aspects of the students' viewpoint the chapter draws heavily on the published material of two students (Wake and Watson, 2007). Their *Assessment for Learning: A Student Survival Guide* has continued to make tangible developmental contributions to communities of staff and students beyond the boundaries of the module. We supplement this with in-depth interview data with a number of other students on the module. In this sense, then, although the chapter has, technically speaking, been written by two people, and the theoretical inferences remain largely the views of the lead author, the main body of the chapter has been produced by the insights and experiences of several of the students on the module. The specific contributions of individual students, where appropriate, are thus duly acknowledged in the biographical information at the end of the chapter.

[A]Context: staff perspective

The lead author of this chapter is currently Director of Assessment for Learning Enhancement in Northumbria University's Centre for Excellence in Learning & Teaching: Assessment for Learning (CETL AfL). She also teaches Childhood Studies on an interdisciplinary Joint Honours programme at the University. She, in collaboration with other staff at Northumbria, has a long track record of using and researching innovative assessment and its impact on students' approaches to learning (Sambell et al, 1997; Sambell & McDowell, 1998, Sambell et al, 2006). This culminated in the establishment, in 2005, of the HEFCE-funded Northumbria CETL, which acts as a national centre for expertise in AfL and a home for innovation, development and research into the integration of assessment, learning and teaching across the university. It aims to accelerate a transformation in assessment practice, so that students are able to benefit from assessment which does far more than simply test what they know. To this end, dissemination and enhancement activity targeted on AfL is central to the CETL's aims. The co-author of this chapter is a student undertaking postgraduate work in support of AfL. She is also the CETL Student Development Officer, liaising between staff and students across the university to enhance students' experiences of assessment.

[A]Recent developments in the scholarship of assessment: Assessment for Learning

Strong arguments have been put forward in recent years about the need for a paradigm shift in thinking about assessment (Segers et al, 2003). Birenbaum (2003) suggests that conceptions and approaches to assessment must change radically if assessment

environments are to keep in step with shifting views of the nature of effective learning and teaching environments. Learning has been largely reformulated along constructivist-based principles. From this viewpoint, the view of the teacher shifts from an authority who transmits knowledge (the sage on the stage) to the role of a mentor or facilitator who guides learning (the guide on the side). Likewise, views about the role of the student shift from being a passive consumer of knowledge, to an active constructor of meaning. This means that learners and teachers become viewed as jointly responsible partners in the learning process, with dialogue between both parties seen as vital (Bloxham & Boyd, 2007). From these perspectives learner-focused pedagogic environments, such as those offered by Enquiry-Based Learning (Hutchings and O'Rourke, 2002), which jointly engage staff and students in communities focused on research activity, reflection and conversation, become highly prized.

Concepts of assessment, however, have been slower to change. As assessment scholarship develops in the higher education community, though, enhancement activities focus on developing assessment approaches which are in sympathy with constructivist-based views of learning. These approaches are formulated in conceptual opposition to the conservative 'testing culture' (Birenbaum, 1996) which has tended to dominate thinking about assessment. By focussing predominantly on the measurement function of assessment–the assessment _**of**_ learning- testing cultures position the student as a passive, powerless, even oppressed victim of the assessment process. Research has shown, for example, that the standards and criteria for judging work often remain a mystery to students, preventing learners from making effective evaluations for themselves (Carless et al, 2007). Further, if students see assessment

tasks simply as hurdles which teachers require them to jump this can damage or, at worst, undermine deep approaches to learning (Sambell et al, 1997).

Efforts to challenge, or at least ameliorate, some of the damaging effects of testing cultures on student learning have resulted in what Boud and Falchicov (2007, p.4) have dubbed an assessment *for* learning 'counter-movement.' This broadly aims to promote new assessment cultures which foster learning (Boud & Falchicov, 2006; Bryan and Clegg, 2006). While approaches to AfL vary, they often involve the design of specific activities as part and parcel of everyday curriculum design and delivery. These might, for instance, involve self and peer assessment activities which offer students insight into assessment standards and criteria within a discipline, supporting them to effectively make judgements about the quality of their own work (e.g. Boud,1995; Brown & Knight, 1994; Nicol and Macfarlane Dick, 2006; Orsmond et al, 2006; Rust et al, 2005; Sadler,1989; Sluijsmans et al, 2001). Other enhancement activity has concentrated on helping students gain more timely feedback and engage productively with it (e.g. Gibbs and Simpson, 2004; Knight & Yorke, 2003; Nicol, 2009), or on developing assessment so as to foster the skills and dispositions of learning for the longer term (e.g. Boud and Falchicov,2006; Carless et al, 2007; Bryan and Clegg, 2006; McDowell et al, 2006).

As awareness about the impact of assessment on students' approaches to learning spreads across the sector, 'assessment for learning' (Gipps, 1994) has become a popular term and a great deal of enhancement activity is centred on it. A number of universities now include assessment for learning in their learning and teaching

strategies or have developed initiatives and projects, with a view to enhancing student learning.

[A]AfL enhancement activity

Increasingly, then, university staff are learning about and debating assessment, via conferences, induction, courses, research and their continuing professional development. In our CETL, for instance, we are keen to foster research, enquiry and exploration, so that we can investigate and learn more about the possible impact of assessment for learning, rather than simply promote it as a 'motherhood and apple-pie' idea. In order to help achieve this aim, our CETL explicitly engages novice and experienced staff across the university in formal and informal learning opportunities to learn more about assessment (Reimann and Wilson, 2009), with a view to interrogating and hopefully improving assessment practice by promoting awareness, reflection, conceptual development and change. These learning opportunities include, for instance, the chance for staff to read and discuss their views of assessment-related research by participating with other lecturers in an informal monthly reading group. Others participate in courses which address the theories and principles of assessment as part of the raft of continuing professional development programmes on offer at the university.

It struck me, however, that while students were often being offered ways of becoming engaged in assessment for learning activities as an integral part of their courses, I hadn't come across many instances in which undergraduates, outside of those

studying to become educators themselves, were explicitly offered the chance to learn about, debate and become engaged with concepts of assessment per se, in the ways that are increasingly on offer to our staff. Further, the extensive literature on AfL is almost exclusively produced by staff, so it seemed timely to engage students as partners in AfL enhancement activity. To this end I validated a module on AfL, which students on a non-vocational Joint Honours programme could select as a second year option.

[A]How did the module work?

The aim of the module was, primarily, to enable students to engage in some depth with the scholarship of assessment (Rust, 2007). At the outset of the module, I explained my enhancement role in the CETL, and suggested students might want to work with me on an AfL project, in which we would try to develop materials that would encourage others to reflect on the key issues. Students were asked to author guides to AfL, or develop other authentic materials of their own choosing, such as workshops or interactive games. These were to be suitable for new students coming onto the Joint Honours programme or for members of staff at our own university.

While the student-authored enhancement materials were, on the one hand, submitted for summative assessment, students knew that, with relevant permissions, they subsequently could be used 'in real life' in assessment enhancement activity. In this sense the module sought to offer students an authentic (Gulikers, 2006) summative assessment experience, so that they could actively apply what they learned about AfL

throughout the module. Students could choose to work individually or in small self-selecting groups to produce their guides or learning materials. Teaching sessions were used to support students in building up appropriate knowledge, skills and theoretical insights to produce their materials effectively.

I hoped that being immersed together in a collaborative process of active enquiry about AfL would afford students the 'substantial investment of time and effort [needed] to participate generatively and with convergent understanding in the central forms of the knowledge community' (Northedge, 2003, p21), extending their repertoire of knowing about assessment issues, and bringing their own internal voices into dialogue with others in the field. As part of the project, then, learners engaged with other students, with CETL staff, with published work on assessment research and the literature on educational development. Exemplars of educational development materials were shared during the course, including, for example, Brown's 'Assessment Manifesto' (2005); Brown, Race and Smith's _500 Tips on Assessment_ (2004); and Gibson's 'Tome Reader' (2007) (a guide for PhD students written in the style of video-game 'cheats' pages). Students were also introduced, (via, for example, the Higher Education Academy, university and conference websites), to the world of professional development and scholarship in learning and teaching. This, in itself, was an eye-opener for my students, as none had realised this world existed, despite it being a major aspect of my own professional life, because until then they had only encountered me as a lecturer/researcher within my substantive area, Childhood Studies. Furthermore, the module inevitably opened up lengthy discussions about university assessment processes, which otherwise exist 'behind the scenes' from the student viewpoint. This enabled students to build a larger picture of the competing

demands and different stakeholder views of assessment than they previously had met through personal experience.

[A]Students' views of their engagement in the module

In what follows, we will highlight some of the key themes and issues to emerge from the students' perspective. It was striking that, while many staff see AfL as a set of classroom techniques to improve student performance (Davies and Ecclestone, 2008, p.72), the students saw AfL in a much more holistic way. For them, AfL did not simply offer the means to gain better marks. Instead, the enhancement materials they developed focused predominantly on issues relating to the stances, dispositions and actions of staff and students. From these students' viewpoints, then, AfL represented improved staff-student partnerships in academia.

As we will highlight below, the aspects of AfL which the students sought to promote resonate strongly with the dynamics of Baxter Magolda's (2004) Learning Partnerships Model (LPM). The LPM offers teachers a frame by which to steer their pedagogic thinking. For Baxter Magolda this frame helps students to develop appropriate attributes, because ultimately society will expect graduates to 'assume positions of responsibility,' 'manage complexity and engage multiple perspectives,' 'gather and judge relevant evidence . . . to make decisions,' and 'act in ways that benefit themselves and others equitably and contribute to the common good' (p. xviii). Educators working within the frame seek to provide learners with carefully balanced levels of support and challenge to facilitate 'self-authorship,' which Baxter

Magolda defines as 'the internal capacity to define one's beliefs, identity, and relations with others' (p. 8). These include support which: respects and affirms the value of student voices; engages in learning with them; and helps them to view their own experiences as opportunities for learning and growth. The challenges include expecting students to: attend to complexity and avoid simplistic decisions; to develop their personal authority by listening to their own voices in deciding how to act; and encouraging them to share their authority and expertise by working interdependently on thorny issues (Baxter Magolda, 2004).

[B]AfL: mutual trust and shared responsibility

Having studied and discussed different stakeholders' views of the purpose of assessment, students were aware of the complexity of the issues. They were keen, however, to develop AfL enhancement materials which prompted others to consider, challenge and confront some commonly-held subject-positions that assessment might imply. Issues of power and authority were played through very explicitly in the student guides, offering telling critiques of the significant cultural gap that students perceived might exist between staff and students.

For the students, this gap was important to consider, because it represented a barrier to AfL and partnership working, rooted in a lack of mutual trust and responsibility. This was not, however, represented as just the teachers' problem, but, interestingly, was framed as a matter of mistrust and misconception emanating from both sides. The following lengthy extract from a student guide to AfL (Wake and Watson, 2007)

illustrates the point. It offers a powerful indictment of both staff and student identities. The student authors of the guide use stereotypes of learners as well as teachers to satirise what they see as dysfunctional learning environments, which AfL seeks to challenge.

In the extract the students are trying to explain the concept of deep and surface approaches to learning to the implied student reader of their guide. They use heavy irony to draw attention to the unsatisfactory nature of pedagogic relationships which are not based on mutual respect, trust and partnership. To introduce these ideas, the guide initially satirises the view of the lazy student who won't take control of their own learning, and who sees knowledge as a commodity.

Spotting a Surface Learner

[Insert Figure 1 here]

The narrative continues

Now, if we are going to be really honest, I bet most of us recognise ourselves in at least one of those statements…You don't? …Whoops, sorry, our mistake!! (p.7)

The Student Guide immediately moves on to conceptually link these learner identities to factors in the learning environment, which include the construction of teacher identities:

The truth is that all too often (but, of course, not always) certain factors encourage students to be a surface learner…one of them being the Surface-Learning Lecturer….OK. We're kidding. There's no such term. But if there was, here's how they would conduct their lectures…

HOW TO SPOT THE SURFACE-LEARNING LECTURER

...who will always stride to provide:

[Insert Figure 2 here] (p8).

Within this representation, mistrust and misconceptions on both sides, then, dictate the types of subject positions on offer. Over-exaggeration is used to make funny, but serious, points about the need for dialogue and partnership working on both sides. As one student explained in interview

> *The thing I was trying to get at doing that bit was [that with some teachers] there was not negotiation here, this is non-negotiable, this is the way I teach and this is it, it was very much I'm in control and you're not, with no say in it. The person you can imagine standing at the front of the class, [saying] don't ask me questions: just do it. The Anti-Christ of AfL!*

By contrast, AfL was represented as partnership and shared responsibility, as the following extract, still aimed at students, makes plain.

Do you want an alternative? Then read on, help is at hand!

The Idea of Constructive Alignment

Basically Constructive Alignment is an approach to what you learn that gives you opportunities for higher quality learning!

It involves two aspects:

1. **CONSTRUCTIVE** = the student bit! You construct meaning through the learning activities you do. You must create the meaning and understanding for yourself, gone are the days where your lecturer tells you what it is!

2. **ALIGNMENT** = the lecturer's part. Will provide you with activities and tasks that will help you achieve the desired learning goals or outcomes.

Gone are the days of inappropriate mundane tasks that leave you bewildered. (Wake & Watson, 2007, p12).

It is especially interesting that the concept of constructive alignment (Biggs, 2003), which is usually understood as the teacher's responsibility to effectively engineer

learning, teaching and assessment so as to 'trap' the student into learning what the teacher desires, is recast in the student version as a matter of working in partnership with mutual responsibility.

[B] Developing personal authority

In developing their enhancement materials, students formed a strong sense of addressing a particular audience. This seemed important in helping them to feel that their own thoughts, feelings and voices were respected and valued. They strove to make points and communicate their ideas effectively, which, interestingly, they saw in stark contrast to the ways in which they approached 'normal' assignments.

> '*We were conscious that we wanted to use different ways of getting the point over rather than just a load of writing that would have bored me rigid. The pictures were deliberately chosen to illustrate the point.*'

Being asked to focus on enhancing others' conceptual engagement appeared to foster creativity, rather than routine compliance with assessment tasks that others have mandated (Torrance, 2007). The following student, for instance, describes how she chose to mix genres in her guide, as a more familiar and natural way of expressing her views and ideas in order to persuade others to develop their thinking about assessment:

'I thought if we had done a 500 word guide with a 1,500 word reflective commentary it would have ended up another assignment and I am sick of doing assignments! The terminology you use, the formality of the words and the formality of the sentence structure. Your audience wouldn't have understood it. They wouldn't have got as much from, it as they would get from our guide. But I was quite conscious that we are still writing to an academic standard because we read a lot and I read stacks of stuff.'

[B] Voice and alienation

When developing their enhancement materials, students chose to use alternative formats from the traditional academic essay or report. As has already been seen in the extracts above, they rooted their guides in informal and diverse textual practices, which allowed them to express their ideas in alternative genres and modes of exchange. With some relish, they chose to employ informal vernacular multi-literacy practices grounded in peer community and popular culture, but which are seldom engaged in their formal assessment (Ivanic et al, 2007).

They found the opportunity to use these culturally and linguistically diverse literacy practices surprisingly liberating, helping them feel they could build on what they already brought to learning. This could be seen as an instance in which university culture adapts to embrace the culture brought by the student, respecting the diverse

voices they bring, rather than habitually expecting the student to become assimilated into university culture (Ramsden, 2009).

Further, the module inevitably opened up many lengthy discussions of what makes a 'good' assignment. This gave rise to considerable debate about academic discourse and questions of voice, which, from students' viewpoints, seemed closely linked to the themes of belonging and ownership of the world of ideas. From students' perspectives, 'normal' assessment experiences were associated with feelings of not belonging, of not feeling part of something which you are supposed to feel at home with (Mann, 2001). One student, for example, talked of searching for personal meaning while preparing her guide to AfL, rather than her usual experience, which involved trying to simply produce what she thought someone else was expecting or wanted to hear:

'Normally I don't write it for me. I don't think I write my academic assignments for myself, I'm writing them for the person who is reading them.'

Producing her guide became viewed as an opportunity to engage holistically with issues of personal identity, rather than performing a task in an atomistic way, by 'putting in' material that others appear to demand:

> *'I used it to think through the things with assessment that had happened to me. It was about me, which my assignments aren't normally. I just normally check what they're asking and put bits in on each criteria.'*

[B]Sharing expertise and authority

In interview, the students' sense of having something to offer to the academic community in relation to AfL enhancement activity was palpable. In part, they felt this was connected to their growing recognition, via the module, that communities of assessment scholars tend to share and debate their ideas, rather than work in isolation. They could also see that views about 'good' assessment are situated, relate strongly to stakeholders' values, attitudes and assumptions about the purposes of assessment, meaning that ideas about assessment are contested, rather than absolute. In this sense, they began to appreciate that assessment knowledge can be viewed as situated within and distributed across communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Knight, 2002), rather than being possessed by the individual.

This had the capacity to challenge and change the way that they saw themselves as learners. One talked, for instance, of the ways in which working and producing assignments collaboratively with peers afforded enhanced opportunities for dialogue about assessment issues, and impacted positively on her own learning experience, by enhancing her own sense of achievement:

> *'We definitely discovered working together you're giving so much more. You're pulling things out of each other, you didn't realise you had. I don't class myself as a creative person, but when I looked at that final product it worked really well. Whereas, writing a normal academic assignment, it's very isolating.'*

This 'natural', collaborative way of working contrasted starkly with most students' prior experiences of doing assignments, which was characterised by a sense of estrangement, and a requirement to fulfil assessment for purely functional, rather than personal ends (Mann, 2001).

'Usually there is no obligation, you're writing for a set task and set thing and once it has been achieved then that's it.'

By contrast, this student continued to talk about producing her enhancement materials in a very different way.

> *'The sense that someone would read this- I think that helped us create it, especially after seeing the guides that they handed out as examples and they had said it might [be displayed].People might pick it up, have a look through it.'*

Here the student invests meaning in terms of making a difference to others. In other words, her work is undertaken partly for the good of the community, not just for individual marks:

> *'It is not just a pass or a fail or a number in a box, there's other important things like satisfaction, there's recognition, there's the feeling that it is going to help other people.'*

From this perspective the student has a sense of contributing to the assessment community in a more reciprocal relationship than is usually the case, which the learner experiences as empowering and enthusing. Another student spoke of suddenly seeing how far, as a more experienced learner, she had something of value to say and

to offer to others: in this case the first years. This led her to recognise and value her own authority and she subsequently volunteered, with her co-author, to take her materials into Study Skills sessions as part of the academic induction of the next cohort of learners:

> *'We'll go and show the first years. It's peer learning, isn't it? It is*
> *proof that there is life after a 2,000 word assignment, that there is*
> *something fun and you can achieve something.'*

The sense of supporting the development of others, here by showing them an 'assessment survivor,' was valued as a meaningful way of sharing the expertise that they had developed.

Moreover, some students' work on AfL was published as part of the staff development series at the university. These students were energised, surprised and somewhat amused by their new identity, as they suddenly recast themselves as authors who might be read and cited by the academic community:

> *'It was just so mega and was just so funny! We've had our names in*
> *brackets me and you. Plebs can make it!... They'll say who's this*
> *new [author, date]? A sense of achievement and recognition isn't*
> *it? As students you feel, we're not quite there yet, 'cos we're still a*
> *student. But we are!'*

The sense of suddenly belonging as partners in an academic community throws issues of identity and status into sharp relief.

[A]Conclusions

Carless (2009) suggests that mistrust is one of the main barriers impeding the development of assessment cultures in universities. In his view trust could be enhanced by heightened communication about the purposes of assessment between university staff. Further, he argues that students need to be shown and helped to understand some of the tacit assumptions of the assessment process, via increased collaboration and dialogue, rather than shrouding assessment processes in secrecy. This, too, boils down to a question of trust.

It certainly seems that the student viewpoints we have discussed in this chapter seem to agree. Their materials advocate strong staff-student collaboration and trust surrounding assessment. Of course it is perfectly possible that the materials the students in our case study produced simply paid lip-service to the spirit of AfL, if they felt they were themselves in thrall to the power of an assessor with whose ideological position they felt duty-bound to agree (Tan, 2004). The sheer enthusiasm and energy of the texts they produced seem, however, to suggest that the ideas being expressed moved beyond simple lip-service. They illuminate and focus upon issues of culture, power and identity that seem to resonate powerfully with students' lived experience, making visible some hugely important aspects of our learning, teaching and assessment cultures. They also clearly challenge deficit models of the contemporary student as somehow 'lacking' (Wilson and Scalise, 2006), blamed for not engaging properly (Harper and Quaye, 2008), or as viewing education as a commodity rather than an experience. They argue, instead, for moving towards an Assessment

Partnership Model, framed by dialogue, mutual trust and the development of more conceptually informed assessment communities.

While the AfL option module continues to be offered to second-years each academic year, and students who choose it continue to come up with inventive, creative and innovative new formats for the development of materials which aim to engage others with the scholarship of assessment, we are now looking at ways of building versions of the model into core modules, so that all students on the course might benefit from the approach. The year-long Study Skills module, offered to enable students to make an effective transition to university study, is an obvious starting point, as it is taken by all (approximately 140) students coming onto our Joint Honours programme. It is currently being redeveloped, so that not only will all new students be introduced to the materials that second-years have produced for them to help them learn about the scholarship of learning, teaching and assessment, but everyone will become involved in a 'Making Connections' project, in which they will have the opportunity to produce, as well as use, authentic enhancement materials. The hope is that gaining academic credit for work on the scholarship of learning will make learning-to-learn come to life from the outset of the course, will develop students' own conceptions and self-conceptions around learning, and, moreover, have the potential to make a genuine contribution to the university.

[A]Postscript by the CETL Student Development Officer

As Student Development Officer in the CETL it's my role to liaise directly with groups of students and staff in order to try and improve the student experience. This

entails developing ideas about AfL on both sides. In my experience, students grasp its principles very quickly- they can readily see how it benefits them. Staff, for a whole host of understandable reasons, can seem more sceptical. Indeed, Carless (2009) suggests that, in relation to assessment, it's very difficult to get 'the right kind' of professional development for staff.

I have found, however, that the student-produced materials have, somehow, helped to encourage staff and students alike to engage with and discuss relevant issues. Perhaps it's something to do with the enthusiasm and energy of the materials, which proves, if proof were needed, that, students can be witty, inventive, creative, altruistic, committed and funny, as well as well-informed. I have used the guides and interactive games with a range of experienced staff from many universities, as well as on induction programmes for new lecturers, and people often tell me how useful they are in helping them get grips quickly with the key ideas from the student perspective, without too much intrusive jargon getting in the way. The Student Guides continue to fly off the shelves and I receive requests for the interactive materials on a regular basis, from as far away as Nepal, so the AfL students continue to have quite an impact, some years after developing their enhancement materials.

Maybe hearing about the issues straight from the horses' mouths really helps, too. I am continually impressed about the lengths some of our student officers, once they become more informed about assessment issues, will go to in order to convince staff to trust their students, and to risk trying AfL approaches. Students come with me, for instance, to talk to big groups on our new lecturers' course, or to stand up and discuss

their viewpoints at learning and teaching conferences, even if it feels quite daunting.

I'll leave the last word about that with one of the students

'I was really up for it, actually. Its not often that you get chance to

sit and talk to your lecturers about what we think and stuff. It is

beneficial to both sides and it helps to better the relationship. Next

time I'll try and do it without shaking!'

References

Baxter Magolda, M. (2004), 'Learning partnerships model: a framework for promoting self-authorship.' In Baxter Magolda, M and King, P. (eds) *Learning Partnerships: theory and models of practice to educate for self authorship.* Sterling, Virginia: Stylus, pp.37-62.

Biggs, J. (2003), *Teaching for Quality Learning at University.* Buckingham: SRHE.

Birenbaum, M. (1996), 'Assessment 2000: Towards a pluralistic approach to assessment.' In: Birenbaum, M. and Dochy, F.J.R.C., Editors, 1996. *Alternatives in assessment of achievements, learning processes and prior knowledge*, Kluwer, Boston, pp.3–30.

Birenbaum, M. 'New insights into learning and teaching: their implications for assessment.' In Segers, M., Dochy, F & Cascallaer, E. (eds.) (2003) *Optimising new modes of assessment: in search of qualities and standards.* Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, pp.13- 36.

Black, P. Wiliam, D. (1998) 'Assessment and Classroom Learning.' *Assessment in Education*, 5 (1), 7-74.

Bloxham, S. and Boyd, P. (2007) *Developing Effective Assessment in Higher Education: a Practical Guide.* Maidenhead:OUP.

Boud, D. and Falchikov, N. (2006) 'Aligning assessment with long-term learning.' *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education,* 31(4), 399-413.

Boud, D. (1995) *Enhancing learning through self-assessment.* London: Kogan Page.

Boud, D. & Falchicov, N. (eds.) (2007) *Rethinking Assessment in Higher Education: Learning For the Longer Term.* London: Routledge.

Brown, S. and Knight, P. (1994) *Assessing Learners in Higher Education*. London: Routledge.

Brown, S., Race, P. and Smith, B. (2005) *500 Tips on Assessment* (2nd ed). London: Routledge.

Brown, S. (2005) 'An Assessment Manifesto.' Deliberations. Available online at http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/deliberations/assessment/manifesto.cfm. (Accessed 17th September 2009)

Bryan, C. and Clegg, K. (Eds) (2006) *Innovative Assessment in Higher Education*. London: Routledge.

Carless, D. (2009) 'Trust, distrust and their impact on assessment reform.' *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 34, (1), 79-89.

Carless, D., Joughin,G. and Liu, N. (2007) *How assessment supports learning: learning-oriented assessment in action*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Univ. Press.

Davies, J & Ecclestone, C. (2008) 'Springboard or strait-jacket?: Formative assessment in vocational education learning.' *Curriculum Journal,* 19, (2), 71-86.

Gibbs, G and Simpson, C. (2004) 'Does your assessment support your students' learning?' *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education,* 1, 1-30.

Gibson, M. (2007) *Tome Reader.* Available online at http://www.dr-mel-comics.co.uk/ (accessed 15th September 2009).

Gipps, C. V. (1994) *Beyond Testing: towards a theory of educational assessment,* London: Falmer Press.

Gulikers, J. (2006) *Authenticity is in the eye of the beholder: A five dimensional framework for authentic assessment.* The Open University, Netherlands.

Harper, S.R. and Quaye, S.J.(2008) (eds) *Student Engagement in Higher Education: Theoretical Perspectives and Practical Approaches for Diverse Populations*. London: Routledge

Hutchings, W. and O'Rourke, K. (2002) 'Problem-Based Learning in Literary Studies.' *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 1, (1), 73-83.

Ivanic, R., Edwards, R., Satchwell, C. and Smith, J.(2007) 'Possibilities for pedagogy in Further Education: Harnessing the abundance of literacy.' *British Educational Research Journal,* 33, (5), 703-721.

Knight, P. (2002) 'Summative Assessment in Higher Education: practices in disarray.' *Studies in Higher Education*, 27, (3), 275-286.

Knight, P and Yorke, M. (2003) *Assessment, Learning and Employability*. London: OUP.

Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation.* London: CUP

Mann, S.J. (2001) Alternative Perspectives on the Student Experience: alienation and engagement. *Studies in Higher Education*. 26, (1), 7-19.

McDowell, L., Sambell, K., Bazin, V., Wakelin, D., & Wickes, H. (2006) *Assessment for Learning: current practice exemplars from the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning*. Newcastle: MARCET, Red Guide Paper 22.

Northedge, A. (2003)'Rethinking Teaching in the Context of Diversity', *Teaching in Higher Education,*8, (1), 17- 32

Orsmond, P, Merry, S and Sheffield, D. (2006) 'A quantitative and qualitative study of changes in the use of learning outcomes and distractions by students and tutors during a biology poster assessment.' *Studies in Educational Evaluation,* 32, 262-287.

Nicol, D., & Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006). 'Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: A model and seven principles of good feedback practice.' *Studies in Higher Education,* 31(2), 199–218.

Nicol, D. (2009) *Transforming assessment and feedback: enhancing integration and empowerment in the first year*. Scottish Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education.

Ramsden, P. (2009) *The future of higher education teaching and the student experience*. UK: Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills.

Reimann, N. & Wilson, A. (2009) HE teachers' learning about assessment: engaging with formal and informal learning opportunities. Paper delivered to the EARLI 13th biennial conference for research on learning and instruction, 'Fostering communities of learners.' Aug 25-29th , Amsterdam.

Rust, C., O'Donovan, B. and Price, M.(2005)'A social constructivist assessment process model: how the research literature shows us this could be best practice', *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education,*30, (3), 231 -240.

Rust, C. (2007) 'Towards a scholarship of assessment', *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education,* 32, (2), 229 – 237.

Sadler, D.R. (1989) 'Formative assessment and the design of instructional systems', *Instructional Science*, 18, 119-144.

Sambell, K. & McDowell, L. (1998) 'The construction of the hidden curriculum: messages and meanings in the assessment of student learning.' *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education,* 23,(4), 391-402.

Sambell, K., McDowell, L. & Brown, S. (1997) '"But is it fair?" an exploratory study of student perceptions of the consequential validity of assessment.' *Studies in Educational Evaluation,* 23,(4), 349- 371.

Sambell, K., McDowell, L. & Sambell, A. (2006) 'Supporting Diverse Students: developing learner autonomy via assessment.' In Bryan, C. & Clegg, K. (eds) *Innovative Assessment in Higher Education.* London: Routledge. pp.158-168.

Segers, M., Dochy, F. & Cascaller, E. (eds.) (2003) *Optimising new modes of assessment: in search of qualities and standards.* Dordrecht:Kluwer Academic.

Sluijsmans, D., Moerkerke, G., Dochy, F., & Van Merriënboer, J. (2001). 'Peer assessment in problem based learning.' *Studies in Educational Evaluation,* 27, (2),153-173.

Tan, K. (2004) 'Does student self-assessment empower or discipline students?' *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 29, (6), 651-662.

Torrance, H. (2007) 'Assessment as learning? How the use of explicit learning objectives, assessment criteria and feedback in post-secondary education and training can come to dominate learning.' *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice,* 14(3), 281-294

Wake, B. & Watson, H. (2007) *Assessment for Learning: A Student Survival Guide.* Northumbria: MARCET. Red Guide series, Paper 33.

Wilson, M. and Scalise, K. (2006) 'Assessment to improve learning in higher education The BEAR Assessment System.' *Higher Education*. 52(4), 635-663.