

## Summary Notes: Workshop B2 – Assessment

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Paul began by reiterating that assessment drives student learning & the achievement of outcomes.

- Makes it imperative that threshold learning outcomes are “real.”
- Also, the importance of aligning goals, teaching & learning activities, and assessment.

The role of institutional imperatives (semester-length courses, for example) in shaping assessment.

And the increasing demands on teaching staff – heavier workloads; more students.

The diversity of student populations; less well-equipped or prepared for university study.

- And teachers have less time to appreciate the diversity of student needs, on account of higher academic workloads

Assessment exercises a profound influence on:

- What students learn;
- How they learn;
- How effectively they learn.

The question of contact hours has been controversial in the UK.

Students make rational choices about what they do – in terms of assessment, as well as subject choices.

The isolated nature of most assessment tasks – which stands in contrast to the rhetoric we use.

There is little evidence that students shift from surface to deep learners; indeed, some evidence that they are more likely to become surface learners.

There can be a tenuous correlation between effort and outcomes.

Are students satisfied with their learning, and the teaching we provide? Perhaps, but that satisfaction does not necessarily relate to the learning outcomes that were identified.

Group projects: students prefer to avoid them, but there is considerable evidence that group work can lead to better learning outcomes.

The perils of setting too many assessment tasks.

- And a lack of consistency (although it is also important to provide variety)

The crucial role of feedback: “developmental feedback.”

Challenging the obsession with essays, and the value of “applied learning”

- Possible alternatives: pamphlets, writing for newspapers.
- And a sense of “making a difference”

The workload implications of shifting patterns of assessment.

The possible value value of e-journals.

Peer assessment: and the important distinction between “assessing” and “marking.”

The importance of providing a range of feedback that is coherent and clear.