

Assessment Overview 1

After standards
The Future of History

'Using Threshold Learning Outcomes to drive Student Learning'

"In all matters pertaining to the assessment of students
please
TURN THE LIGHTS ON!"

- fundamental to *higher* education
- drives student learning and achievement of outcomes
- 'constructive alignment' (of goals, L&T activities & assessment: J.Biggs)
- ethical considerations

Assessment Overview 2

After standards
The Future of History

Key Contexts

- Public Domain...
- Back Office...
- Teacher Experience...
- Student Experience...

Assessment Overview 3

After standards
The Future of History

The importance of assessment to students

Assessment exercises a profound influence upon:

- What students learn...
- How much they learn and study...
- How they learn...
- How effectively they learn...

Assessment Overview 4

After standards
The Future of History

A few common claims/complaints (at least in the UK) ...

Teachers/faculty often say

- students will only do the assessed assignments (not the courses)
- students aren't interested in feedback (only marks/grades)
- students don't like new/unfamiliar forms of assessment
- ...

Students often say

- we are unclear about goals and standards
- we are often baffled by the meaning and use of 'assessment criteria'
- we don't get enough practical advice about how to improve our work
- we are 'super-sensitive' to any signs/evidence of 'marker variation'
- ...

Assessment Overview 5

After standards
The Future of History

Planning to use assessment of TLOs to drive student learning

- **Variety**
What kinds of task are needed to measure/develop students' learning of each/all TLOs?
- **Volume**
How many of each kind of task are needed?
- **Timing**
When, and in what order, are the tasks performed?
(On the 3 above, see www.testa.ac.uk; Lizzio, A. et al (2002), University students' perceptions of the learning environment and academic outcomes, *Studies in Higher Education* 27/1)
- **Embedding**
How and where do students learn ALL about assessment? How are teaching and learning activities designed to prepare and support students' learning for assessments?
- **Feedback**
How and when do students learn about their progress and how to improve their assessed learning/performance?

Assessment Overview 6

After standards
The Future of History

Key Conditions to ensure that assessment enhances and supports student learning

1. Tasks capture sufficient study time (*time on task: Berliner*)
2. Tasks orientate students to allocate time and effort evenly across course and on most important aspects of the course
3. Tasks engage students in, and reward them for, high-quality learning activities
4. Sufficient feedback is provided; often enough and in enough detail
5. Feedback focuses on students' learning, rather than on marks or students themselves
6. Feedback is timely (still of use)
7. Feedback is linked to purpose of assignment and assessment criteria
8. Feedback is understandable to students
9. Feedback is received by students and attended to
10. Feedback acted upon by students to improve future work/assessments

Adapted from G. Gibbs (2005), Conditions under which assessment supports students' learning, *Learning and Teaching Higher Education*, 1/1, 3-31.

After standards
The Future of History

Assessment Overview 7

The Importance of Developmental Feedback

... 'the most powerful single influence on students' achievement'

... 'a hallmark of excellence in teaching' (feedback on teaching)

- Feedback on the progress of students' learning may be regularly embedded in teaching and learning activities, in and out of class, online, etc.** Only by knowing what, how, and how much progress students are making in their learning can teachers understand the impact of teaching activities and adjust these to optimize student learning.'
- Feedback on assessed work:**
 - through summative (marks/grades count) or formative (marks don't count) assignments
 - by measuring students' performance AND providing practical advice on how to improve
 - in/out of class activities; for whole groups/individuals; by self/peers/teachers; online/oral...
 - needs to be regular, criteria-related, legible, understandable, practical, timely, useable...
 - may be 'diagnostic' (students identify abilities) or 'ipsative' (charts progress from previous feedback), 'student-steered' (after 'measure' of achievement, each or all students identify what developmental feedback they want)

Hattie, J. (1987) Identifying the salient facets of a model of student learning: a synthesis of meta-analyses, *International Journal of Educational Research*, 11, 187-212; Black, P. & William, D. (1998) Assessment and Classroom Learning, *Assessment in Education*, 5/1, 7-74.

After standards
The Future of History

Assessment Overview 8
EXAMPLE

Student views of what tutors value when assessing history essays

	All-student assessment of importance % n. 674	Range of student response, by department % n.17
Answer to the question set	91	84-100
Clear line of argument	90	81-94
Clear structure/organisation	83	62-95
Wide reading	79	62-89
Analytical thinking	69	56-95
Understanding of historical debates	63	36-80
Footnoting and referencing	57	25-89
Personal insights, views and judgements	51	27-77
Appraisal of historians' works	46	31-63
Correct use of English	45	34-69
Use of historical theories/concepts	38	22-62
Use of knowledge from teaching sessions	30	11-67
Use of primary sources	29	18-41
Skills in use of visual material/sources	9	0-22
Skills in use of numerical/statistical data	8	0-23
Knowledge drawn from other disciplines	8	0-21
Skills in use of C and IT-based data	7	0-13

After standards
The Future of History

Assessment Overview 9
EXAMPLE

Student views of what tutors can do to improve feedback on History essays

All-student response (n. 674)

Ranking of items	Agree %	Disagree %
Provide more-precise advice on scripts	95	4
Hold a tutorial during preparation time	85	9
Fully explain the standards required	85	11
Write more comments on scripts	81	16
Show marks against assessment criteria	81	12
Circulate model/excellent answers	79	17
Take more account of individuality	71	19
Use teaching sessions to give feedback	64	29
Comment on student's own assessment	63	23
Encourage peer feedback on work	48	42
Take less time to mark and return work	44	53

Hyland, P. (2000) Learning from feedback on assessment, in Booth and Hyland, XXX

After standards
The Future of History

Assessment Overview 10

Threshold Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate an understanding of at least one period or culture of the past.
- Demonstrate an understanding of a variety of conceptual approaches to interpreting the past.
- Show how History and historians shape the present and future.
- Identify and interpret a wide variety of secondary and primary materials.
- Examine historical issues by undertaking research according to the methodological and ethical conventions of the discipline.
- Analyse historical evidence, scholarship and changing representations of the past.
- Construct an evidence-based argument or narrative in audio, digital, oral visual or written form.
- Identify, and reflect critically on, the knowledge and skills developed in their study of History.

After standards
The Future of History

After standards
The Future of History

