

UNIVERSITY OF  
**Southampton**

**Neil  
Ford**

**Business**

**Supporting student agency and  
success in higher education**





# Peer learning to support undergraduate research (Business)



(Ford, 2018)



## Focus:

- **Student-led peer learning sessions** providing students with peer feedback on their ideas towards developing an assessed dissertation proposal, and knowledge of the theory of research methods assessed through a multiple choice test.
- **Involved training final year students to facilitate peer learning sessions**, and **training post-graduate researchers** to deliver drop-in sessions for data analysis.

## Outcomes:

- Increases in students' feedback orientation scores (FOS, Linderbaum & Levy, 2010); 15 out of 24 students increased their feedback orientation scores, learning outcomes, and student self-efficacy.
- High attenders average module marks were 68% compared to 62% for low attenders. Caution is needed in the interpretation of results as these could be due to motivation of achievement bias; this needs further investigation.
- Average module mark increased from 59-72% from the previous year, although student satisfaction declined; multiple changes to the module from the previous year may be implicated.
- Feedback from students about the value of the intervention was mixed.

**Key message: To be more selective and critical about where peer learning may or may not work.**



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**Max  
Chipulu**

**Business**

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# Does student engagement in self-evaluation Impact task performance. (Business) (Chipulu, 2018)



**Focus:** Involved an assignment clinic and feedback workshop followed up with a focus group to discuss examples of areas of improvement students could propose. Students were asked to request feedback on a specific area of improvement based on their own evaluation of how a task went.

## **Outcomes:**

- The students who engaged in the intervention self-evaluation task did better than those that did not but other variables (e.g. student motivation) could be factors in impacting results.
- The average scores for the group who engaged in the intervention by asking for specific feedback was 80% compared to overall average for the module of 63% (approx. 50% of the cohort asked for focused feedback).
- The project identifies the value of students' taking responsibility for asking for specific feedback- i.e. importance of student ownership of feedback.
- Student satisfaction increased significantly especially in relation to feedback, clarity of assessment marking criteria, usefulness and timeliness of feedback.

**Key message:** The criticality of planning. Planning well ahead of time, with intervention activities scheduled as part of the module timetable.



UNIVERSITY OF  
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**Emanuela  
Lotti**

**Economics**

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# Supporting and developing students' self-evaluation skills (Social Sciences / Economics) (Lotti, 2018)



**Focus:** Formative feedback through focused workshop and peer marking activities to enhance assessment literacy.

## **Outcomes:**

- statistically significant increases in students' perceived assessment literacy for the experimental group using EAT but no increase in the assessment literacy scale (Smith et al., 2013); no change in feedback orientation of students using FOS (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010);
- increases found in students' performance in one module but not in the second module where the intervention was also trialled when comparing experimental and control groups. Given that the students received the interventions at different times; it would be useful to see if the timing of the intervention was a factor in impacting student performance.
- The experimental group's responses were statistically significantly different to the control group's, both in their engagement with assessment literacy as measured by EAT, and in their overall engagement in assessment using all dimensions of the EAT Framework following the intervention.

**Key message:** The quantitative data shows how even a very small intervention with limited use of additional resources can be powerful and improve the assessment literacy of a whole cohort of students.



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**Goran**

**Mashanovich**

**Electronics**

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# Improvement of assessment feedback skills through assessment workshops, test design and use of electronic voting systems (Electronics). (Mashanovich, 2018)



- **Focus:** Clear explanation of what constitutes good and student entitlement explained through classes and VLE.
- Students were engaged in designing summative test questions and had to explain their rationale underpinning their choices; students were engaged in a 2 hour workshop working on previous exam questions where they worked in groups to produce solutions; students also marked exam answers; groups also had to give feedback; a student response system was introduced in sessions.
- Exploration of the impact of an increased number of formative assessments and less summative assessments on student development of assessment and feedback skills; and in using year two students in delivery of year 1 modules; and how second year students can pass their experience on to first year students.

## **Outcomes:**

- Led to curriculum change in reducing the number of summative tests, increasing the number of workshops to support learning, with increased student satisfaction.
- Students' engagement and understanding of feedback was higher than their self-reported assessment literacy scores. Assessment literacy increased although changes were not statistically significant (Smith et al., 2013).
- Students engagement with assessment as measured by EAT did increase and the increase was statistically significant.



# **Improvement of assessment feedback skills through assessment workshops, test design and use of electronic voting systems (Electronics).**

(Mashanovich, 2018)



## **Outcomes:**

- Assessment feedback increased the most of the three dimensions (others to include assessment literacy and design).
- Significant increases in student satisfaction were identified, especially in relation to clarity of assessment criteria, usefulness, and timeliness of feedback.
- The students reacted very well to the introduced changes in the module delivery and particularly to the assessment workshop, test design and the new student response system (e.g., Top Hat).
- Key learning points were applied to further development of pedagogy.

## **Key messages:**

**Student entitlement, and ‘what constitutes good’ should be explained not just at the beginning of the semester but also during the semester. This approach can significantly change dynamics in the class and significantly improve the student learning experience. It can also hopefully improve their assessment feedback skills. Careful planning of teaching and learning activities and discussion with colleagues about different approaches is fundamental.**



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**Veronica**

**Spencer**

**Film  
Studies**

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# Improving assessment literacy skills amongst first-year Humanities' students. (Film/Humanities). (Spencer, 2018)

**Focus:** Three workshops were provided to develop students' assessment literacy (focused on essay writing, understanding of criteria, and understanding and use of feedback).

## **Outcomes:**

- Positive impact on students' assessment literacy, their performance, and satisfaction.
- The average module mark increased significantly, with awards of first-class and upper second class honours increasing from 46% of cohort to 66% in 2017 from 2016
- With regards to assessment literacy (Smith et al., 2013), specific improvements in understanding of requirements, and students' ability to make informed judgements about the quality of their work improved and such changes were statistically significant.
- Student engagement with assessment as measured by the EAT framework increased in all three dimensions and especially in engagement with assessment feedback; all changes were statistically significant.
- However feedback orientation as measured by FOS (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010) did not significantly change.



# Improving assessment literacy skills amongst first-year Humanities' students. (Film/Humanities). (Spencer, 2018)

## Outcomes continued

- The interventions have seen improvements in students' understanding of assessment and feedback and begun to impact their development of self-evaluation skills.
- Assessment literacy (Smith et al., 2013) improved in the experimental group receiving the intervention but not in the control group who did not receive the additional training.
- The experimental group scored themselves lower than the control group on feedback orientation and engagement with feedback; this could have been because the training made them more aware of their own limitations.
- The average entry tariff point for the experimental group was significantly higher than that of the control and needs to be considered as a moderating variable.

## Key message

**My focus has always been how to improve the module to enable the students to engage with, and better exploit, its content. I have learned that I need to give more attention to the students' emotions and how anxiety can affect their understanding of the material and their development to self-evaluate as independent learners.**

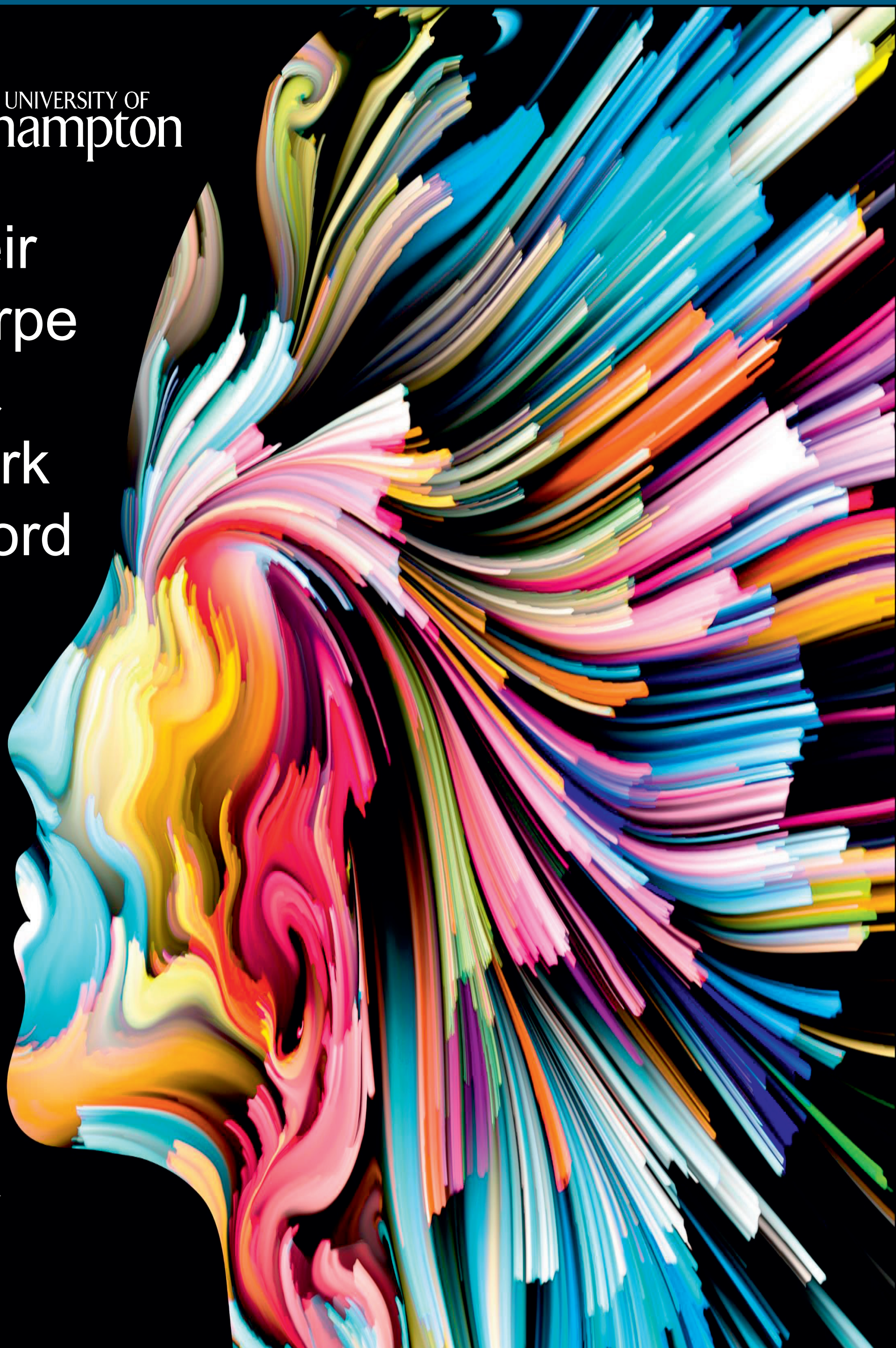


UNIVERSITY OF  
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Keir  
Thorpe  
&  
Mark  
Telford

Law

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# Raising the students' awareness and comprehension of the assessment criteria and grade descriptors (Law). (Thorpe & Telford, 2018)

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**Focus:** Involved students' engagement in tutorials to review a focused task (200-300 word summary), and for students to review work of another student; and the use of an online assessment literacy booster exemplar exercise; students were asked to grade previous students' work using the assessment criteria.

## **Outcomes:**

- Some students found peer reviewing supported their understanding of assessment criteria and marking descriptors, and that they had a greater appreciation of how to analyse and judge their own work.
- The numbers engaging in the intervention was relatively small, with mixed impacts with some students valuing the activities and others not; with relative declines in student satisfaction especially in one module.
- 89% of the students who engaged in the project looked at the intervention online activity but only 19% of this sample undertook the activity, and those that did, did worse than those students who did not actively engage with it.



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# **Raising the students' awareness and comprehension of the assessment criteria and grade descriptors (Law).**

(Thorpe & Telford, 2018)

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## **Key messages:**

- **Even a small scale intervention requires substantial preparatory work. This has to be carried out to the extent that students have a basic level of belief in the value activities.**
- **Students also need to have gained sufficient knowledge, not simply to participate in the activity but so that they feel themselves adequately/appropriately knowledgeable to give the activity, in their eyes, value.**
- **Integrating activities into the curriculum offer is important.**
- **The tutorials in the activity drew on information covered in lectures, and given that lecture attendance was relatively poor this also had a knock-on effect on the intervention.**



UNIVERSITY OF  
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**Vesna**

**Perisic**

**Mathematics**

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**Focus:** Implementation of a small scale intervention in the design of formative feedback on weekly problem sheets to improve students' self-assessment skills, informed by the EAT framework (Evans, 2016).

## Outcomes:

- No direct impact on learning outcomes and satisfaction but some changes noted in engagement.
- There was a statistically significant change in students 'minimal effort orientation' (i.e. students perceived they were putting in more effort), and in their ability to judge the quality of their own learning using Smith et al.'s (2013) Assessment Literacy Survey; students' also acknowledged greater responsibility in applying feedback as measured by the Feedback Orientation Scale (FOS) (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010).
- Students did perceive the intervention to be useful as identified in student feedback.



## Outcomes

- Students' assessment literacy increased following the intervention; the results were statistically significant.
- Student comments indicated that they valued the attention on feedback and how the intervention was encouraging them to review feedback and do something with it.
- Students were positive about the value of the intervention, and were able to articulate self-regulatory mechanisms that they would employ (Perisic, 1, p. 5).
- Students recommended the approach be extended to other modules.

## Key message:

**It is important to have the full support of everyone involved in the intervention (students and teaching assistants) in order to be able to allocate more time and resources into every single step of the intervention. Reiterate verbally the scope of the intervention and its potential benefits in order to better motivate not only the students but also the teaching assistants involved.**



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**Mary  
Gobbi**

**Nursing**

**Supporting student agency and  
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# Assessment literacy: Scoping the terrain. (Nursing) (Gobbi, et al., 2018)

## **Focus:**

- Aim to develop and improve first year undergraduate nursing students' assessment literacy and feedback with respect to their first written nursing assessment and the generic criteria expected of them.
- Stage 1 involved a scoping exercise to ascertain students' views of assessment and feedback; Stage 2 comprised an adjusted series of academic study skills, with pre and post intervention tests augmented by informal feedback.

## **Outcomes:**

- Structured support improved student performance with respect to their academic skills development. However, this support needs to address the variable skill levels and self-efficacy found in the student cohort.
- The intervention saw increases in student learning outcomes, student satisfaction, and enhanced focused feedback from staff following on-going professional development activities.
- There was no statistically significant change in students' assessment literacy (Smith et al., 2013) following the intervention, however on one of the sub-scales, students' perceptions of their ability to judge the quality of their own work declined; with greater impacts on males (less confident than females in judging the quality of their work post intervention).



## Outcomes:

- Using assessment to support understanding did increase, but was not statistically significant.
- There was no change in students' perceived self-assessment capability, however students' who perceived themselves to be better at judging the quality of their own work in the pre-test also perceived themselves with higher capacity in the post-test.
- Improvements in students' work in the areas that were targeted as part of this intervention were noted

## Key message:

Students' self efficacy influences their participation and perception of competence. Some students seem to be overrating their skill base prior to the formative assessment. We need to understand more about student experience of academic skills development in secondary and further education contexts.

**Key lessons: Not to underestimate the diversity of the student intake and the level of structured guidance required at the beginning of the programme. Check student workload with parallel modules and control the timetable to space the academic skills sessions to best effect.**



UNIVERSITY OF  
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**Laura  
Grange &  
Ian  
Harding**

**Ocean &  
Earth  
Sciences**

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**Art or science? What constitutes 'good' in the production of a geological field sketch (Stage 1)? What constitutes 'accurate' in the collection of geological field data? (Stage 2). Ocean and Earth Sciences (Harding & Grange, 2018)**

**Focus:** On developing assessment literacy within the discipline through focused support with geological field sketches, and focused training session on collection and measurement of geological data.

**Outcomes:**

- Increased engagement by students as measured by the EAT assessment wheel and in relation to students' use of formative assessment opportunities and input into supporting the development of the programme.
- Increases in students' confidence, students' performance, confidence of the academic team leading the delivery of pedagogy; sustainability through embedding the intervention features within curriculum design.
- Statistically significant increases in students' engagement in assessment feedback especially in relation to making the most of formative feedback opportunities, where the largest amount of change was witnessed; and increases in all dimensions of engaging with assessment using EAT, excepting three areas (mapping how all assessments map together; understanding of the requirements of the discipline, and, self-evaluation).



# Art or science? What constitutes 'good' in the production of a geological field sketch (Stage 1)? What constitutes 'accurate' in the collection of geological field data? (Stage 2). Ocean and Earth Sciences (Harding & Grange, 2018)

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## Outcomes:

- Students' engagement in assessment increased in all three dimensions of EAT (literacy, feedback and design).
- In field sketching, on ten of the eleven components of assessment, students in the experimental group did better than the control group.
- The overall performance of students' sketch marks was better for the experimental group, and this was statistically significant.
- Students' confidence levels improved across all responses in the post-activity questionnaire with most students stating they were 'confident to very confident' about measuring and recording different types of geological data in the field.
- Students were better able to identify planar and linear features after they had received peer-led training. Many expressed that their confidence in taking and recording measurements of geological field data had improved as a direct consequence of the training.
- Students also recognised the benefit of receiving peer-peer group teaching, stating the experience to be 'positive' and beneficial owed to their peers sharing their 'perspectives', 'insights' and familiarity with 'common mistakes'.



**Art or science? What constitutes 'good' in the production of a geological field sketch (Stage 1)? What constitutes 'accurate' in the collection of geological field data? (Stage 2). Ocean and Earth Sciences (Harding & Grange, 2018)**



### **Key messages:**

- **Engaging students in discussion and involving them in the development of marking criteria develops their confidence and elevates their levels of assessment literacy.**
- **Providing opportunity for formative training fosters learning and increases the level of assessment literacy amongst students.**
- **Positive student outcomes from these types of activities are particularly notable when coupled with student-led approaches (e.g. peer-peer instruction).**
- **Have a good understanding of the pedagogy behind the interventions you are implementing and ensure you can communicate the relevance and importance to the students in a language they will understand.**
- **Incorporating a range of activities (e.g. flipped learning materials, buzz groups etc.) maximises student engagement – keep a diverse approach to implementing teaching enhancements.**



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**Judith**

**Lock**

**Biological  
Sciences**

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**Engaging students with assessment through student-generated multiple choice revision questions (stage 1); Use of feedback to support writing of practical reports for 2<sup>nd</sup> year Biological Sciences students (stage 2). (Biological Sciences) (Lock, 2018)**

## **Focus**

- Stage 1 involved students developing 'challenging' multiple choice questions
- Stage 2 involved a range of feedback strategies to support students' practical report writing to include Quickmark comments on reports, highlighting of marking criteria using a rubric, practical report skills report audit, and focused feedback using feedback to support incremental development of understanding of report writing.

## **Outcomes:**

- Students who engaged with feedback achieved higher marks.
- Students' feedback orientations in some but not all dimensions improved using FOS (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010).
- Writing their own questions allowed students to increase their literacy with this type of assessment.
- There were statistically significant changes in students' perceptions of their assessment literacy (Smith et al. 2013)
- There was also a statistically significant change in students' orientation to learning; with students demonstrating decreases in minimum effort orientation.



**Engaging students with assessment through student-generated multiple choice revision questions (stage 1); Use of feedback to support writing of practical reports for 2<sup>nd</sup> year Biological Sciences students (stage 2). (Biological Sciences) (Lock, 2018)**

### **Outcomes:**

- While there were no significant changes in overall feedback orientation (FOS scale), students' self-efficacy in relation to feedback increased from pre- to post-test and this was statistically significant.
- While students felt more personal accountability within the feedback process, perceptions regarding the student's responsibility to apply/use feedback actually decreased and requires further examination. Did the support offered by the intervention actually, on one level increase dependence on the tutor?

### **Key messages:**

- Fitting data collection within the normal running of the module is key. It needs to be a normal part of the module.
- pushing the requirement for students to include the skills audit in their report did result in more students completing it.
- If we are going to include interventions, we need to highlight the importance to students of their engagement with it.

***Students 'are not as savvy as I had assumed. They are reticent and like guidance. However, they do not always perceive guidance as being useful, as they may not have the confidence to apply it' (Lock, 2018, 3, p. 2)***



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**Sharon**

**Pettit**

**Psychology**

**Supporting student agency and  
success in higher education**





**Focus:** Students were involved in interactive workshops focused on making good use of feedback. They had opportunities to examine previous students' work, and the marks awarded and to develop action plans based on what they took from analysing excerpts from essays and the written feedback.

## **Outcomes:**

- Students engaged in the interactive workshop.
- Clarity about the requirements of assessment were welcomed by students.
- Dealing with negative feedback and its impact on self-efficacy and motivation was a critical limiting personal factor. Students varied with regards to key curriculum factors they found most limiting.
- Students varied in their ability to interpret marker feedback.
- Real-time polling engaged students in giving feedback.
- Main outcome was in informing curriculum development regarding assessment and feedback priorities.



**Key messages:**

- **Much student feedback is in the form of written narrative by markers.**
- **Markers may spend a lot of time and care writing these. Despite this, students vary in their ability to interpret this feedback.**
- **It strengthened the view that staff and students need to work together to facilitate engagement in feedback in order to maximise learning as part of a two-way process.**
- **It is a two-way process.**
- **We need to build interventions into mainstream module/teaching rather than provide as an add-on.**
- **Tools need to be explained carefully to students to enable them to have maximum access to them.**



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**Nic Fair &  
Lisa Harris**

**Curriculum  
Innovation  
Business**

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# Students' opinions on the value of self-assessment from experience of Living and Working on the Web module. (Curriculum Innovation, Business) (Fair & Harris, 2018)

**Focus:** Emphasis on promoting students' self-assessment skills. Students submitted blog posts, commented on other's posts and were engaged in a reflection blog post. Students self-assessed their performance in a specific topic using all the criteria from their own personal Google doc self-assessment and feedback form. Tutors reviewed the self-assessments and provided specific feedback where tutor and student opinions on the assessed work differed.

## **Outcomes:**

- It led to the quality of feedback improving.
- There was greater consistency in grading and feedback among the tutor team. 92% of students found the self-assessment useful.
- Average module grade increased but a number of variables could be implicated.



# Students' opinions on the value of self-assessment from experience of Living and Working on the Web module. (Curriculum Innovation, Business) (Fair & Harris, 2018)

## Outcomes



- There were noticeable increases in the percentage of students who strongly or partially agreed that self-assessment helped them to get the grade they needed to advance their learning more quickly; to track their progress; to learn what is important; to comment on peers' work more effectively; and to understand feedback better.
- However, it was also seen by students as a way to accurately understand what the bare minimum requirements are for a pass.
- While the percentage of students who found the marking criteria easy to use to self-assess increased, approximately 50% of students still found the criteria difficult to use.

**Key messages: Self-assessment needs to be supported with assessment literacy development. It is important to provide explicit support for developing assessment literacies before asking students to start using self-assessment marking criteria.**



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**Supporting student agency and success in  
higher education and beyond through the  
development of assessment feedback skills**

**Total project cost £100,000. Revenue grant £50,000**

**PI: Carol Evans**

**[www.eatframework.org.uk/](http://www.eatframework.org.uk/)**