

Title: **Developing and embedding technology-supported assessment and feedback processes across an institution**

Presenters: **Stephen Bostock and Matthew Street**
Keele University

Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

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

1. Compare the coursework assessment practices in their own institution with our three technology-based processes that were designed for educational effectiveness and resource efficiency
2. Suggest technology-based innovations in providing online feedback that are likely to be successful if adopted in their own institutions, based on the evaluations of our 20 projects in different disciplines.
3. Apply the lessons we learnt from promoting institution-wide change in coursework assessment and feedback to their own institution.

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

This JISC funded project, Support Technology for Assessing and giving Feedback (STAF), was to build institutional capacity for using technology in assessment and feedback. We reviewed current practices and literature, developed a portfolio of technology-supported assessment processes using available technology, and promoted their adoption. Process redesign combined educational effectiveness and resource efficiency, and attempted institution-wide impact in a short period, through institution-level educational development and staff support (Bostock and Street 2011). Simultaneously, we supported twenty volunteer academics piloting new technologies to provide rich media online feedback, and evaluated their impact. The whole project was sponsored by the PVC and addressed the institution's acknowledged objective to improve the student assessment experience.

The potential benefits of technology in assessment and feedback are well documented. Cook & Noss (2010, p.10) discuss the evidence for it "removing the burden of managing assessments freeing up staff to focus on setting effective assessment tasks and giving effective feedback". *Effective Assessment in a Digital Age* (JISC, 2010) provides examples. The project Reengineering Assessment Practices project (REAP) at the University of Strathclyde used a multi-strategy approach across the whole institution (Nicol, 2007), while the project,

Transforming the Experience of Students through Assessment (TESTA), addressed the design of assessment at programme level at three universities (Gibbs, 2010).

The review of current practices in academic schools revealed much arbitrary variation and some inefficiency in the use of resources, while not always providing good student experiences. Regulations were identified that needed review or clarification. Three, thirteen-step processes were designed involving online submission, marking, feedback, and archiving. When discussed with all schools and faculties, they responded very differently. The institutional position is currently being decided but the combination of senior management support, process redesign, and individual staff support for volunteers is suggested as a strategy for rapid institutional change.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

1. Short presentation of a review of current coursework assessment and feedback practices across our institution, based on focus groups in every school, and the design of three technology-based processes that support the student experience while being efficient in resources (time, space, paper).
2. In small groups, participants compare the three processes with assessment and feedback in their own discipline or institution. Similarities and differences are noted and discussed.
3. A short presentation of the use of technologies to improve feedback in 20 mini-projects by academics we supported in 2010-11 including audio and video; a summary of their evaluations, and examples of video clips of the academics discussing the technologies they used.
4. A discussion in small groups of these technologies and how they could be applied to the participants' disciplines or institutions
5. A short presentation of our project's strategy for promoting institution-wide change towards technology-supported assessment and feedback, it's strengths, weaknesses, successes and delays.
6. A plenary discussion of successful strategies for embedding technologies into assessment and feedback on an institutional scale.

References

Bostock S. J. and Street, M. (2011). Modelling assessment processes across a university and introducing technology-based innovations, accepted for presentation and proceedings, *ICICTE Conference Proceedings*, July 2011, and at <http://www.keele.org.uk/docs/059%20SB-MW%20ICICTE%20paper%20March2011v6.pdf>
Retrieved 13 May 2011

Cook, J. & Noss, R. (2010). Technology in learning. Retrieved 21/02/2011.
<http://repository.alt.ac.uk/839>

Gibbs, G. (2010). *Transforming the experience of students through assessment* (TESTA). Retrieved 11 February 2011. <http://www.testa.ac.uk/>

Joint Information Systems Committee (2010). *Effective assessment in a digital age*. Bristol: JISC