

**Title:** **Authentic Master's level assessment to support student employability**

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### **Abstract:**

#### **Session Learning Outcomes**

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

- Identify authentic assessment methods appropriate for their own contexts, which demonstrate students capabilities and skills;
- Choose fit-for-purpose methods for assessing Master's level students;
- Discuss attitudes to enhancing Master's level assessment.

#### **Session Outline**

Much assessment at Master's level relies on highly traditional formats (essays, exams, dissertations) which don't really represent the kinds of capabilities that many graduating Master's students will need to demonstrate (QAA, 2010, Seymour, 2005, Wharton, 2003). Sally Brown has been leading a three year NTFS project ("Assimilate") exploring how Master's students are assessed in the UK and internationally and in this session the team will present initial findings of the analysis of the emergent data. Case studies of innovative and authentic assessment will be presented together with a preview of the analysis of attitudes to master's level assessment that has been undertaken using Q sort methodology to identify groupings of views that academics working in this domain hold. (Brown, 1997, Deignan 2011))

#### **Session Activities and Approximate Timings**

This participative workshop will include individual and small group tasks and plenary discussion as well as presentation of the findings. Indicative timings:

1. Introductory ice-breaking task (10 minutes)
2. Presentation re the Assimilate project and Q sort methodology (20 minutes)
3. Case study review task (10 minutes)
4. Mini presentation about the findings of the data analysis(10 minutes)
5. Task: what kinds of assessment contribute to making Master's graduates employable?(15 minutes)
6. Plenary discussion (25 minutes)

## References

Brown, S.R. (1997). *The History and Principles of Q Methodology in Psychology and the Social Sciences*. Retrieved April 12, 2004, from <http://facstaff.uww.edu/cottlec/QArchive/Bps.htm>

Deignan, T. (2011). Understanding and improving transitions in education for enterprise. In Rebecca Kill & Karen O'Rourke (Eds.), *Inspiring enterprise: Transforming enterprise education at Leeds Metropolitan University* (pp. 56-69). Leeds, UK: Leeds Met Press. Retrieved June 30, 2011, from [http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/Inspiring\\_Enterprise\\_LoRes.pdf#page=64](http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/Inspiring_Enterprise_LoRes.pdf#page=64)

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Seymour, D. (2005) Learning Outcomes and Assessment: developing assessment criteria for Masters-level dissertations. *Brookes eJournal of Learning and Teaching* , 1(2).

Wharton, S. (2003) Defining appropriate criteria for the assessment of master's level TESOL Assignments. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 28(6), pp.649-664.