

Title: **Students setting summative assessments: inspirational, feasible learning engagement or a terrifying step too far?**

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Session Learning Outcomes

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

- Have considered the perspectives of students, academic and registry staff in considering issues surrounding student-controlled assessment.
- Evaluate the points at which such assessments could develop academic practice, of both staff and students.
- Critically evaluate the potential impact of student-designed, led and controlled assessment on student perceptions of assessment.
- Devise/develop a nomenclature for such an approach
- Identify the challenges and changes such an approach would demand.

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

In 1995 David Boud commented: *“Students can escape bad teaching but they cannot escape bad assessment”*. Over a decade later students continue to report ‘bad’ assessment. This session considers whether the next logical step in personalised, flexible learning (Wanner and Palmer, 2015) is to enable students to design their own summative assessments to support deeper understanding of learning.

The idea stems from the value in ‘visible learning’ (Hattie, 2009) evident when students have control and Festinger’s recognition (1961) that individuals place higher value on those things which demand greater personal effort.

The workshop will ask delegates to explore the potential of and issues surrounding students designing summative assessment. In the session we will share diverse perspectives of the concept from:

- participants at a RAISE (Researching, Advancing and Inspiring Student Engagement) special interest group on ‘Engaging Assessment’;
- students;
- academics;
- Registry colleagues.

We also draw on doctoral research from 282 graduates of first degrees who were from universities across England into what influences perceptions of degree value indicating that greater engagement within the academic curriculum raises graduates’ positive perceptions.

Making the student learning experience more powerful through meaningful assessment responsibility has the capacity to develop deeper understanding, empowerment and self-direction (Deci and Ryan, 2012).

Many institutions offer student-led or student choice in assessments formulated by academics, but giving control through student-driven and designed assessment is different. Could it ameliorate the risks of the consumerist approach to higher education which may make HE susceptible to the vagaries of marketplace demands? Would such an idea only work at certain points or levels to support effective transitions?

Such a concept challenges and could change existing academic practice. By the end of the workshop we will have considered alternative approaches to developing and supporting new assessment practices led by students.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

The session will be structured as:

15 minute introduction of the views from the RAISE SIG, students from all undergraduate years, academics, registry perspectives and doctoral research findings all illustrated as infographics.

15 minutes in a cafe-style approach using Padlet, post-its and paper tablecloths for structured mind-mapping delegates will consider key questions surrounding:

- How could student-led assessment support transition between the first year and second year of a students' degree?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages from the students, academics and quality perspectives?
- What changes would such an approach demand in existing academic practice and procedures?

15 minutes delegate discussion and pull together of ideas and recommendations around the assessment concept.

References

Boud, D. (1995), *Enhancing learning through self-assessment*. London: Kogan Page.

Festinger, L. (1961). The psychological effects of insufficient rewards. *American Psychologist* 16, pp. 1–11.

Hattie, J. (2009) *Visible Learning*. Oxford; New York: Routledge

Wanner, T. & Palmer, E. (2015) Personalising learning: Exploring student and teacher perceptions about flexible learning and assessment in a flipped university course. *Computers & Education*. 88, pp.354-369.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2012). Motivation, personality, and development within embedded social contexts: An overview of self-determination theory. In R. M. Ryan (Ed.), *Oxford handbook of human motivation* (pp. 85-107). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press

