

## Assessment in practice: examples of discipline-specific initiatives

### Biosciences:

- **Assessing Practical Skills:** This project investigated how practical classes can be designed so that an assessment of practical skills and manual competency of Bioscience students can be achieved. To this aim we designed and conducted practical classes for first year undergraduate students so that subject specific and general practical skills were developed. Students' manual competency was monitored throughout the course and formally assessed at the end of the module. We linked the practical skills with theoretical knowledge gained from lectures and workshops. The success of the newly designed practical classes was assessed at the end and compared with previous evaluations of practical classes that did not focus on the assessment of practical skills but rather on the effect of practical experience underpinning theoretical knowledge.

### Computing Science:

- **Group Projectwork:** Downloadable case study on negotiated assessment criteria and peer assessment in software engineering group project work. Software Engineering, Computing Science, Level 2.
- **Portfolios:** Assessment through a portfolio of deliverables supports deep learning and minimises plagiarism, even in technical subjects. Tight integration of the assessment into the structure of the module provides ample formative feedback and reduces the marking load. Computer Science/Information Systems Level M.
- **Self Assessment:** Using self assessment to develop students' skills in assessing their work against objective criteria; to provide timely feedback; and to foster an understanding of the assessment grading depending on a variety of deliverables. Computing Science, Level 2.

### Economics:

- **Using classroom experiments in teaching Social Sciences:** The rationale behind the module used in this case study is to use participation in classroom experiments to help first year students better understand some of the basic principles of economics and game theory. This case study also looks

at how experiments can be the basis for assessment. Economics and Game Theory, Level 1.

- **Using Turnitin at the University of Kent:** Write up of the pilot projects carried out in the Economic and Business departments. The report gives student and staff views on their initial experience of using Turnitin and its use as an aid in referencing and improving academic writing. This case study was presented as 'Carrot or stick: student engagement with Turnitin' at the Liverpool Hope CETLs Research Symposium 'Opening the gateway: keys to understanding student learning and writing', Liverpool Hope University, 26 June 2007, and at the 4th LDHEN Symposium 'How do students engage with learning?', Bournemouth University, 12 April 2007.

### English for Academic Purposes:

- **Assessing seminar participation using blogs:** The aim of this pilot assessment method was to address some of the challenges of assessing seminar participation, including recording and evaluating student contributions more objectively. This method was also thought to be potentially fairer to less confident speakers of English. Assessment for English for Specific Academic Purposes: Level 1 undergraduate modules in English for Social Science, for students whose first language is not English.

### History:

- **Assessing Seminar Participation:** This is a tried and tested technique for improving the quality of seminar discussions of assigned readings, as well as the levels of overall learning within a module by providing a means of assessing levels of student preparation for each seminar. The scheme involves a way of structuring the basis for a seminar mark, with a very marginal additional marking burden, and is thus a time-efficient way of using an assessment technique to improve levels of learning and the quality of seminar discussions. History and Philosophy of Art, all levels.
- **Using Wikipedia:** This assessment is an alternative form of written assignment where students critique the accuracy and reliability of History-related Wikipedia entries. Students choose a topic within Wikipedia and they then compare unverifiable and verifiable sources in order to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of historical material that is posted on the site. Students reported greater engagement with the task and a new view of the reliability of web sources. Click here for the Guidelines to Students for this assignment. History, Level 2 and 3.

### Journalism:

- **Mock trial:** Using a role play to assess student understanding and application of legal knowledge of the Contempt of Court Act 1981 using a mock trial scenario. MA Broadcast Journalism.

### Multimedia Technology and Design:

- **Enhancing student engagement with online resources:** Case study of using the Assignment Survival Kit (ASK) essay writing tool with first year undergraduate Multimedia Technology and Design students. This paper examines the results of the introduction of the Assignment Survival Kit (an online essay planning and writing guide) to first year undergraduate multimedia students. Initial results of the trial indicate some improvement in essay writing skills with a positive response from students regarding the usefulness and usability of the ASK. A model for introducing online resources is proposed and factors influencing student success with using online resources is discussed, for example, the importance of personalising online resources and time management. This paper was presented at the 6th LDHEN Symposium 'The challenge of learning development', Bournemouth University, 6th and 7th April 2009, and at the 5th EATAW Conference, 'The roles of writing development in higher education and beyond', Coventry University, 30 June - 2 July 2009.

### Sports Studies:

- **Formative assessment and feedback:** The Centre for Sports Studies ranked first in the NSS 2007 for assessment and feedback. This case study looks at staff and student interview data in relation to Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick's Seven principles of good feedback practice to identify areas of good feedback practice for dissemination across the University. Exemplars of assessment information from module packs is included.

### Strategic Studies:

- **Peer assessment:** Peer assessment was introduced in 2006 for one year only. Some students disliked it but most saw the advantages in it and were praising the exercise by the end of the course. Their marks also seemed to improve with peer assessment. However, students would prefer not to have to sacrifice valuable seminar discussion time and one has to bear in mind

fairness issues surrounding student disabilities. Still, if properly built into the weighed assessment structure of the module, carefully designed peer assessment exercises of this kind should offer real advantages in terms of student learning, as well as providing alternatives to exams which need not be as time-consuming for teachers to mark. Introduction to Strategic Studies (15 Credits, Level I).