

Assessment: Overcoming Barriers to Change

90 workshop at HEA national conference on July 3 2006-07-25

31 attendees.





Part Two

Attendees were asked to write down suggestions for overcoming barriers to changing assessment on post it notes. These notes were stuck onto tables labelled with the barriers identified in Part One of the exercise.

Part Three

The suggestions were then classified according to COCD.





Key

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|--|
|  Yellow – ideas for the future, dreams, challenges, ideas for tomorrow |
|  Red – Innovative ideas, breakthroughs, Can be implemented. |
|  Blue – Easy to implement, high acceptability, past examples available. |
|  Black – not feasible ideas. |

The intention was to look for creative red and yellow ideas.





The suggestions have been themed with similar ideas.

More student involvement

Solutions	Yellow 	Red 	Blue 	Black 
Get students to assess each other	2		6	
Put students in charge of steering the boat	1	3		
Ask students how they would like the intended learning outcomes to be assessed	1	5	6	
Increase student involvement		1	9	
Students write own individual assessments	3	1		
Students involvement in marking	3	3	4	
Get students to mark their own work	2	2	1	
Mark students on the feedback they give each others assignments	1			5
Ask students to get involved with assessment criteria		2	6	





Increasing student involvement and asking students how they would like the learning outcomes to be assessed was seen as a solution that was easy to implement (blue circle) and innovative (red.) Asking students to become involved in marking and assessing each other was also seen as a solution that had high acceptability (blue), although some thought this was an idea for the future (yellow).

More staff development time

Solution	Yellow 	Red 	Blue 	Black 
Have 3 days in nice location to talk about assessment (compulsory)	1	1	1	2
Teach staff to streamline assessments			2	
6 months study leave to re-design all assessment	2			3
Run a workshop like this			4	
Work on a small scale with planned support to make sure a new way of working is successful			5	
Staff support groups, cross faculty/cross school			4	
Development Training in Assessment	1		5	
Use this activity workshop with staff		3		
Staff Development, all tutors to take a module out of own subject - including assessment - experience becomes motivation for change				
Train staff and students in disability equality			1	





Taking time out to talk about and redesign assessment were two ideas which were seen as ideas for the future and by some people as unworkable. Running workshops similar to the HEA conference workshop to discuss issues around assessment was seen as an exciting idea which could be easy to implement. Training in disability equality and assessment, staff support groups and working on a small scale with planned support were all seen as feasible ideas.

Change in attitude surrounding assessment

Solution	Yellow 	Red 	Blue 	Black 
Be passionate about assessment. Show that is about learning not judging people	1			2
Innovative methods from day 1	3	3	2	
Try it yourself, don't expect others to if you don't			4	
Stop using the word 'barrier' and take a more appreciative approach	2	2		1
Use the word 'portfolio', it can mean anything you want it to mean.	2		1	4
Feel the fear and do it anyway		2		
Encourage a holistic approach		5	1	
It is easier to get forgiveness than permission. Just do it.		5	1	
Create less risk averse culture		4		1





The number of comments surrounding lecturers' attitudes towards innovative assessments suggests this is an aspect of importance to many workshop participants. Taking a positive approach was seen by some as innovative or an idea for the future, but by others as something already being done or not feasible. One comment posed the question , 'what is wrong with resistance?'

Provide rewards/incentives surrounding developing innovative assessment

Solutions	Yellow 	Red 	Blue 	Black 
Create a system of incentives	2	3	1	
Incentives for staff, prizes, less work, time				1
Rewards, promotion, money, benefits				1
Competition with money prizes				1





Creating some form of system with incentives was seen as an innovative idea, although others saw this as not feasible.

Increase resources

Solutions	Yellow 	Red 	Blue 	Black 
Buy in help ie GTAs who will also profit from the learning experience	1			2
Centralize assessment, teachers and assessors not the same person	3		2	
Have another person paid to undertake assessments	2		1	5
Employ more people	3			3
Use HEFE money to buy staff time, develop e.g.s of innovative assessment in subject areas. Plan to produce sets of examples which colleagues can adopt, use as a springboard. Aim to reduce fear of unknown and make the theory more concrete.	2		1	
Apply for a mini-grant from subject centre to research a new assessment approach within institution		1		
Provide on line laptops/mobiles for each member of staff to save time				3

All these ideas were seen by some participants as exciting ideas for the future, some thought they were already highly acceptable and some saw them as unworkable.

Change the Assessment Process

Solutions	Yellow 	Red 	Blue 	Black 
Use only pass/fail		1	1	2
No grades only feedback	2	2	1	2
Give lots of examples	2	2	1	2
Take the assessment at any point in the semester				
Develop very clear criteria so that all can see how judgements are arrived at				
Increase diversity in formative assessments				
Make lecturers do student assessments	2	1		
Make students mark lecturers' assignments	2	2		
Asses individual skills – peers, lecturers and service-users	2		3	

Have less assessment

Minimize assessment altogether	3	2		
Do away with more summative assessments	2	2	1	
No summative assessment in year one	4	7	6	
Reduce number of assessment points	1	2	3	
Impose policy on assessment that limits number of pieces of marked work, but requires variety in		1	4	

assessment				
Only assess learning outcomes once			4	
Assess less	1		3	

Issues surrounding limiting the number of assessments and changing the assessment process were popular ideas, with 'no summative assessment in year one' receiving a high number of votes under the innovative ideas (red) and high acceptability (blue) categories.

Conclusion

The outputs from the HEA workshop of 'overcoming barriers to change' produced some imaginative and interesting ideas surrounding attitudes towards innovative assessment and possible solutions for change.

Extrinsic ideas

- more student involvement in the assessment process
- More time for staff development and support
- Rewards and incentives for developing innovative assessment
- Increase resources available to aid development of innovative assessment
- Have less assessment and no summative assessment in year one.
- Change the assessment process, increase diversity in formative assessments, no grades only feedback.

Intrinsic idea

- Create a less risk averse culture and adopt a 'holistic approach', be passionate about assessment.