ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK PRINCIPLES

Below are a set of principles that might be used to guide the design of assessment and feedback in higher or further education. This set of principles informed the work of the Reengineering Assessment Practices (REAP) project (www.reap.ac.uk).

The REAP project: 11 Principles of good assessment design

Assessment tasks should:

(engage)
1. Capture sufficient study time and effort in and out of class
2. Distribute students' effort evenly across topics and weeks**.**
3. Engage students in deep not just shallow learning activity
4. Communicate clear and high expectations to students.

Good feedback practice should:

(empower)
1. Clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, standards)
2. Facilitate the development of reflection and self-assessment in learning
3. Deliver high quality feedback to students: that enables them to self-correct
4. Encourage dialogue around learning (peer and tutor-student)
5. Encourage positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem
6. Provide opportunities to act on feedback
7. Provide information that teachers can use to help shape their teaching

From Gibbs and Simpson (2004) and Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006)

The first four principles are primarily about using assessment tasks to promote students' productive engagement in learning (engagement). All four might be simplified into one principle about 'time on task'. Elsewhere, I have called this '*Encourage time and effort on challenging learning tasks*'.

The second seven principles are about feedback and the development of independence or learner self-regulation (empowerment). Balancing engagement and empowerment is important in the early years of study (see, Nicol, 2006).

The first four assessment principles (conditions) are described in Gibbs and Simpson (2004) and the seven feedback principles are described in Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006). A further paper describes the application of these principles in two first-year modules with large student numbers (Nicol, 2009).

References
Gibbs, G. & Simpson, C (2004) Conditions under which assessment supports
    students learning, *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*, 1, 3-31.

Nicol, D, J. & Macfarlane-Dick (2006), Formative assessment and self-regulated
    learning: A model and seven principles of good feedback practice, *Studies in
    Higher Education,* 31(2), 199-218.
Nicol, D, (2009), Assessment for Learner Self-regulation: Enhancing achievement in
    the first year using learning technologies, *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher
    Education*, 34(3) 335-352

David Nicol d.j.nicol@strath.ac.uk
See www.reap.ac.uk