



## Seminar: 'Engaging and Empowering Students with their Assessment'

Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2011, (10.00-3.30)


Venue : The Arches, NOVA, UCD.

This all-day seminar on assessment, entitled 'Engaging and Empowering Students with Assessment', is specifically aimed at those in key teaching and learning positions in UCD. It is focused on the important issues of: Engaging, in particular 1st year students in the feedback process; assessments for self-regulation using learning technologies; and UCD case studies on developing students' choice of assessments within a module (a HEA funded project). The invited speaker is Professor David Nicol, University of Strathclyde and Director of the REAP Project, <http://www.reap.ac.uk/projectTeam.html>.

To register, please complete the on-line registration form at:

<http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/academicdevelopment/workshops/workshopsregistrationform/>

Queries to [teachingandlearning@ucd.ie](mailto:teachingandlearning@ucd.ie)

10.00-12.30	<p><b>Enhancing Assessment and Feedback in the First Year: Principles and Practice</b></p> <p>(including engaging students in assessment for learner self-regulation using learning technologies)</p> <p>(see over for more details)</p>	<p><b>Prof David Nicol</b></p> 
<b>Lunch-time</b>		
1.30--3.00	<p><b>Empowering Students through Choice of Assessment Methods</b> (HEA Funded Project). (see over for more details)</p> <p>UCD Case 1: Group Posters <i>or</i> Group Presentations</p> <p>UCD Case 2: Continuous problem-solving assignments <i>or</i> end-of-semester prepared question exam</p> <p>UCD Case 3: Group Assessment <i>or</i> end of semester essay.</p>	<p><a href="#">Dr Geraldine O'Neill</a>, UCD Teaching and Learning.</p> <p><a href="#">Dr Kathy O'Boyle</a>, School of Biomolecular &amp; Biomedical Science</p> <p><a href="#">Dr Evelyn Doyle</a> &amp; <a href="#">Dr Nicolas Clipson</a>, School of Biology and Environmental Science</p> <p><a href="#">Ms Judy Walsh</a>, School of Social Justice.</p>
3.00-3.30	<p><b>Open Discussion on Engaging and Empowering Students with Assessment</b></p>	<p>Professor David Nicol and all</p>

### Professor David Nicol Biography

David Nicol is Professor of Higher Education at the University of Strathclyde. He was previously Deputy Director of the Centre for Academic Practice and Learning Enhancement at Strathclyde and Director of the REAP project ([www.reap.ac.uk](http://www.reap.ac.uk)), a £1m project examining how new technologies could support improved assessment and feedback practices. David is currently employed by the QAA Scotland as Assessment and Feedback facilitator for the Scottish higher education sector and is leading a project on student peer review and feedback funded by JISC. He is also collaborating with partners in Spain, Australia and the UK on assessment and feedback projects. David's research publications are in assessment and feedback, e-learning developments and change management in HE.



### Further Details of the sessions:

#### **Morning Session (AM): Enhancing Assessment and Feedback in the First Year: Principles and Practice.**

Students are generally more dissatisfied with assessment and feedback than with any other aspect of their courses [UK National Student Survey]. Teachers are, however, concerned that increasing the provision of high quality feedback, particularly in large classes, will inevitably lead to increased workload. In this presentation it will be argued that in mass higher education, written feedback which is essentially a monologue is now trying to carry the full burden of dialogue between the teacher and student. This is distorting feedback mechanisms, increasing staff workload and pushing students towards a passive approach to learning. To address this situation it is argued that we must reintroduce dialogue in learning by rethinking the sources, form and timing of feedback and the role of the student in these processes. New technologies have the power to support an enhanced feedback model where feedback is dialogical, shared, varied and ongoing. In this morning seminar, the principles of effective feedback will be proposed and examples of technology-supported practices outlined. The presentation will draw on the findings of the Re-engineering Assessment Practices (REAP) project, funded by the Scottish Funding Council under its e-Learning Transformation initiative (see [www.reap.ac.uk](http://www.reap.ac.uk)) and on other strategic initiatives based on work at the University of Strathclyde. REAP showed that learning gains could be delivered without increases in staff time.

#### **Afternoon Session (PM): Empowering Students through Choice of Assessment Methods.**

UCD, through HEA Training of Trainers funding, is engaging in a project to encourage staff to develop choice of assessments methods within their modules, i.e. an inclusive assessment approach. Over two academic years, 10 modules across a variety of levels and disciplines are being supported in this project. The afternoon session presents the experiences of students and staff in the first three modules designed and implemented in this project. Through the analysis of student questionnaires (n=160 students) and staff interviews (n=5), this session explores issues such as: a) the students perceived equity, empowerment and anxiety related to the choice of assessment methods, b) students rationale for assessment choice, c) the supports required for staff and students and c) the recommendations for future practice. The feedback from the staff and students appears positive to the introduction of this more inclusive assessment approach and has, in particular empowered students in the assessment process.

### Selected assessment publications

#### AM Session

- Nicol, D (2010), The foundation of graduate attributes: developing self-regulation through self and peer assessment. Published by QAA for Higher Education and available at:  
[http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/documents/G21C/Assessment\\_150910.pdf](http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/documents/G21C/Assessment_150910.pdf)
- Nicol, D (2010) From monologue to dialogue: improving written feedback in mass higher education, *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 35(5), 501-517.
- Nicol, D (2010), Four recent papers on assessment and feedback with significant implications for practice, QAA Scotland Enhancement Themes: Graduates for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, available at [www.reap.ac.uk/resources](http://www.reap.ac.uk/resources)
- Nicol, D and Draper, S (2009) A blueprint for transformational organisational change in higher education: REAP as a case study. In: Mayes, T; Morrison, D; Meller, H; Bullen, P and Oliver, M (eds) *Education through technology-enhanced learning*. Higher Education Academy. ISBN 978-1-907207-11-2. Available at [www.reap.ac.uk/resources](http://www.reap.ac.uk/resources)
- Nicol, D (2009), Transforming assessment and feedback: Enhancing Integration and Empowerment in the first year, Published by Quality Assurance Agency, Scotland. Available at [www.reap.ac.uk/resources](http://www.reap.ac.uk/resources) and [http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/documents/firstyear/First\\_Year\\_Transforming\\_Assess.pdf](http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/documents/firstyear/First_Year_Transforming_Assess.pdf)
- 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
- Nicol, D (2007) E-assessment by design: using multiple-choice tests to good effect, *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 31(1), 53-64.
- 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.
- (see also [www.reap.ac.uk](http://www.reap.ac.uk))

#### PM Session

- O'Neill, G., Doyle, E., O'Boyle, K., Clipson, N. (2010) *Choice of Assessment Methods within a Module: Students' Experiences and Staff Recommendations for Practice*. Dublin: AISHE Conference Presentation/Paper publication, 26th/27<sup>th</sup> August, 2010,  
<http://ocs.aishe.org/index.php/international/2010/paper/view/155/87>
- O'Neill G., & Galvin, A. (2010) UCD Choice of Assessments Project (HEA Training of Trainers Project)  
<http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/projects/choiceofassessmentmethods/>