



Chat Transcript for Session Topic: Great designs: what should assessment do?

Discussion of
Boud "Great Designs: what should assessment do?"

Moderated by
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Date/Time	Author	Comment
30/05/2007 08:02:15	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	Since it's now 8am (in the UK at least!) we'll get started!First a couple of house keeping points!
30/05/2007 08:02:33	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	Welcome everyone to this Keynote session on 'Great designs: what should assessment do?'. I'm Alison Muirhead from Inspire Research the conference organisers, and along with Jenny Booth from the REAP team am your moderator for this chat session.
30/05/2007 08:02:50	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	If your login ID isn't immediately recognisable perhaps you could preface your first question by introducing yourself and your institution?
30/05/2007 08:03:19	Jenny Booth (JennyBooth)	Hello all we are all looking forward to a very interesting session!
30/05/2007 08:04:35	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	I would like to introduce our Keynote Professor David Boud from the University of Technology Sydney.
30/05/2007 08:05:16	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	who I'm sure will be joining us again in a moment!
30/05/2007 08:05:36	Irene Roy (iroy)	a bit of a delay in messages coming through
30/05/2007 08:06:17	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	Irene, that might be because of so many people logging in and out of the site at the moment - it should settle down
30/05/2007 08:06:33	Irene Roy (iroy)	ok, thanks
30/05/2007 08:07:34	Irene Roy (iroy)	hopefully australia is not offline
30/05/2007 08:07:58	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	is there anyone else here from Sydney?
30/05/2007 08:08:02	Tracey Winning (TraceyWinning)	I'm still okay, tracey in adelaide, not sure re Sydney
30/05/2007 08:08:31	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	Great to have you with us!
30/05/2007 08:08:34	Amanda Cossham (Amanda Cossham)	I'm here from NZ
30/05/2007 08:08:43	Jenny Booth (JennyBooth)	nice to have a few joining us from the southern hemisphere!
30/05/2007 08:09:33	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	Hi David!



30/05/2007 08:10:16	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	OK so, I would like to introduce our Keynote Professor David Boud from the University of Technology Sydney. David - perhaps you'd like to start us off with some summary points or reflections from your presentation, or some questions for discussion?
30/05/2007 08:10:31	Jenny Booth (JennyBooth)	Welcome back David :-)
30/05/2007 08:11:27	David Boud (DavidBoud)	Sorry, I crashed and this part of the website wasn't available to me.
30/05/2007 08:11:51	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	Oh dear - hope it's all working now!
30/05/2007 08:13:22	David Boud (DavidBoud)	My position is that we need to shift our perspective on assessment, not just change a few practices. This has profound implications for how we think about what we do under the banner of assessment. Perhaps we should start by focusing on why this might be
30/05/2007 08:14:28	Mary McCulloch (marymc)	Hi David, Mary McCulloch from Glasgow uni. I guess tradition gets in the way, we have always done it this way so
30/05/2007 08:14:53	Irene Roy (iroy)	we've all agreed that we are here as a group of 'like-minded' people so no-one will really not agree with your statement
30/05/2007 08:15:10	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	and a reluctance to change often Mary
30/05/2007 08:15:17	David Nicol (DavidNicol)	Hi David, enjoyed your paper. is there a legitimate place in your principles for teacher imposed structures? Would this be returning to tradition?
30/05/2007 08:15:54	David Boud (DavidBoud)	It depends what you mean by teacher imposed structures. In one sense they are all imposed.
30/05/2007 08:15:55	Irene Roy (iroy)	i would however want to ask about the link between the assesment activity and the intended outcome
30/05/2007 08:16:05	Irene Roy (iroy)	because this does not come out clearly in your presentation
30/05/2007 08:16:54	David Boud (DavidBoud)	My intended outcome for all assessment is that it develops students capacities to make judgements about knowledge within and beyond the course.
30/05/2007 08:16:57	Geetha Abeysinghe (gka23)	Geetha: Hi David, Geetha from London. It is not only tradition as Mary says but sometimes we get also influenced by class size, workload, pressure by organisations procedures, etc. Not only what we assess but also how we assess. this all brings us back to
30/05/2007 08:16:57	Helen Ashton (helen)	Staff often perceive barriers at many levels which are not actually there (school, uni, accreditation) etc. [Helen Ashton, Heriot-Watt Uni, Edinburgh]
30/05/2007 08:18:00	cynthia shedd (cindyshedd)	Any tips on how to handle these obstacles?
30/05/2007 08:18:23	David Boud (DavidBoud)	My experience of assessment is that we have scope to make far more changes than we are brave enough to do.
30/05/2007 08:18:26	Rosario Hernandez (RosarioHernandez)	I agree with you Helen; it's easier to blame others
30/05/2007 08:19:06	Irene Roy (iroy)	thank you David, that really makes it clear what you mean about shifting our perspectives about assessment
30/05/2007 08:19:10	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	How can we encourage staff to take that first step towards changing David?
30/05/2007 08:19:33	Helen Ashton (helen)	Biggest problem I hear is that people will not feel it is valid (esp if not an invigilated exam)!
30/05/2007 08:20:04	David Boud (DavidBoud)	We must focus on our ultimate goals as educators: to form students who have a capacity to learn without us and learn that which we do not know.



30/05/2007 08:20:27	Helen Ashton (helen)	David: I agree - if we are a bit brave, explain to the students what we are doing and why, people are often pleasantly surprised.
30/05/2007 08:20:55	cynthia shedd (cindyshedd)	David, do you find any resistance from your students?
30/05/2007 08:21:20	Mary McCulloch (marymc)	i also think we need to dispel myths, there are lots of things that are thought to be sacrosanct in assessment, and they are not, that would allow for the scope you speak of David
30/05/2007 08:22:02	David Boud (DavidBoud)	Not really, Cindy, I see it as a crucial part of my job to provide a compelling educational rationale for everything I do.
30/05/2007 08:22:41	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	what about from your colleagues? any suspicions, or were they easily convinced?
30/05/2007 08:22:51	Irene Roy (iroy)	which would imply that as educator, one can no longer engage in un-planned activities?
30/05/2007 08:23:23	David Boud (DavidBoud)	So many things appear to be sacrosanct and so many miss the point. Validity for example is not about invigilated exams but about correspondance with the world of practice.
30/05/2007 08:23:59	Helen Ashton (helen)	David: do you think this practice is the norm though? I don't see this from many (although often they would like to but feel lack of time to do so).
30/05/2007 08:24:00	Tracey Winning (TraceyWinning)	Also for colleagues, what types of questions should we be asking (ourselves as well) to shift our focus and change our ways?
30/05/2007 08:24:18	David Boud (DavidBoud)	Some of my more radical assessment interventions were made initially without the knowledge of my colleagues because I suspected they would want to stop me.
30/05/2007 08:24:57	Irene Roy (iroy)	can you give examples of these radical interventions please?
30/05/2007 08:25:26	David Boud (DavidBoud)	The questions we should be asking are about what are the learning consequences of our assessment activities, for example.
30/05/2007 08:25:35	Rosario Hernandez (RosarioHernandez)	My question David , is how to involve other colleagues in innovation?
30/05/2007 08:26:16	Kenji Lamb (klamb)	(JISC) Are there good examples of how assessment has been transformed without a significant increase in the workload of the lecturer?
30/05/2007 08:26:26	David Boud (DavidBoud)	Rosario, I have involved colleagues by showing them what is possible and that the sky won't fall in if they do something different.
30/05/2007 08:27:18	Helen Ashton (helen)	We are currently designing a new course here, and one of our aims is to have several modules with clear links across them. We expect staff to work together on a number of these, so they can support, and see different practices. We are very bad at simply s
30/05/2007 08:27:42	David Nicol (DavidNicol)	at an institutional level what kind of initiatives have worked in your opinion, to change the culture of assessment?
30/05/2007 08:27:49	David Boud (DavidBoud)	Klamb, there are many examples in my 1995 book on Enhancing Learning through Self Assessment. My view is that assessment interventions must reduce work load in the steady state and make the work more interesting for staff.
30/05/2007 08:28:51	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	Helen, how receptive are you finding staff to that approach?
30/05/2007 08:29:05	David Boud (DavidBoud)	David, there are very few significant institutional initiatives that have moved in the direction I am suggesting. There are examples at Alverno college and in some programs using problem-based learning.



30/05/2007 08:29:49	Helen Ashton (helen)	Alison: Well, I think we are lucky at the moment, and the 6 staff involved are young, enthusiastic, and want to experiment. We will have to see in the next few months how others take this approach as we move forward! We are ever hopeful!
30/05/2007 08:30:30	David Boud (DavidBoud)	Helen's approach of staff collaborating in assessment is important, but strong educational leadership is required if some poor practices are not to be reinforced.
30/05/2007 08:30:48	Irene Roy (iroy)	David, i am still interested to hear about those 'radical' assessment interventions
30/05/2007 08:31:06	Wafa-Makky Nichols (WNichols)	Anyone teaching a technical/scientific subject to students to whom English is a second language (Wafa Nichols KAU, CEGMR, pre clinical genetics) I feel I have a whole set of restraints because of the language. Any suggestions
30/05/2007 08:31:35	David Boud (DavidBoud)	Iroy, an example is introducing student self assessment in a course unit that required me to mark against a normal distribution!
30/05/2007 08:31:44	Liz Moon (Liz)	How have students reacted to self/peer assessment? What are your thoughts of its use in a simulated environment?
30/05/2007 08:32:35	cynthia shedd (cindyshedd)	Wafa, one approach is to have someone who speaks both languages debrief students after a lecture and review/clarify unfamiliar terms.
30/05/2007 08:32:38	David Boud (DavidBoud)	If self/peer assessment is introduced well and students are convinced of its value (our first job) then they take to it very easily.
30/05/2007 08:33:04	Steve Draper (SteveDraper)	Here's another thought: what's your reaction. I've started to be interested in how to do assessments/tasks primarily designed so that the student FEELS competent, becomes aware of their skills. Much of athletics has always been like that: public control
30/05/2007 08:33:09	David Boud (DavidBoud)	I don't think simulated environments differ much from others in this area.
30/05/2007 08:33:14	Rosario Hernandez (RosarioHernandez)	Wafa, I teach Spanish to Irish students and I have introduced self and peer assessment with them using the Spanish language
30/05/2007 08:33:50	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	Helen, I'd like to hear how you get on! do you think that showing it in practice will be the key to changing perceptions?
30/05/2007 08:34:01	David Boud (DavidBoud)	Steve has hit on a vital issue: assessment should help students feel competent rather than incompetent otherwise they won't excel.
30/05/2007 08:35:46	Helen Ashton (helen)	Alison: I think it will help a lot. In the last few years when I have involved other academics in new ideas I have had they have usually seen the value. I think most people see the hurdle as too hard, not enough time etc by themselves. Given lack of time of
30/05/2007 08:36:16	Irene Roy (iroy)	well over here, my colleagues are still convinced that one needs to catch them (students) out during the exam
30/05/2007 08:37:00	Alice Lau (amslau)	That is a vital issue, and I think feedback plays an important part. Very often we focus on the negatives in our feedback.
30/05/2007 08:37:17	David Boud (DavidBoud)	Iroy, your colleagues need to grow up and see themselves as educators rather than adolescents.
30/05/2007 08:37:40	Irene Roy (iroy)	hahaha, I will tell them and say you said so
30/05/2007 08:38:09	Kenji Lamb (klamb)	To Helen: If on the road to great assessment, you needed to begin with 'smaller ideas', where did you start?
30/05/2007 08:38:11	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	What about the 'public' aspect of what Steve says? Is it useful for assessment outcomes to be more than just between student and teacher?



30/05/2007 08:38:53	Mary McCulloch (marymc)	but David, is this not because of the change in attitude you talk about, that assessment should have an effect on learning, but too often it is seen as a means of ranking students
30/05/2007 08:39:27	David Boud (DavidBoud)	Public competence is as important as feelings of competence. Judgements need to be more than that of teachers: which is what they are in traditional assessment.
30/05/2007 08:39:40	Tracey Winning (TraceyWinning)	in practice/work situations, it is not just between student and teacher
30/05/2007 08:40:05	Irene Roy (iroy)	alison, ultimately assessment is not only for the benefit of the student or the teacher, there are many other stakeholders
30/05/2007 08:40:36	Helen Ashton (helen)	klamb: I started with a small self and peer assessment at the beginning of the 2nd of a linked module. They were building computer applications, and their interfaces were poor (we had not taught them good pratice yet!), so I gave them a simple proforma an
30/05/2007 08:40:52	David Boud (DavidBoud)	We have responsibilities to the external world as well as students and their learning, but the pendulum has swung too far in the direction of the former.
30/05/2007 08:42:40	Jenny Booth (JennyBooth)	Does anyone else have examples of new practices they have tried along, perhaps along with colleagues?
30/05/2007 08:44:11	David Nicol (DavidNicol)	I like the link you made with measurement and judgement. How can we use the former to encourage the latter focus by staff?
30/05/2007 08:44:38	Irene Roy (iroy)	Jenny, i have been involved in team assessments
30/05/2007 08:44:52	David Boud (DavidBoud)	David, can you elaborate on your point?
30/05/2007 08:44:55	Alice Lau (amslau)	David, do you think that one of the reasons that contribute to that is the lack of consideration in the theoretical underpinnings in many of our assessment practices?
30/05/2007 08:45:10	Irene Roy (iroy)	for example where student write one essay and it is assessed for different things by a more than one lecturer
30/05/2007 08:45:30	Geetha Abeysinghe (gka23)	Geetha: As class sizes increases, another problem which has come about is, 'how do we make sure that the submitted work is the student's own?' this is more so in essay type submissions.I have tried to overcome this by designing exercises which require por
30/05/2007 08:45:42	Irene Roy (iroy)	or as a final assessment, student teams do presentations, and get assessed by everyone who taught them in a course at the same time
30/05/2007 08:45:49	Wafa-Makky Nichols (WNichols)	Self/Peer assessment adds a dimension to students understanding but even within the traditional sit down three hour exam arent there improvements that can be made to improve the long term effects of the assessment on the student
30/05/2007 08:46:00	David Boud (DavidBoud)	Amslau, I agree, we talk about the importance of theoretical underpinings in our disciplines, but not much in assessment.
30/05/2007 08:46:30	David Nicol (DavidNicol)	well, staff are focused on measurement at present and you say they should focus on developing judgement - how do we bridge this to move staff forward?
30/05/2007 08:47:10	Tracey Winning (TraceyWinning)	and some literature is so focussed on measurement eg med educ lit
30/05/2007 08:47:51	Alice Lau (amslau)	it's just that we seems to have suck in the time of psychometrics, behaviourist kind of of assessment sometimes...when we are all talking about moving towards social constructivism. how can we tackle this?
30/05/2007 08:48:14	Rosario Hernandez (RosarioHernandez)	I have the same concern as David Nicol: too much emphasis on measurement by staff



30/05/2007 08:48:31	Kenji Lamb (klamb)	While training to become a teacher (many years ago), I always had to evaluate my performance as a teacher and consider strategies for improvement (during placements/practice activities/etc.). Is this an example of established great assessment?
30/05/2007 08:48:32	David Boud (DavidBoud)	The bridge, I think David, is in what measurement is used for. Conventionally, it is a certifying report, but this data if constructed differently can inform students's judgements. We seem to want to avoid seeing assessment as impacting on students learni
30/05/2007 08:49:39	David Boud (DavidBoud)	Klamb, your example is a good one. Some of the best examples are in practice areas, not classroom activities.
30/05/2007 08:49:40	Helen Chen (hel13chen)	gka23, ePortfolios and related activities has been garnering a lot of interest here in the U.S. and many other places as well. However, scalability of portfolio assessment, providing timely feedback, etc. is a great challenge.
30/05/2007 08:50:45	Rosario Hernandez (RosarioHernandez)	Then the feedback to students should also entail feedforward and students need to use the feedback for their learning
30/05/2007 08:51:23	Amanda Cossham (Amanda Cossham)	Perhaps we should be drawing a greater distinction between formative assessment and summative assessment. We still need to know how students are doing against the standard we have established for mastery of the course - as well as facilitating their learn
30/05/2007 08:51:50	David Boud (DavidBoud)	Yes, Rosario. All assessment feeds forward and back and its sends messages to students that contradict what we tell them often.
30/05/2007 08:51:51	Geetha Abeysinghe (gka23)	Hel13chen: yes, I have used discussion boards and portfolio development. As you say this puts added workload on the tutor. As David said it shoudl not be so. Unless there is a way we can use peer evaluation even on portfolios.
30/05/2007 08:52:11	Wafa-Makky Nichols (WNichols)	cant we also facilitate learning through summative assessment
30/05/2007 08:53:12	Helen Ashton (helen)	Amanda: I'm not convinced I have seen many examples of summative assessment which could not also be formative. Anyone else?
30/05/2007 08:53:12	Helen Chen (hel13chen)	I think we have to figure out new ways of engaging student as partners in assessment. Fortunately emerging technologies and perhaps social software can help facilitate this building of community.
30/05/2007 08:53:32	David Boud (DavidBoud)	I'm nostalgic for the days when we could pretend to separate formative and summative assessment, but those days are passed. We have to consider how they necessarily interact.
30/05/2007 08:53:44	Wafa-Makky Nichols (WNichols)	Im sure a summative assessments that only required recal would have a very negative effect on their future study patterns, they would soom learn memorization was enough, never mind about meaning/implications etc
30/05/2007 08:53:51	Amanda Cossham (Amanda Cossham)	Students do also learn through summative assessment - I didn't mean to suggest otherwise. But some of the more radical approaches seem to me to be more suited to formative than summative
30/05/2007 08:54:35	Helen Ashton (helen)	Amanda: sorry, misread! Yes, perhaps... is this a problem though?
30/05/2007 08:55:24	Amanda Cossham (Amanda Cossham)	Helen - I agree. In my institution, formative assessment is voluntary, and I doubt that as much learning happens as should. It's something I'd like to address - but if it isn't 'marked' they don't always want to do it.



30/05/2007 08:55:24	David Boud (DavidBoud)	The design challenge I believe Amanda is in making some of the good formative processes work in summative contexts without them being destroyed in the process.
30/05/2007 08:56:10	Alice Lau (amslau)	that's one of my issue too David, how do you separate formative and summative? Or my real question is do we need to separate them at all? At the end of the day, students want their assessment to contribute to both their learning and also qualifications.
30/05/2007 08:56:40	Wafa-Makky Nichols (WNichols)	I agree Amanda, but can anyone suggest (possibly less radical) approached that could be used for summative assessment possibly even within the bounds of a traditional sit down exam
30/05/2007 08:56:47	Amanda Cossham (Amanda Cossham)	David - I do need to explore some of these ideas further in my teaching practices. I work with distance students, and there are additional complexities in terms of the fact that students see formative as 'just more study'
30/05/2007 08:57:05	Helen Ashton (helen)	Amanda: I have done several assessment activities recently where the students knew there would be no marks. By stressing the value, and giving it importance (formal methods of submission/deadlines etc) (and perhaps a good group of students), I have got a lot
30/05/2007 08:57:06	Rosario Hernandez (RosarioHernandez)	Modularisation seems to be having a negative impact on formative assessment
30/05/2007 08:57:07	Helen Chen (hel13chen)	David, your point about not being able to separate formative and summative assessment alludes to your earlier point about our responsibilities to student learning as well as external stakeholders.
30/05/2007 08:57:35	Amanda Cossham (Amanda Cossham)	helen - good for you - I have a great many new ideas as a result of this conference!
30/05/2007 08:58:10	David Boud (DavidBoud)	Let us celebrate the possibility that Helen pointed to. Students will respond to more than sticks.
30/05/2007 08:58:35	Amanda Cossham (Amanda Cossham)	:-) I shall order a lot of carrots!
30/05/2007 08:58:59	Kenji Lamb (klamb)	If you can incorporate great formative assessment into a course, then is there still a need to transform 'traditional' summative assessment?
30/05/2007 08:59:38	Rosario Hernandez (RosarioHernandez)	Helen, I also have very good reaction from my students when we discuss why grades are not necessary in certain contexts
30/05/2007 08:59:51	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	Well we're just about out of time I'm afraid.
30/05/2007 09:00:40	David Boud (DavidBoud)	Traditional summative assessment is the real battle ground. We can all slip in good formative processes into our teaching, we must not concede ground to the traditionalists in the arena in which they exert most influence.
30/05/2007 09:01:19	Helen Ashton (helen)	Rosario: I haven't done this - nice idea. I often don't give marks or grades, and they seem to be okay with this.
30/05/2007 09:02:01	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	The chat room will remain open for a little while longer, but the next chat session on 'Raising students meta-cognition (self-assessment) abilities is just about to begin!
30/05/2007 09:02:02	David Boud (DavidBoud)	Thank you very much for your stimulating conversation. I assume we can continue some of this asynchronously. Is that correct Alison?
30/05/2007 09:02:36	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	Yes David - I would like to close by saying thank you to our Keynote speaker, Professor Boud. Please do continue your discussions or post any unanswered questions in the conference discussion boards.



- TRANSCRIPT ENDS -

We apologise that owing to the limit on storage of individual messages within the chat software, particularly long messages have been truncated. Unfortunately, we are not able to recover these.

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