



University	Glasgow Caledonian
Department	Caledonian Business School
Module	Strategic Management
Overview	<p>This module is taught once per session in semester A to the entire cohort of level 3 students (c700) studying the undergraduate programme framework. Since module inception, the teaching team has designed and developed an assessment process that links two pieces of coursework, providing opportunities for peer and tutor feedback both in class and online. Furthermore, elements of coursework feed into what is assessed in the examination. The principle of the team's coursework design is for the first piece of assessment to inform the second, and in this sense provides the opportunity for students to receive quality formative feedback and for the coursework feedback to enable students to self assess their readiness for the exam.</p> <p>Before REAP: Despite considerable discussion of module content and assessment criteria through scheduled team meetings, and a system of peer support amongst staff, feedback provided to students was variable in terms of content and style. At the same time the teaching team felt it could do more to encourage student self-assessment, especially before submitting the second piece of coursework. Moreover, the team found that many students did not collect the written feedback provided to them, demonstrating arguably a greater interest in the mark awarded rather than in the feedback provided and the learning that can come from this.</p>
Drivers for change	<p>To improve the usefulness, quality, consistency and timeliness of student feedback from a large teaching team with the aid of electronic feedback software (EFS), and in the process, achieve efficiency gains. The use of EFS was also viewed by the module team as a mechanism to facilitate reflection amongst the team on how it can improve assessment practice on a specific element of the module. Piloting the software was expected to help the team reflect specifically on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clarity of criteria and standards for assessment tasks provided to students. • The link between the assessment instruments and the module design. • The degree to which the criteria are shared and understood by the teaching team. • How to encourage students to self-assess their own work formally before submission.
Intervention	<p>The module team first piloted the use of Electronic Feedback Software (EFS) in 2005/06 before introducing it fully in 2006/07. EFS is based on a Microsoft Office application, that draws on Excel, and can be used to design, generate and email feedback letters directly to students. The feedback, while based on a standardised menu of comments developed by the module leaders, can be personally addressed to each student and markers can add their own personal feedback comments offering specific feedback on any aspect not covered by the pre-designed marking comments. As well as generating individual student feedback, the software can also be used to analyse the distribution of overall % marks and marks for each separate criteria for the whole cohort as well as for each individual marker. This can be used effectively for purposes of moderation, and for purposes of providing generic feedback to the student group.</p> <p>The pilot involved asking staff to participate in remarking a sample of coursework scripts using the EFS system and give their views on whether this system could improve the feedback to a large cohort of students (c700), from a large teaching team (8 staff comprising 3 full time and 5 part time staff). Analysis of this pilot led the team to conclude that EFS could be used to tackle the interlinked issues of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater consistency and quality of feedback provided by the teaching team; • Student engagement with assessment criteria and feedback; • Improving the timeliness of feedback provided to students. <p>Following the analysis of the pilot, some modifications were made to the assessment instrument to extend and clarify the marking criteria and these were distributed to tutors for feedback. The EFS system was then introduced to students in session 2006/07 with all students receiving their feedback letters by email.</p> <p>This was followed-up by a student evaluation questionnaire completed by 41% of all registered students. The questionnaire focused on three sets of questions: (1) preferences for electronic email feedback over traditional 'hand-written/hand-collection' feedback system; (2) the degree to which the instructions for the assignment and marking criteria were clear and easy to follow; and (3) the extent to which the feedback was considered useful.</p>



PROCESS		Activities		
EMPOWER-MENT	NICOL'S 7 PRINCIPLES OF GOOD ASSESSMENT DESIGN	Principle 1 (clarify criteria)	1) Not wholly applicable in the pilot and roll-out stages, but possible in the future as greater attention is given to the principles of good assessment. Before handing in their coursework, students are asked to "sign-off" saying that they have read, confirmed and understood the criteria against they are going to be marked. This is a form of identifying criteria for assessment, without getting students actively involved in the formulation of criteria.	
		Principle 2 (self-assess, reflect)	1) When handing in the assignment, students are now required to hand in a cover sheet that does two things to facilitate self-assessment and reflection. The first one is the need for students to confirm that they have read, understood, and designed their report in a way that reflects the structure and marking guidelines set for the assignment. The second one is for the students to award themselves a mark for their work, taking in to account the marking criteria and guidelines. This provides the opportunity to students to reflect on their work and on assessment criteria, by comparing what they feel they 'deserved' with the actual mark awarded.	
		Principle 3 (tutor feedback)	1) The linkages between coursework 1, coursework 2 and examination provide opportunities for students to learn from what they have done and carry it forward to the next stage. The EFS marking system involves giving students clear feedback for each of the seven elements inside the coursework highlighting how well they have met each of the criteria. This includes feedback giving advice reminding students how they should correctly cite and reference sources, and how they should, for example, write an executive summary. These are transferable skills which should help them avoid repeating errors in future assignments.	
		Principle 4 (peer feedback)	1) The use of Blackboard managed learning environment (MLE) to support the module provides an opportunity for students to discuss coursework before and after submission, thereby providing opportunities for both peer and tutor dialogue. There is evidence to suggest that electronic feedback software stimulated many 'conversations' about the assignment marks amongst students. This may be due to the fact that feedback arrived electronically and was amenable to circulation among groups of students.	
		Principle 5 (motivation)	1) The team working element of the coursework leading to team presentation and online peer and tutor feedback is designed to provide a supportive environment which encourages students to share and develop their knowledge, understanding and analytical skills and to benchmark their performance against other students.	
		Principle 6 (close feedback loop)	1) The linkages between the two pieces of coursework and the examination provide opportunities to apply what has been learned in previous tasks. For example, active participation in the seminar programme and team presentations for assignment one provides students with knowledge and feedback to carry forward to assignment two. In addition, the exam was designed in a way to encourage students to develop and use the examples gained from research and analysis of the companies in assignments 1 and 2 in their exam answers.	
		Principle 7 (shape teaching)	1) Participation in REAP has led to practice that enhances teachers' understanding of teaching 'engagement'. Over the last two years the teaching team has become more accustomed to more regular team meetings that provide opportunity to share information; and the introduction of student feedback questionnaires has provided valuable information from students that feeds in to module design and delivery.	
	ENGAGEMENT	GIBBS & SIMPSON'S 4 CONDITIONS OF TIME & EFFORT ON TASK	Condition 1 (in and out of class)	1) The combination of a 'blended' learning and teaching strategy aims to balance study time in and out of class. This involves lectures, seminars, Blackboard discussion boards, and student team meetings.
			Condition 2 (spread evenly)	1) Re-engineering has led to abandonment of the examination and introduction of what is essentially a module that is continuously assessed, with extensive use of formative feedback. REAP has led to re-evaluation of the module and concentration on a narrower syllabus to enhance deeper learning. The requirement to complete a number of tasks to produce a portfolio helps to distribute students' efforts more evenly across topics and weeks.
			Condition 3 (deep not surface)	1) The revised module has eliminated one third of the syllabus to enable deeper learning, and introduced the need for students to submit pieces of work on a more continuous basis.



			Condition 4 (high expectations)	1) The assessment criteria, which had been redesigned and extended to facilitate EFS and clearly laid down expectations. In analysis of student satisfaction with EFS, two-thirds of students agreed that the assessment instructions were clear and easy to follow (66%), and that the marking criteria were also clear (64%), with 15% and 13% respectively offering a neutral response. The high score here may have been facilitated by requiring students to confirm by signing a declaration that they had read and understood the marking criteria before submitting their work.
OUTCOME			Efficiencies	1) Despite early start-up costs for module leaders and a learning curve for all tutors marking assignments, efficiency gains have been reported by the majority of tutors marking scripts. Administrative staff are also relieved of time-consuming task of returning feedback to students, as this is done electronically by the tutor. 2) The newly developed module will bring further significant administrative savings as only one mark will be formally entered onto OMNIS, rather than 3 individual marks – a significant time saving when a module has over 700 students
			Informal Learning Gains	1) In the module, students learn implicitly about their strengths and weaknesses in relation to team working. In the redesigned module, students will be asked to reflect on this aspect of learning as part of their portfolio
			Formal Learning Gains	1) The average marks awarded for the assessments and exams are comparable with previous years.