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Addressing the challenges of assessment and feedback in Business Schools: developing assessment practices which support learning

Abstract

The chapter outlines the paradigm shift that has characterised debates around assessment and feedback in higher education, triggered in particular by high levels of student dissatisfaction. It then presents contemporary models of assessment and discusses the conditions under which assessment supports learning. It is argued that the notion of 'Assessment for Learning' offers a way of articulating as well as progressing some of the key contemporary concerns and practices of business educators. While these conditions can already be observed in Business Schools, most notably in a keen interest in authenticity, suggestions are made for how they can be built on further to advance innovation in assessment and feedback practices in business and management contexts. The chapter concludes with vignettes which show real examples of ways in which these conditions have been put into practice.

Keywords

Assessment for learning, learning-oriented assessment, feedback, business, higher education, authenticity, student engagement, evaluative judgement

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1. INTRODUCTION

The past decade has been characterised by an upsurge of interest in assessment and feedback in higher education. This has been triggered in particular by high levels of student dissatisfaction. In the UK for instance, items on assessment and feedback in the annual National Student Survey (NSS) have continuously attracted low satisfaction ratings by students (Bell and Brooks 2018). Not only in the UK but also elsewhere, many institutions have therefore developed policies and guidelines, assessment and feedback principles as well as a plethora of initiatives aimed at improving the student experience of assessment and feedback.

This is also reflected in practice initiatives, research and publications on assessment in business-related subjects. While assessment research of international significance has originated in Business Schools, such as the studies conducted by Price, O'Donovan, Rust and colleagues (e.g. O'Donovan, Price and Rust 2001; Price et al. 2012; Price et al. 2011; Rust, Price and O'Donovan 2003), this is complemented by a range of publications about innovative practices in assessment and feedback in business-related disciplines. Many of these publications have been written by practitioners, reporting, evaluating and researching new approaches experimented with in their local contexts, engaging in a practice known as the scholarship of teaching and learning (Kreber 2013). Learning and teaching in Business Schools has long been underpinned by a desire to incorporate real-world cases, scenarios and tasks, and this has also driven innovations in assessment. This interest in authentic assessment is reflected in publications such as those by, for instance, James and Casidy (2018), Voss (2015) and Neely and Tucker (2012), and it also chimes with current developments in the sector more broadly.

In this chapter we will argue that we need to move away from an exclusive focus on marking and measurement and think about maximising the potential of assessment to engender high quality student learning. We propose that the notion of 'Assessment for Learning' might offer a way of articulating as well as progressing some of the key contemporary interests, concerns and practices of business educators. The 'signature pedagogies' (Shulman 2005), i.e. the forms of teaching and learning that are characteristic for business and management subjects such as the use of real-world case studies, offer considerable opportunities for learning-oriented approaches to assessment. The chapter will first outline the paradigm shift that has characterised debates around assessment in higher education generally. It will then present

contemporary models of assessment and discuss the conditions under which assessment supports learning. We argue that these conditions can already be observed in Business Schools, but also make suggestions for how they can be built on further to advance innovation in assessment practices in business and management contexts. The chapter will conclude with vignettes derived from the published literature on assessment to show real examples of ways in which these conditions have been put into practice. The intention is to inspire our readers to try such practices for themselves.

2. FROM ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING TO ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

Assessment has a strong bearing on how teachers teach and how students learn. It goes well beyond the supposedly simple activity of evaluating the quality of students' performance of tasks and assignments set by their tutors (see, for instance, Brown and Knight 1994; Sambell and McDowell 1998). The fact that assessment drives student learning is well known and referred to as the 'backwash effect'. In other words, 'students will always second-guess the assessment task and then learn what they think will meet those requirements' (Biggs 2003, p. 210). Therefore, carefully crafting assessment can have a positive impact on the nature and quality of student learning.

The paradigm shift in assessment

The way in which assessment has been conceptualised and implemented by researchers, educators, and policy makers has changed fundamentally in recent years. This has been described as a culture change or paradigm shift. Different terms have been used to describe the old and the new models of assessment which underpin these developments: testing versus assessment culture, measurement versus judgement model, scientific-measurement versus contextual-qualitative paradigm.

The main aim in the old model of assessment (Gipps 1994) was to differentiate between students and sort them by ability. Discussions of assessment focused on accuracy and objectivity of measurement, to which the reliability of assessment processes and instruments was central. Standardisation and technical issues were therefore foregrounded. Corresponding assessment practices privileged simple, discrete tasks remote from the world outside the classroom and questions with right or wrong answers. These practices predominantly tested the retention of information and were taken under controlled conditions.

In contrast, the new model focuses on validity and the quality and level of learning that is stimulated and assessed. Tasks carried out in the real world, including that of academia and professional practice, tend to be divergent, open-ended and ill-defined - unlike the simplified tasks and tests typically carried out under exam conditions - and assessment of such tasks involves complex judgments informed by evidence from multiple sources. Current assessment practices thus comprise a much wider range of strategies, with an emphasis on holistic tasks, problem solving and authentic situations from which competence is inferred rather than directly measured. An example of this development is the case-based essay which is now a standard and well-respected assessment format in Business Schools.

However, while thinking about assessment has changed fundamentally, in practice both models continue to influence assessment policies and practices. This is a key reason why assessment and feedback in higher education are so full of tensions and dilemmas (Havnes and McDowell 2008).

Multiple purposes and multiple stakeholder

Assessment serves many different purposes and stakeholders, including students, university staff, employers, professional statutory and regulatory bodies *(*PSRBs), the government and even the general public. In Business Schools accreditation by organisations such as the Association of MBAs or the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), to name just two, exerts an important influence on assessment regimes. The tensions arising from this situation have been referred to as assessment doing 'double duty' (Boud 2000):

> Assessment always performs functions other than the ones teachers and examiners normally think about and take account of. It is always about more than judging the achievement of learning outcomes for a given module or course. (…). Some of the ways in which assessment activities have to do double duty are:
>
> - They have to encompass formative assessment for learning and summative for certification
> - They have to have a focus on the immediate task and on implications for equipping students for lifelong learning in an unknown future
> - And they have to attend to both the learning process and the substantive content domain.

> Every act of assessment we devise or have a role in implementing has more than one purpose. If we do not pay attention to these multiple purposes we are in danger of inadvertently sabotaging one or more of them. (Boud 2000, p. 160)

Gipps (1994) distinguishes between three purposes of assessment: *accountability*, which requires quick, manageable and reliable information in order to make judgements about the performance of educational institutions; *certification*, which relies on detailed and reliable information to enable comparison between individuals' performance; and *learning* for which the development of high level skills and understanding needs to be stimulated. While it is acknowledged that all of them have a role to play, Gipps argues that accountability has dominated and limited, or even damaged, the learning purpose of assessment. This critique has been the starting point of contemporary developments in assessment and feedback.

Many business educators will be familiar with the distinction made between 'summative' and 'formative' assessment. As the name suggests, the purpose of summative assessment is to summarise, grade and certify achievement and learning as it stands at one particular point in time, often at the end of a course. The purpose of formative assessment, on the other hand, is to monitor progress, diagnose problems and improve learning. It is thus inseparable from teaching, and feedback is a key element of formative assessment. Sadler (1989, p. 120) describes formative assessment in terms of "how judgments about the quality of student responses (performances, pieces, or works) can be used to shape and improve the student's competence by short-circuiting the randomness and inefficiency of trial-and-error learning".

The importance of formative assessment and feedback for learning

Educational research has highlighted the crucial role of formative assessment for student achievement and learning. In 1998 a ground-breaking literature review by Black and Wiliam (1998) demonstrated that formative assessment substantially improves learning, particularly for low achievers. However, this was shown to depend on certain conditions being fulfilled. Feedback information had to be used in order to be effective, i.e. it needed to be analysed, worked with and acted upon, by the student to improve learning and by the teacher to adjust instruction. There was also evidence that a focus on individuals, comparisons and grades had a negative impact on learning. Instead, it was argued that feedback should focus on the qualities of students' work and the ways in which it can be improved, rather than ability and comparisons with others. Similar evidence was provided by Hattie's seminal work which

synthesised meta-analyses of educational research in order to identify those factors with most impact on students. This confirmed that feedback is one of the most significant influences on student achievement (Hattie 2009).

These ideas, initially raised in relation to the school sector, were also taken up in higher education. Since the influential paper by Sadler (1989) on formative assessment in higher education, there has been extensive research and writing about assessment and feedback in terms of how it can be most effectively understood, with an emphasis on formative, learning-oriented assessment (Carless 2007). In line with the new model described above, the social meanings of assessment were redefined, away from viewing it as a means of controlling student learning and towards framing assessment as a catalyst for student engagement with their chosen disciplinary areas. This cultural shift also required redesigning assessment practices in order to make them tools for learning rather than simply means of judging and selecting students. Whilst there are variations in terminology to capture the essence of this cultural shift (e.g. Assessment for Learning, formative assessment, learning-orientated assessment), the new paradigm tends to point to assessment as a constructivist process with the students at its centre as active, self-regulated learners.

Towards Assessment for Learning practices in higher education

The ideas underpinning Assessment for Learning went hand in hand with the realisation that teaching is much more than transmitting information and needs to support students to construct their own understanding through interactions in communities and cultures. This led to widespread attempts to incorporate assessment as a positive and integral part of teaching and learning, rather than a separate post hoc event (McLean 2018). One important aim of Assessment for Learning has been to develop and value assessment practices which stimulate students to engage actively with learning activities and subject matter, and support participation and the development of identity (Sambell, 2013). Another important goal has been to rethink assessment and feedback practices to ensure they foster student autonomy, so that students learn not to become overly dependent on their teachers to oversee and direct their actions. This entails embedding assessment and feedback processes into the curriculum so that instead of being told what to do, students are supported to exercise increasing levels of control over their own learning by progressively developing their capabilities in self-monitoring and self-regulation (Nicol and MacFarlane Dick 2006). Strategies which equip

students well for the longer term (Boud 2014) and a lifetime of learning in the complex and changing world beyond graduation (Tai et al. 2018), rather than simply focusing on academic success with the immediate piece of work or their programme of study, have been another important characteristic of Assessment for Learning practices. Although less explicitly defined, Assessment for Learning contrasts with the notion of *assessment of learning*, the old model mentioned above which is characterised by a focus on measurement, certification and accountability (Gipps 1994).

The 'assessment for learning movement' (Boud and Falchikov 2007) in higher education has encouraged and supported academics to reconceptualise assessment and feedback by foregrounding learning and to change their practices accordingly (Sambell et al. 2013; Reimann and Wilson 2012; Reimann 2018). However, the multiple purposes and drivers of assessment often create barriers that resist radical transformation, and conceptual change and change of practices are a slow and gradual process (Sadler and Reimann 2018). There have been a number of large-scale pedagogic initiatives, such as the Re-Engineering Assessment Practices (REAP) project in Scotland, assessment-focused Centres for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at Northumbria University and Oxford Brookes University in England, with the latter based in the Business School, and Carless, Joughlin and Mok's (2006) hugely influential and positive efforts to promote what they termed 'learning-oriented assessment', originating in the University of Hong-Kong. These initiatives have largely been driven by establishing evidence-based principles, in an effort to encourage stakeholders - mainly teaching-focused academics - to radically reconfigure their conceptual approaches to assessment design and practices.

Models and principles of assessment: the Northumbria model of Assessment for Learning and Carless' learning-oriented assessment

The large-scale Assessment for Learning initiative located in the £4.5 million Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Northumbria University (Reimann and Wilson 2012; Sambell, McDowell and Montgomery 2013) developed six evidence-informed core conditions to drive conceptual change and a shift in institutional culture. This approach meant rethinking some commonly-held assumptions about assessment and feedback, on the part of staff and students alike, changing understandings of assessment as well as practices (Reimann and Sadler 2017), rather than requiring lecturers to simply insert a few new techniques or tactics. This view of Assessment for Learning aimed to encourage a change in overall

thinking, and a reframing of staff-student relationships in terms of shared responsibility and partnership. Seen through this lens, Assessment for Learning becomes a way of thinking, akin to a philosophy, which thrives in environments where assessment practices are discussed, reflected upon, shared and negotiated, not only in the *letter*, but the more radical *spirit* of assessment for Learning (Marshall and Drummond 2006).

We suggest that the readers of this chapter consider this model of Assessment for Learning as a broad framework to support the development of assessment designs that promote good learning in Business Schools. The model is based on six conditions, drawn from an extensive review of the literature and evidence-based practice. The six conditions become key questions for practitioners to ask themselves and each other as they (re) design learning environments with integrated and aligned assessment as part of the overall picture. To this end, the model is best seen as a series of inter-linking aspects which characterise effective Assessment for Learning environments, so that ideally *all* are in play. In other words, it should not be seen as a discrete set of components.

The model of Assessment for Learning, which two of the authors helped to develop, calls for an overall curriculum design that:

1. Emphasises authenticity and complexity in the content and methods of assessment rather than reproduction of knowledge and reductive measurement;
2. Uses high stakes summative assessment rigorously but sparingly rather than as the main driver for learning;
3. Offers students extensive opportunities to engage in the kinds of tasks that develop and demonstrate their learning, thus building their confidence and capabilities before they are summatively assessed;
4. Is rich in feedback derived from formal mechanisms e.g. tutor comments on assignments, clickers in class;
5. Is rich in informal feedback e.g. peer discussions of work-in-progress, collaborative project work, which provides students with a continuous flow of feedback on ‘how they are doing’;
6. Develops students’ abilities to direct their own learning, evaluate their own progress and attainments and support the learning of others.

These conditions of Assessment for Learning in the Northumbria model resonate strongly with the principles of learning-oriented assessment identified by Carless and colleagues. These comprise three core principles or interrelated processes which ensure that the learning potential within the assessment process is maximised (Carless 2007; Carless 2015):

- *Principle 1: Learning-oriented assessment tasks*
  Assessment tasks should be designed to stimulate sound learning practices amongst students.
  This involves framing assessment tasks primarily as learning tasks, such that students, when approaching assessment tasks, engage in worthwhile, long-term learning and deep approaches to learning which are aligned with the relevant ways of thinking and practising of the subject domain, rather than short-term cramming and memorisation.
- *Principle 2: Developing evaluative expertise*
  Assessment should involve students actively in engaging with criteria and developing a concept of quality. This can be done through activities in which learners use learning goals, criteria and quality standards in judging their own and their peers' performance.
- *Principle 3: Student engagement with feedback*
  Feedback should be timely and forward-looking so as to support current and future learning.

  > "…for assessment to promote learning, students need to receive appropriate feedback which they can use to 'feedforward' into future work. Feedback in itself may not promote learning, unless students engage with it and act upon it.... Timeliness and promoting student engagement with feedback are thus key aspects." (Carless 2007, p. 13)

When assessment foregrounds learning, 'the ways of thinking, the procedures and practices that are characteristic of particular subjects or disciplines' (Kreber 2009, p. 12) come into view. Such 'ways of thinking and practicing' (McCune and Hounsell 2005) are what sets one discipline apart from another one in terms of discourse, conventions, truth criteria, values and skills that are specific to the discipline community. Through making these core ideas and ways of functioning explicit, teachers can engender 'authentic conversations' with students (Kreber 2013) which invite them into the discipline's 'community of truth' (Palmer 1998, p. 122). By connecting students with particular issues, problems or scenarios that bring the discipline's core concepts and ways of thinking and practicing to life, we exemplify how the discipline works. Due to the backwash effect mentioned earlier, assessment is absolutely

critical for socialising students into the discipline's community of truth. Thus, assessment practices in business and management disciplines should be designed in ways that enable students to engage in the academic and professional practices of leaders in marketing, management, accounting, entrepreneurship and so on and to think like them. While business and management clearly do not qualify as a single discipline, the notions of ways of thinking and practising (McCune and Hounsell 2005), authentic conversations (Kreber 2013) and communities of truth (Palmer 1998) are nonetheless helpful in shaping assessment tasks in these fields.

As a consequence, in the more recent version of Carless' (2015) model of learning-oriented assessment, an important conceptual addition has been the foregrounding of assessment practice in the subject discipline within which it takes place. Similarly, the Northumbria model emphasises the importance of opportunities for active participation in disciplinary communities and characteristic ways of 'doing the discipline'. Only through repeated participation in discipline-specific practices and the informal feedback this generates will students be able to develop the tacit know-how which underpins an ability to think, talk, write and act like, say, an accountant, entrepreneur or human resources manager. Engaging with these ways of thinking and practising is much more than simply acquiring subject knowledge. In Carless' (2015) model the specific disciplinary knowledge and skills to be learnt and assessed are particularly central to the design of learning-oriented assessment tasks, i.e. principle 1. However, it also bleeds into the other two principles. For example, in developing evaluative expertise, students are developing insight into criteria and exemplars that are accepted within the professional community.

3. STRATEGIES FOR ASSESSMENT DESIGN THAT SUPPORTS LEARNING

Efforts to instigate change in assessment practices have frequently been framed as diversifying assessment, focused on moving away from conventional formats such as essay assignments, multiple choice or short answer examinations and introducing what is often described as more innovative formats. However, while there is clear evidence that different formats produce different levels of and approaches to learning (Biggs 2003), diversification alone is not sufficient for ensuring that assessment supports learning. But what might assessment and feedback situated in the new paradigm look like? How can the principles and conditions of assessment that support learning outlined above be implemented in practice? These questions will be addressed in the subsequent sections of this chapter. By doing so, we

aim to stimulate our readers to think about the ways in which assessment practices in Business Schools already incorporate such Assessment for Learning practices or could be developed further to do so.

Authentic assessment

Authenticity has a long-standing tradition in the pedagogies typical for business and management and been a feature of learning and teaching in these subjects for a long time. Published almost 20 years ago, Kaye and Hawkridge's (2003) edited volume of case studies of innovation comprises several examples in which the potential of real-world business scenarios for learning is highlighted. Interestingly, at that time relatively little attention was devoted to ways in which such authentic approaches are, or could be, extended to assessment; however, this has changed considerably. Various publications provide accounts and empirical investigations of assessment strategies which make strong links to real-world business and management practices, such as simulations (Farrell 2020, Lohmann, 2019, Neely and Tucker 2012; Voss 2015), case studies (Evans 2016; Jones and Kerr 2012, McGreevy, Heagney and Gallagher 2019; Mihret et al. 2017) and scenarios (James and Casidy 2018). Technologies frequently support such approaches as they allow the world of business and management to be imported into the classroom.

Authenticity is also a key tenet of assessment for learning. Villarroell et al. (2020) define authentic assessment as 'a way to relate learning and work, creating a correspondence between what is assessed in the university and what graduates do in settings in the outside world' (p. 39). However, Burton (2011) cautions against adopting too narrow a definition of authenticity based on workplace knowledge and skills associated directly and literally with 'employability', given the fast pace of change which mean specific knowledge and skills become soon outmoded. In addition, as many business lecturers can confirm, vocational relevance alone is not sufficient to ensure student engagement and learning.

Alternative views of authenticity have applied a much broader notion of relevance (National Forum 2017). It has been suggested that developing a sense of self and ownership through personal involvement and personal meaning are crucial for authenticity:

> 'Personal meaning is best achieved when students are engaged in their own search for knowledge, an activity that offers a degree of self-determination … Being meaningful in this sense is about an experience that the student determines as significant or worthwhile.' (Wald and Harland (2017, p. 757)

In a similar vein, authentic assessment has been linked to tasks whose purpose student buy into, which generate intrinsic interest and enable them to make a genuine and novel contribution, often by resulting in a product or performance (O'Neill 2019). This contrasts with assessed tasks set as hoops to jump through and carried out for the benefit of the assessor. Ashford-Rowe, Herrington and Brown (2014) have identified characteristics of authentic assessment which go beyond an exclusive focus on the 'real world'. These include challenge, a concrete outcome such as a performance or a product, transfer of knowledge, metacognition (i.e. self-monitoring), performance requiring accuracy, authenticity of the environment and the tools (e.g. language) used, opportunities for feedback, and opportunities for collaboration. Business simulation games for instance have been shown to embody several of these characteristics. Voss (2015) demonstrates how such games require students to use higher level thinking and decision making skills, simulate the real-world business contexts in which such decisions are made, and provide frequent opportunities for practice, feedback and development. However, Voss' research also highlights that implementing simulations poses challenges, both for staff and for students, such as problems arising from group work.

Seen from the viewpoint of immersing learners in the ways of thinking and practising associated with the discipline, authentic tasks in business and management involve students in activities which resonate strongly with the discipline's community of truth. This goes well beyond a narrow emphasis on the vocational and is particularly important in Business Schools where tensions can arise from the need to educate students 'for' as well as 'in' business (Warwick, personal communication). Authentic assessment tasks will need to accommodate both and ensure that, in addition to being contextualised in the real world of business and management, they have the potential to be personally meaningful. This involves students becoming personally invested in the issues they are learning and assessed on, being encouraged to reflect on what these issues mean to them on a personal level and how they, now and as future graduates, can contribute to society and the world (Kreber 2014). In addition, if the goal is to foster learning that leads to a deeper understanding, both of subject matter and of self, we need pedagogies and assessment practices that provide opportunities for students to experience conceptual shifts (Kreber 2014). Experiential ways of learning that require students to relate abstract academic content to concrete issues of social relevance are therefore a central recommendation already widely taken up by Business Schools. However,

equally important are ways that provoke students to reflect critically on their own assumptions, beliefs and values, and encourage them to make personal judgements about their learning (Boud 2007). Students also need to learn to take risks. This is facilitated by learning environments of trust where they dare to subject their knowledge claims to the critical assessment of others (Kreber 2014) and which foreground subject mastery, rather than simply a perfunctory quest for marks, which can make students risk-adverse (Black and Wiliam 1998).

Student engagement in feedback processes

A considerable body of research has focused on external feedback provided by the teacher/expert (e.g. Hattie &Timperley,2007; Hyland & Hyland, 2006). According to Dingyloudi and Strijbos (2018), in a recent review of 195 papers published between 1985 and 2014, Winstone et al. (2017) identified 159 empirical papers out of which 81% focused on expert feedback, predominantly in the context of higher education. This kind of feedback refers to information provided by an expert as response to students' performance in a task towards reducing the gap between students' current level of performance and desired level of performance (Hattie and Timperley 2007).

In the conventional model, qualities of good feedback are often described as in the table below:

Good feedback …	**Rather than …**
Is timely	Provided a long time after producing the work
Is based on criteria and/or learning outcomes (= criterion referenced)	Based on comparisons between students (= norm referenced)
Focuses on the task	Focuses on the person
Is specific and refers to concrete examples	Making broad, general statements
Suggests what and how to improve	Justifies grades
Focuses on key points	Is extensive

Table 1: Good feedback in the conventional model

One issue arising from this kind of teacher feedback, especially if associated with summative tasks, is that it comes too late from students' perspectives, and remains information without any impact and consequences. According to a useful briefing note written by Hounsell (2015)

for the WISE Assessment project at Hong Kong University, while teachers may diagnose and suggest remediation, the timing militates against students being able to use it to close the feedback loop. Hounsell therefore suggests strategies to 'flip' feedback, to enhance dialogue and interaction, shifting the focus from 'retrospective feedback to prospective feedforward' (p. 2). This involves rethinking *when* and *how* feedback can be provided, such that there is a future horizon in mind. Strategies proposed by Hounsell include: 'Draft, comment, revise, resubmit', where comments on a draft impact on the final submission; 'Parts to whole', where comments provided on one or more sections impact on a longer piece of work developed over time; 'Presentation-paper', where an oral presentation generates peer and tutor comments and subsequently results in a written paper; and 'Chaining and threading' where students submit coversheets stating how feedback received previously has been addressed. Our own work on feedforward has shown that these ideas are being taken up widely, but that future horizons can vary considerably between improvements made within modules, across modules and into academic and professional practice more broadly (Reimann, Sadler and Sambell 2019).

In line with the paradigm shift in assessment, several higher education researchers have recently called for a rethinking or reconceptualisation of feedback (e.g. Boud and Molloy 2013a; Merry et al. 2013; Sambell 2011) as 'assessment for learning', 'feedback for learning' or 'sustainable feedback'. It is widely accepted that the impact of feedback comments will be restricted if the student is cast in the role of passive recipient (Boud and Molloy 2013a). Arguably, the dominant discourse of equating university feedback with comments on summative work poses a particular problem since it encourages feedback to be conceptualised in a very limited way: as a product and 'provision of information' (Sambell, McDowell and Montgomery 2013, p. 73); as 'monologue' (Nicol, 2010); as 'an episodic mechanism delivered by teachers' (Boud and Molloy 2013a, p. 699); as 'dangling data' (Sadler 1989, p. 121), or 'telling' (Sadler, 2010, p. 539). In response to this restricted view of feedback, there are strong arguments, based on extensive research evidence and views of learning which foreground learning for the longer term, of the developmental benefits of moving towards a much broader definition of feedback as dialogue 'to support learning in both formal and informal situations' (Askew and Lodge 2000, p. 1). From this viewpoint, learner engagement in formative activity becomes a key driving principle which supports self-regulation and helps bridge the gap between teacher comments and what students do. In the new paradigm, feedback is seen as a process which drives curriculum design.

Active, social and participatory learning and authentic feedback experiences which facilitate self-evaluation through dialogue and involvement all lie at the heart of the Northumbria Assessment for Learning model outlined above (Sambell, McDowell and Montgomery 2013). Even with the large classes which are typical for many Business contexts, if carefully thought through, this can be enacted by 'flipping feedback' (Hounsell 2015). This kind of feedback is embedded in teaching, based around active-learning exercises where students spend time on task and generate real-time, authentic feedback during class time, also called 'classroom assessment' (Angelo and Cross 1993). The use of 'clickers' to enable students to have a go at questions and compare their responses to those of their classmates and in discussion with tutors is a prime example of this. In a similar vein Mohrweis and Shinham (2015) show how 'scratch-off' cards have been successfully used to provide instant feedback in a first year accounting review session, with significant impact on exam results. Other methods of this kind include feedback flowing from peer and self-review exercises, where students generate as well as receive feedback, such as the Essay Feedback Checklist used with first year management students reported by Mansour (2015).

Developing evaluative judgement

Students need to be prepared to function beyond the course 'in a world without marks, grades, rubrics, explicit criteria and markers' (Dawson et al. 2018, p. 1) or, in other words, assessment needs to be 'sustainable' (Boud 2000). Preparing for such independence requires the development of students' ability to judge the quality of their own work and that of others. Sadler (1989) points out that this involves an understanding of what constitutes quality in a given domain, the ability to compare own work with this standard, and strategies that allow the gap to be closed. Just like teachers who acquire their concept of quality through repeatedly judging students' work, students need to be given opportunities to practise making judgements and making the rationale for their judgements explicit. Since knowledge of standards is tacit and situated (Price et al. 2011), participatory approaches through which students learn to make judgements in collaboration with others help them develop a feel for standards and criteria. The work of Price, O'Donovan and colleagues, which originated in a UK Business School, has been highly influential in highlighting the limitations of assessment criteria and rubrics and the importance of complementary approaches (O'Donovan, Price and Rust 2001; Price et al. 2012; Rust, Price and O'Donovan 2003). Since standards are socially constructed, providing criteria is not enough: students need to be actively involved in using and discussing them with others and applying them to concrete pieces of work.

Evaluative judgement can be developed through a range of approaches including self-assessment, peer feedback and review, use of rubrics and use of exemplars (Tai et al. 2018). Tai et al. stress that this needs to involve:

> active and iterative engagement with criteria, the enactment of judgements on diverse samples of work, dialogic feedback with peers and tutors oriented towards understanding quality which may not be otherwise explicated, and articulation and justification of judgements with a focus on both immediate and future tasks. (Tai et al. 2018, p. 477).

Approaches intended to develop students' evaluative judgement are increasingly reported in the literature. Nicol's work on peer review (Nicol 2019; Nicol 2014; Nicol, Thomson and Breslin 2014) has demonstrated that reviewing and commenting on the work of others impacts in particular on students' evaluations of their own work and subsequent attempts to improve its quality. Fraile, Pandero and Pardo (2017) developed a structured co-creation process during which students devised, discussed and agreed criteria and then drafted their own definitions of poor and excellent quality based on these criteria. The resulting rubric incorporated students' own words and was subsequently used for summative assessment purposes. In our own work we have frequently used genuine exemplars of varying quality which we ask students to rank order. The rationale for their rankings is then discussed and compared with our own, with a focus on both students and teachers making the reasons for their judgements explicit, rather than presenting the teacher's as the 'right' answer. Examples for supporting learning from exemplars through scaffolding and dialogue can be found in Carless et al. (2018).

Vignettes of practice

The vignettes below have been selected to illustrate ways in which contemporary assessment practices in Business Schools have incorporated some of the ideas outlined above. They are situated in a range of countries (Australia, Canada, South Africa and the UK), at undergraduate and postgraduate level and in different business related subjects. While each vignette has its own merits, they are not intended as exemplary practices, but rather, to demonstrate the intricacies and challenges of attempting to put assessment which supports learning into practice.

EXAMPLE PRACTICE 1: Feedforward exercise on an MBA module in financial decision making (Parry and Bamber 2010) - UK

This assessment practice was termed 'a structured feedforward exercise', integrated into a course on financial decision making. Following a six-week taught course, the students had a further three weeks to complete and submit a 2,500 word written report, which critically analysed financial problem-solving and decision-making in an area of practice for a chosen organisation ***[Authenticity]***.

The structured feedforward exercise provided students with guidance and feedback on the assessment development process during the taught course. These activities included:

i. Development of an assignment planning sheet that guided them through choosing a topic and relevant theory that was then discussed with peers and a tutor (weeks 1-3)
ii. Session to discuss and give examples of what different assessment criteria and terms such as analysis and synthesis may mean and how they could be addressed (week 3) ***[Evaluative Judgement]***.
iii. Students used a self-assessment sheet (checklist) to assess their draft report in class and discuss it in small groups. Within this session each student was seen individually by a tutor to discuss the results of the self-assessment exercise. This resulted in generation of feedback from self, peers and the tutor (week 6) ***[Evaluative Judgement, Engagement with Feedback]***.

The students were then encouraged to use the outcomes from the structured feedforward exercises to further develop the report prior to submission (week 9).

EXAMPLE PRACTICE 2: Learning from one assessment task to the next on a large first-year business unit (Vardi 2013) – Australia

Two written assignments were designed to enable students to use feedback from their first piece of work to enhance the second. The first assignment was a 1,800 word essay to examine a multinational company's performance in society. This second assignment was directly linked to the first as it required the students to use the research and analysis from the first essay to write a 1,000 word critical business report recommending strategies for

the company to meet their social responsibility as per the United Nations Global Compact ***[Authenticity]***. This allowed tutors to provide feedback that was highly specific to the first task, which could also be translated to support the work required for the next task. The marks and feedback from the first assignment were provided to students at least a week before submission of the second. To supplement this timely feedback, staff training also took place around a number of feedback principles for markers to ensure that it was forward-looking ***[Engagement with Feedback].***

In addition to the focus on student engagement with feedback, consistent standards of performance were designed for the unit. To support these descriptions, exemplars for the highest level of performance for each assessment task were provided. A workshop activity helped students to deconstruct these exemplars in relation to the assessment task and standards ***[Evaluative Judgement]***. These workshops were also videocast.

EXAMPLE PRACTICE 3: An assessment literacy-building intervention for first-year business students (Smith et al. 2013) - Australia

A short (approx. 45 minutes), single workshop activity was used with a large first year business cohort prior to them submitting a 1,500 word literature review. The ability of the students to judge their own and others work in response to an assessment tasks was a key aspect focus of the workshop ***[Evaluative Judgement]***.

The format of the workshop was:

a) Use of a "think, pair, and share" exercise where participants considered the quality of two pieces of example work. The students used an assessment rubric, containing the criteria and standards for the assessment, to support their judgements. There were three phases to this activity: individual judgements about the exemplars (think); explanation of the judgement in relation to the criteria to a partner (pair); discussion of judgements with the whole class (share). The outcome from this activity was a list of criteria from the students in their own language.
b) Identification of the stronger and weaker examples then took place and the students provided the marks they awarded. The tutor then revealed their mark for the work and the reason for it.

c) The students were then asked to revisit the assessment rubric and compared the basis for their judgements against the academic standards expressed in it

EXAMPLE PRACTICE 4: Using international marketing simulations as an authentic assessment (Farrell 2020) - Canada

Computer simulations were used as an authentic assessment of undergraduate business students' capabilities in international marketing. Country Manager was the international marketing simulation used and the scenario was that a US-based consumer products company was concerned about the aging profile and slow growth in their primary markets in North America, Australia and Western Europe. The response to this was that the company was to develop a presence in emerging and fast growing markets in either Asia or Latin America. The students were required to make a range of strategic decisions to penetrate these markets.

Students worked in self-selected teams of three or four; firstly coming to a decision about the target country that they could justify in terms of social and demographic profile and then to identify initial strategies for how these markets would be entered, considering the relevant strength and weaknesses of each. Students attended weekly simulation labs, which provided guidance from tutors. They worked through successive rounds of the simulation where they made strategic marketing decisions in order to achieve profitability. More specifically, students were required to understand consumer buyer behaviour and the factors that motivate purchase decisions. ***[Authenticity]*** Students had to submit an online peer evaluation and a 10-page group report at the end of the simulation exercise. Within the report students discussed lessons learned from their experience with the simulation ***[Evaluative Judgement]***.

EXAMPLE PRACTICE 5: Formative self-assessment on an undergraduate Accounting programme (Hill 2016) – South Africa

For a final-year Taxation module, with 561 accounting students, students completed six class tests that constituted 10% of the overall mark for the module. A self-assessment

exercise was conducted for three of the tests. To support engagement in the self-assessment exercises a self-assessment assignment (worth 5% of the overall mark for the module) was developed where marks were awarded based on the accuracy of the students' judgements about their own work relative to the judgements by the lecturer ***[Evaluative Judgement].***

Self-carbon test answer papers were created with a front-page (white) that students completed the test on and a second copy (yellow) page so students were left a copy of their test. The white copy was submitted for marking by the tutor and the yellow page was taken away by the student so they could self-assess. Students were also provided with a model answer and detailed marking plan for the test that they had completed in order that they could undertake the self-assessment.

Once the students had undertaken the self-assessment they were required to submit the mark onto the virtual learning environment for the module. They were also asked reflective questions to encourage them to think about the positive and negative aspects of their performance on the test. Finally they were given the opportunity to compare their mark with that from the lecturer ***[Engagement with Feedback]***.

The vignettes illustrate several of the principles and strategies outlined above. They also demonstrate that assessment that supports learning almost always involves close attention to course and curriculum design. Most of the examples do not only represent one-off interventions but intricate designs consisting of several steps and stages. It is also worthwhile noting the challenges of designing assessment in ways that engender student agency and ownership. In example 1 for instance, the design encourages self and peer assessment to generate feedback that students need to interpret in order to help them with the current task. Therefore the level of active student involvement and the link for the student to the assessment task in hand appear to be strong. In contrast, in the second example, the feedback on the first assignment is tutor generated and therefore student agency is lower and students' ability to interpret and use of the tutor's comments to inform the task that follows is assumed. In both examples two and three the workshop activities were designed to support the development of student understanding of the assessment criteria by involving them in making

judgements about the work of others. However, while the students are actively involved in this process, the translation of this activity into being able to make judgements about their own work and take action to improve it still seems to require quite a large step which might be difficult for students without additional scaffolding. This demonstrates how complex it is to develop assessment practices that actively address all principles of learning-oriented assessment in an interconnected way

4. CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an overview of current debates about assessment and feedback in higher education and highlighted the opportunities which a focus on Assessment for Learning can offer to Business Schools. We have shown that business related disciplines are already at the forefront of implementing innovative assessment, as evident, for instance, in the many examples of authentic assessment. We have also pointed the reader towards ideas and debates in the assessment in higher education literature which have the potential to contribute to further enhancements. These include models of authenticity which go beyond an exclusive focus on the world of work, (re) considering feedback as a process rather than a product provided by the 'expert' tutor, and the importance of developing students' evaluative judgement. The latter in particular has received considerable attention in current debates and practice developments, to which Business Schools may want to contribute. The discussion in this chapter has demonstrated that the multiple stakeholders and purposes of assessment have resulted in a terrain which is full of tensions and challenges, and the examples and vignettes provided have illustrated the complexities of implementing assessment which genuinely supports learning. However, despite these potential difficulties, the principles and conditions of Assessment for Learning outlined here have already encouraged academics in many countries to have thought-provoking discussions and develop cutting edge assessment practices. While there is not one perfect way to teach, there are pedagogies and corresponding assessment practices that are more likely to support meaningful student learning. We hope that this chapter will contribute to sustaining and engendering further dialogue about assessment in Business Schools, grounded in above insights gained from theory, research and concrete examples.

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