Supporting Assessment Literacy in Changing Times

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Abstract

Although assessment literacy is in its infancy in higher education and somewhat under-conceptualised (Medland, 2019), its importance is increasingly acknowledged. Recent trends in assessment and feedback, along with the disruption to educational practices and perceptions caused by the global shift to online/remote learning in 2020, have served to accelerate the need for an accessible framework to enable those who assess to self-reflect on their personal assessment literacy and to enable institutions to support them in this regard. This chapter discusses these trends and considers what they may mean for how we conceptualise assessment literacy and how we support the assessment literacy of educators and learners into the future. It concludes with a series of evidence-based reflective questions for use by individuals as they continue to enhance their assessment literacy.

Introduction

There are many literacies that underpin our ability to successfully engage with the world around us. Concepts such as information literacy, health literacy and digital literacy, for example, have expanded our traditional view of literacy and allowed it to encompass knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions defining central aspects of our lives. Within higher education, a key literacy impacting the experiences and outcomes of those who teach and learn as they design and engage with educational opportunities is assessment literacy.

As with many other literacies, assessment literacy is a concept that has evolved over time. In its initial form, assessment literacy was focused on knowing and understanding the terminology around assessment, in order that we could speak a common language in related discussions and planning. However, scholars have noted that, while language forms the basis of assessment literacy, it is not, in itself, enough. The concept has thus grown in complexity with authors variously describing it in terms of, for example:

- assessment knowledge, conceptions of assessment, assessment in practice, and assessor identity (Xu & Brown, 2016);
- clarification of what constitutes good assessment, how assessment elements fit together, student and staff entitlement, and the requirements of the discipline (Evans, 2016);
- assessment principles, assessment techniques and methods, assessment criteria, standards and policies, and feedback purposes and processes (Price et al., 2012); and
- knowledge of theory, technical skills, principles and concepts, language pedagogy, sociocultural values, local practices, personal beliefs/attitudes, and scores and decision making (Kremmel & Harding, 2020).

Although assessment literacy is in its infancy in higher education and somewhat under-conceptualised (Medland, 2019), its importance is increasingly acknowledged. Recent trends in assessment and feedback, along with the disruption to educational practices and perceptions caused by the global shift to online/remote learning in 2020, have served to accelerate the need for an accessible framework to enable those who assess to self-reflect on their personal assessment literacy and to enable institutions to support them in this regard. This chapter discusses these trends and considers what they may mean for how we conceptualise assessment literacy and how we support the assessment literacy of educators and learners into the future.

All three authors have worked at national and institutional levels to enhance assessment and feedback understandings and practices across Irish higher education and to enhance the professional development of staff who teach. We have been involved in the development and implementation of a national professional development framework for all staff who teach (Donnelly & Maguire, 2020; National Forum, 2016b), a profile of assessment practices across Irish higher education (National Forum, 2016c), the development of a national understanding of assessment and feedback (National Forum, 2017a; O'Neill et al., 2020) and associated principles (National Forum, 2021) and an interrogation of assessment across different work-integrated learning contexts (O'Neill, 2022a). This experience, along with relevant international literature, informs the discussion throughout this chapter. The aim of the chapter is to provide an accessible, coherent underpinning for the support of assessment literacy in ever-changing times.

Relevant Trends in Assessment and Feedback
The development of assessment literacy does not occur in a vacuum. It is highly influenced by fast- and slow-moving changes and trends in the world inside and outside of higher education institutions. Disciplines, for example, have their own unique local assessment language and practices but are required to increasingly develop more cross- and inter-disciplinary opportunities, bringing them and their students outside of their disciplinary assessment language. Other contextual factors include national and local policies, structures and processes (Lees & Anderson, 2015), the increasing diversity of the higher education community (Smith, 2020), and changes in attitude towards higher education and its purposes (Medland, 2016). It is difficult to recall any contextual influence that has been more powerful than the shift to online/remote learning that occurred as a response to the global pandemic in 2020. Many educators across the world were forced to reconsider why and how they assessed as there was a necessary move away from the reliance on face-to-face examinations. Some did not have to change their assessment approaches but became part of this wider conversation around how we enhance our understanding and practice of assessment. While the pandemic has had a particularly transformative impact on engagement with online and technology-enabled assessment, there were other common trends internationally that were already challenging staff to understand assessment in a more sophisticated way and these trends were reinforced or supplemented in response to the pandemic experience.

An increase in technology-enabled assessment and refreshed interest in assessment overall
Technology has always impacted upon assessment and feedback, but never to the extent it has since March 2020. Many staff and students had to rapidly become familiar with new language specific to assessment in the digital/blended context and build related knowledge and skills. Those unused to the online context queried basic questions such as the difference between a take home exam and an open book exam or whether an online assessment meant an assessment completed online or merely submitted online, as well as more complex topics such as how to maintain the integrity of assessments within a remote context.

As might have been predicted, a number of challenges accompanied the emergency move to online learning and assessment. In a global study examining higher education during the first wave of the pandemic, Aristovnik and colleagues (2020) explored whether lecturers unfamiliar with the new mode of delivery had inadvertently overloaded their students with study materials and assignments. They found that close to half of surveyed students reported that their workload had become larger or significantly larger during that initial shift to online. This difficulty may be seen as an exaggerated indicator of the steep learning curve that programme and institutional communities can experience in adapting pre-existing assessment knowledge and approaches to new contexts.

As mentioned, another area where challenges were faced was in the area of academic integrity. Online proctoring, which many turned to in a bid to allay related concerns, was shown to impact on the equity of assessments (Swauger, 2020) and on student anxiety levels and related performance (Woldeab & Brothen, 2019). This has led to a growing understanding that students and educators need to work together to educate and inform their colleagues and peers and develop a culture of academic integrity.

Along with the need to adapt assessments to the online/remote context, the unexpected inability to facilitate face-to-face examinations and practical assessments led to alternative assessment approaches being explored and debated at an increasing rate across the globe. This, in turn, challenged staff and student values around the nature and purposes of assessment, prompting them to re-visit their thinking and practices. For example, staff found that they needed to detail more clearly the grading processes involved in an alternative assessment, due to it being new to many students. This experience made some staff come to value such transparency in designing assessments as it resulted in fewer issues/questions during the assessment lifecycle (National Forum, 2020).

While the above are just a few examples, there is no denying that assessment has never been more topical within higher education and that the experiences of students, staff and leaders in recent years have highlighted the importance of considering the purposes of assessment, its link to meaningful student learning, and the strong relationship between approaches and outcomes and the personal values, capabilities and priorities of those who teach and learn.

A move towards more sustainable assessment approaches
The language and practices around student assessment and feedback have been receiving a lot of attention in recent years and there has been a move towards the concept of 'sustainable assessment', which is similar to the concept of 'assessment as learning' (Boud & Soler, 2016; National Forum, 2017a). Wanner and Palmer highlight 'increased interest in moving away from assessment of learning (summative assessment), not only towards assessment for learning (formative assessment), but also assessment as learning where the assessment process becomes part of the learning of skills and students reflect on and assess their own learning' (2018, p1033). Sustainable assessment focuses on the long-term future of students and on equipping them appropriately so that they will be in a position to meet their own learning needs in their lives and work beyond higher education (Boud & Soler, 2016).

As part of this movement towards more sustainable assessment and feedback, it has been argued that, as it is understood to be part of formative assessment, the use of sustainable assessment can help reduce the requirement for some summative assessment, with a related impact on assessment design across a module/programme. Further, as sustainable assessment relies quite heavily on peer and self-assessment, it is a trend that brings student assessment

literacy into sharp focus. The development of student assessment literacy is an opportunity to work in partnership with students on their learning (Deeley & Bovill, 2017; Evans, 2016; Smith et al., 2013). Carless and Boud (2018) identify four key areas for the development of student feedback literacy: appreciating feedback, making judgments, managing affect, and taking action. Further, they highlight those who teach as playing an important role in promoting student feedback literacy through curriculum design, guidance and coaching.

For the promise of sustainable assessment to be realised, therefore, staff who teach need to have a good understanding of the use of self and peer review to support sustainable assessment, as well as the broader topic of assessment design, including programmatic approaches to assessment design (National Forum, 2017b), and issues around assessment load (Jessop & Tomas, 2017; Tomas & Jessop, 2019). They also need to be well positioned to support the assessment literacy of their students.

A focus on equity, student empowerment and social justice
As the concept of student-centred learning has gained traction through related educational policies and structures (Klemencic et al, 2020) and student partnership and engagement have become ever more central to institutional decision-making, the voices of the increasingly diverse student body have been heard more clearly in recent years and the concepts of equity and inclusion have gained a prominent place in educational discourse. The pandemic experience accelerated this trend as those who teach and lead became more acutely aware of the structural barriers that students can face and how adjustments to processes and approaches can make a significant difference to the ability of students to engage effectively with programme content.

One key trend that has captured the imagination of educators across the globe in the context of calls for more equitable and inclusive teaching and learning has been that of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Burgstahler, 2015; CAST, 2018). The central idea behind UDL is that learning experiences, and associated assessments, are designed with all students in mind rather than being designed with some students in mind and subsequently having to be adapted for others. UDL is based on the idea of students being provided with multiple means of representation, multiple means of action and expression and multiple means of engagement. In line with the trend towards sustainable assessment, engaging and empowering students in assessment and feedback is an underpinning value in UDL (O'Neill & Maguire, 2019), yet many staff are unfamiliar or indeed struggle with this on both conceptual and practical levels.

A focus on equity and inclusion, and UDL more specifically, has also resulted in growing interest in the idea of diversifying assessment. Diversifying assessment reduces the chances of students being marginalised by overuse of one particular assessment type. However, for assessment diversification to be effective, staff need the understanding, knowledge and skills to apply it appropriately, and care needs to be taken in the assessment design to not swamp students with too many assessment types (O'Neill & Padden, 2021). One approach to diversification is supporting students' choice in their assessment methods within a module (O'Neill, 2017, 2022b).

Taking UDL and the equity and inclusivity of assessment one step further, we find the wider and more transformative concept of 'assessment for social justice' (Hanesworth et al., 2019; McArthur, 2016). This concept includes ideas such as trust, honesty, responsibility, forgiveness and responsiveness (McArthur, 2021). The language around social justice can be less familiar for some disciplines, but it has been argued that this does not always preclude its

implementation in practice. Assessment for social justice is likely to continue to gain traction over time, requiring attention from a conceptual standpoint and challenging the values/beliefs that staff, students and wider stakeholders hold regarding assessment.

A focus on employability and, relatedly, authentic and work-integrated learning

A focus on employability has been evident in higher education across the globe for some years, often prompted at national level by economic policies and skills mismatches (Bosco & Ferns, 2014; Osmani et al., 2015). Employability and work-readiness have also been shown to be a high priority amongst students (Tomlinson, 2012). In a national survey of students in Ireland, for example, in which they were asked to explain what being "successful" in higher education meant to them, the top theme amongst responses focused on developing skills to maximise employability (National Forum, 2019).

As people have made efforts to embed employability within curricula and graduate attributes, interest has grown in more authentic, engaging and meaningful assessments, both on and off campus (Ajjawi et al., 2022; Hundley & Kahn, 2019; O'Neill, 2022a). While the language in this area has not been consistent, the use of the term 'authentic assessment' has increased and it is understood to include a range of concepts related to realism, cognitive challenge and evaluative judgement (Villarroel et al., 2018). Ajjawi et al. (2022) characterise authentic assessment around three principles: that assessment is sustainable, that assessment engages students in active portrayal of their achievements and professional identity, and that assessment involves collaboration amongst the students, academics and industry partners.

In tandem with this trend towards more authentic learning and assessment opportunities, the concept of work-integrated learning has recently emerged with more frequency. Zegwaard and colleagues explain this concept as:

> an educational approach that uses relevant work-based experiences to allow students to integrate theory with the meaningful practice of work as an intentional component of the curriculum. Defining elements of this educational approach require that students engage in authentic and meaningful work-related tasks, and must involve three stakeholders; the student, the university, and the workplace/community. (Zegwaard et al., 2020, para. 2)

A key aspect of work-integrated learning (as opposed to terms such as work-based learning) is that it includes student experiences of assessment and feedback both on and off campus and is therefore the responsibility of a wider group of stakeholders (O'Neill, 2022a). The successful design and support of work-integrated learning, and related assessments, will therefore require staff to engage in inter-stakeholder dialogue. Dialogue between, for example, students, staff and practitioners (assessors in practice), has been identified as key to enhanced assessment practices (O'Neill, 2022a; Ruskin & Bilous, 2022). In addition to skills in interacting with stakeholders and building consensus, the trend towards work-integrated learning and authentic learning and assessment requires staff and students to have a deep understanding of appropriate grading scales (pass/fail, levels, percentages), assessment criteria, particular assessment approaches and how to foster clarity regarding assessment and feedback expectations (O'Neill, 2022a).

Assessment Literacy in Practice

Overall, the trends described above demonstrate the multitude of claims on staff and students as they endeavour to navigate assessment and feedback in a dynamic higher education context. Neither the list of trends nor their individual facets are exhaustive. However, they serve to illustrate how we might begin to think about assessment literacy in practice. The central idea underpinning the emerging concept of assessment literacy is that assessors have a certain level

of contextualised knowledge, skills and understanding of assessment. There is recognition that assessors can have different levels of assessment literacy and that assessment literacy can be developed.

As outlined in Table 1, assessment literacy in practice involves designing, managing and communicating assessment opportunities (alone or in partnership with other stakeholders), in a range of contexts, where those opportunities are represented through multiple methods and in multiple formats and require a response from diverse cohorts/individuals. Further, a person's assessment literacy is influenced by various factors, including their personal values, their assessment experiences and practices, their ability to adapt knowledge and skills in assessment, their language and communication capabilities, and the given context.

Table 1 Assessment literacy in practice

Assessment literacy in practice involves designing, managing and communicating assessment opportunities (alone or in partnership with other stakeholders), in a range of contexts, where those opportunities are represented through multiple methods and in multiple formats and require a response from diverse cohorts/individuals.	
Designing, managing and communicating assessment opportunities…	Involving, for example: ● Purpose of assessment ● Principles of assessment ● Knowledge of assessment approaches and processes ● Co-creation/partnership/stakeholder dialogue ● Responding to influencers (programme needs, policies, and quality assurance…)
…in a range of contexts…	For example: ● Academic settings ● Discipline-focused settings ● Workplaces ● Online/face-to-face
…where those opportunities are represented through multiple methods and in multiple formats…	For example: ● Projects, assignments, exams, journals, peer feedback ● Paper-based, media-based, online, oral
…requiring a response/output…	Demonstrating, for example: ● Understanding and knowledge recall ● Problem solving ● Creativity ● Critical and/or evaluative ● Application of practical skills
…from diverse cohorts/individuals.	For example: ● Part-time/full-time ● Mature students ● International students ● Students with disabilities ● Students from ethnic/racial minorities

Factors influencing assessment literacy include:
- *Personal values:* The beliefs and conceptions of assessment held by the assessor
- *Assessment experiences and practices:* The cognitive and affective impact of assessment on the assessor and those being assessed; the impact of prior experience of assessment
- *Adaptive knowledge and skills in assessment:* The knowledge and experience of the assessor including their digital capabilities
- *Language and communication:* The level of understanding of the assessor of the language around assessment and their ability to communicate effectively on the topic
- *Context*: The impact of the structural, socio-political and cultural environment, such as relevant assessment and grading policies, the institutional learning environment (digital), national and institutional quality standards, professional body requirements, institutional goals and priorities, cultural and social influences

Developing Assessment Literacy: Professional Development

The processes around how we develop our assessment literacy practices are important: how staff share, discuss, interrogate, compromise and change their understanding and their practices; these are key to how we move forward. In light of the discussion thus far, it is clear that the development of assessment literacy needs to be a professional development priority within higher education institutions. If professional development is supported and enhanced it can support the assessment literacy of staff themselves, while also enabling staff to support the assessment literacy of their students.

For professional development to be leveraged effectively, however, it is important that its potential is well understood. Drawing on insights from national enhancement work in the Irish context (National Forum, 2015a, 2015b, 2016b) and related international literature, we illustrate some characteristics of professional development that will be helpful to bear in mind in attempting to develop assessment literacy.

Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that professional development goes well beyond the formal, structured, accredited professional development with which staff engage in the higher education context. As illustrated in Table 2, professional development comes in various guises making it possible for staff to develop their assessment literacy through, for example, conversations with peers, independent reading, or unaccredited workshops, seminars, etc. Indeed, informal and non-formal professional development has been demonstrated to lead to significant professional growth (Schildkamp & van der Veen, 2017; Teräs, 2016).

Table 2 Professional development typology (adapted from National Forum, 2016b, p.2)

| Non-Accredited			Accredited
Collaborative Non-Accredited	**Unstructured Non-Accredited**	**Structured Non-Accredited**	
Informal	*Non-Formal*	*Non-Formal*	*Formal*
Learning from these activities comes from their collaborative nature.	These activities are independently led by the individual. Engagement is driven by the individual's needs/interests. Individuals source the material themselves.	Organised activities - They are typically facilitated by an institution, network or disciplinary membership body and have identified learning objectives.	Accredited programmes of study.
For example: Conversations with colleagues, peer networking, peer observations, online blog or discussion forum	For example: Reading articles, following social media, self-study, watching video tutorials, keeping a teaching journal or portfolio, preparing an article for publication	For example: Workshops, seminars, MOOCs, conferences, summer schools, structured collaborative projects	For example: Professional certificate, Graduate Diploma, MA, PhD, EdD in Teaching and Learning, eLearning, Leadership in Education, Education Policy

In addition to considering the various avenues for professional development available and being open to a mix of professional development opportunities, it is also important for staff to remember that they may need more development in one area than another. It is possible for a person to be, for example, a 'new learner' or 'consolidating learner' in one aspect of their professional development and a 'mentor' or 'leader' in another (National Forum, 2016b). With respect to assessment literacy, this prompts us to bear in mind that its development can be viewed on a spectrum. During the emergency shift to online/remote learning, many staff who may have considered themselves mentors or leaders in the assessment field found that they did indeed have considerable 'new learning' to do. Similarly, while staff may feel that their own assessment literacy is quite advanced, they may be new learners when it comes to supporting the assessment literacy of their students. The significance of this insight lies in highlighting the importance of staff embarking on ongoing, career-long engagement with their assessment literacy and continuously reflecting on where they may need to strengthen one aspect or another in response to new understandings, changing contexts or altered expectations.

Irrespective of the types of learning activities engaged with or the development level a person has reached with respect to a given aspect of assessment literacy, it is important that assessors have an accessible framework to enable self-reflection on their personal assessment literacy. This helps to acknowledge their beliefs and values, to identify their strengths, weaknesses and gaps in knowledge/skills, and to be aware of the influences on, and impact of, their assessment practices. To this end, we have identified below a number of questions staff might find useful to consider, individually or with colleagues, or indeed be prompted to reflect upon within a more structured professional development context. These questions are not hierarchical, nor are they mutually exclusive. They can relate to both the assessors (usually staff but learners can also be assessors) and the learners experiencing assessment, the 'assessee' (Smith et al., 2013).

Why do I assess?
A core aspect of our assessment literacy relates to our understanding of the purposes of assessment. Just as when researching we should choose the methods that suit the research question being asked, it is important that in assessment we select methods and design assessment according to the learning outcomes to be achieved. Figure 1 illustrates some of the key concepts in assessment and feedback, the purposes attached to different approaches, and examples in practice

Figure 1 Purposes of assessment and feedback
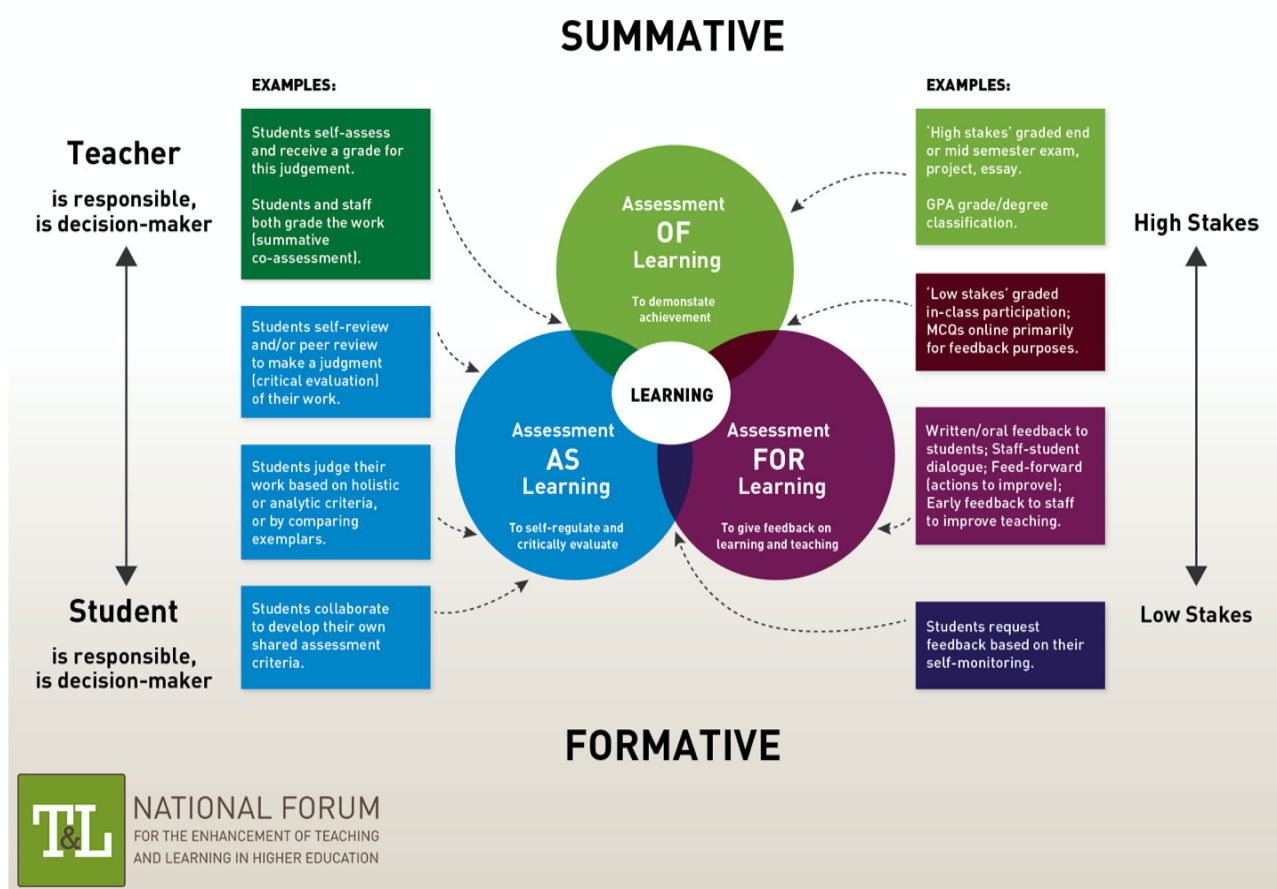
(National Forum, 2017a, reproduced with permission from National Forum)

What do I bring to the assessment context?

Assessing is a very human activity and each assessor, and indeed each learner, brings their own views, values, and experiences to the assessment context. The importance of staff exploring their conceptions of assessment, and considering their personal beliefs, attitudes and sociocultural values with respect to assessment cannot be overstated (Evans, 2013; 2016; Kremmel & Harding, 2020; Massey et al., 2020; National Forum, 2016b; Xu & Brown, 2016). Taking into account the trends outlined earlier, it would be beneficial for those who are assessing to consider, for example, their personal views, values and attitudes with respect to social justice (McArthur, 2016), equity and inclusion (O'Neill & Maguire, 2019) or student partnership and empowerment (Deeley & Boville, 2017; National Forum, 2017a). To what extent do we trust students? Or believe that they should be more empowered? We are influenced by our previous experience of assessment, as both an assessor and as a learner, and we often role-model what we have experienced, using approaches with which we are most familiar (O'Neill & Padden, 2021). We need to reflect on how these values, conceptions and experiences impact on our own practices.

What do I know (and what do I need to know) about assessment?

There is a considerable body of knowledge, and related skills that is needed to underpin enhanced assessment practices. As we have outlined, for example, staff who teach need to have a good understanding of assessment design, assessment approaches, grading scales, assessment criteria, and how to support sustainable and inclusive assessment. They also need to be capable

of supporting the assessment literacy of their students and fostering clarity regarding assessment and feedback expectations. Added to all this, it is important that staff have the capability to adapt their knowledge and skills to different contexts and circumstances, as the pandemic demonstrated forcibly. There is a growing body of literature that supports the use of assessment principles to guide staff as they build knowledge and related skills (Boud & Associates, 2010; Boxham & Boyd, 2008; Evans, 2016, 2022; Kremmel & Harding, 2020; National Forum, 2021; Price et al., 2012; UCD T&L, 2022). Such principles provide basic tenets for practice in the areas of, for example, validity, reliability, efficiency, effectiveness, diversity, empowerment and academic integrity. Principles are useful as they are situated in the middle ground between the more theoretical literature, emphasised by Kremmel and Harding (2020) and Xu and Brown (2016), and the practice wisdom guiding everyday enactment of assessment literacy.

How do I communicate about assessment?

Assessment literacy in its simplest form has been thought of as knowing the language around assessment terminology, in order that we can speak a common language in this area. Many authors on assessment literacy, describe language as central to assessment literacy (Kremmel & Harding, 2020; O'Neill et al., 2020; Price et al., 2012; Xu & Brown, 2016). However, communicating is a wider concept than language and includes how we converse, share and become part of a wider dialogue around assessment. As Baker and colleagues argue, 'the interplay of tacit and explicit dimensions of knowledge manifest themselves in conversational learning as individuals come together in a joint meaning-making process' (Baker et al., 2002, p. 5). Dialogue is key to effective student feedback (Ajjawi & Boud, 2018), just as communication with colleagues is important in attempting to plan assessment across a programme of study (Jessop & Tomas, 2017) and inter-stakeholder dialogue has been identified as an essential enabler of work-integrated learning and assessment (O'Neill, 2022a). As institutions moved suddenly to online/remote learning in 2020 communication also became fundamental to the ability of higher education communities to reach consensus regarding alternative assessment approaches, adapting systems to allow for the move away from end-of-term face-to-face examinations and endeavouring to meet the needs of both students and those assessing them while maintaining quality and academic integrity.

How do I (and my students) experience assessment?

Assessment and feedback are relational processes that can elicit positive and negative emotions in those who assess and those being assessed. Whether it is receiving a grade from an exam or assignment, giving or receiving peer feedback, or feelings of anxiety or stress during times of high assessment load or high grading load, how we experience and manage the affective dimension of assessment and feedback can impact on learning experiences and outcomes. The importance of recognising and better understanding this aspect of assessment literacy has been highlighted (O'Neill et al., 2020; Xu & Brown, 2016) and the affective dimension of feedback has received particular attention (Carless & Boud, 2018; Evans, 2013, 2016, 2022; Winstone et al., 2017). Becoming aware of the emotions involved in assessment and feedback and discussing these with students may lead to clearer communication regarding the roots of negative emotions and an opportunity to adjust assessment approaches or assessment design across a programme to optimise the learning experience.

How do I design, implement and evaluate in different contexts?

The assessment design process, at both module and programme level, is central to the work of any practitioner involved in assessment. It includes exploring how your assessment(s) fits in with the programme/subject assessment (Jessop & Tomas, 2017; National Forum, 2017b; UCD

T&L, 2022), aligning with programme and module learning outcomes by choosing the appropriate assessment methods and technique (Kremmel & Harding, 2020; Price et al., 2012; Webb, 2012), designing and choosing assessment criteria and standards (Price et al., 2012), developing grading approaches, interpreting results (Webb, 2012), developing the connectedness between assessment and learning (Evans, 2016; Price et al., 2012), and evaluating the whole process.

These assessment design processes are highly influenced by the modality (either online/face-to-face or blended approaches), the disciplinary contexts and other contexts such as work placements and community-based experiences. With respect to context, local, institutional and national policies, structures, processes and related cultures and trends can also impact on how we assess. Institutional grading scales, as an example, can impact on particular student cohorts when there is an expectation of grading to a normal curve (O'Neill, 2017; O'Neill, 2022a; O'Neill, 2022b; Tannock, 2017). Professional bodies, where relevant, may emphasise particular assessment methods in preparation for professional practice (Hughes & Barrie, 2010). Inclusive assessment approaches (O'Neill & Maguire, 2019), student-centred learning (Jordan et al., 2014) or assessment for social justice (McArthur, 2021) may be emphasised to greater or lesser extents depending on the local educational culture. Recent international trends have seen the requirement for more authentic, engaging and meaningful assessments, both on and off campus (Ajjawi et al., 2022; Hundley & Kahn, 2019; O'Neill, 2022a). Learners are also increasingly more involved in the co-design of assessment, becoming partners in assessment (Deeley & Boville, 2017; O'Neill & Maguire, 2019). We need to reflect on how these various influences impact on our understanding and design of assessments in practice and how we might interact with these influences to promote and sustain enhanced assessment experiences for our students.

In conclusion

As this chapter has illustrated, educational trends, whether unforeseen or predicable, have a strong impact on the assessment literacy needs of the higher education community. Assessment literacy is a dynamic aspect of who we are as educators, and it must remain constantly responsive to change and ready for adaption. There is a need to continuously scan the social, cultural, political and educational horizons to see what is coming next and how students and graduates of the future can be prepared to engage with their lives and work. The sudden move to online/remote education was arguably unforeseeable but advances in digital, such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, as well as collective responsibilities related to sustainability and social justice, are likely to change the face of teaching and learning further still. Education is continuously evolving, and the assessment literacy of higher education communities needs to evolve with it.

Suggested Readings (4 key reads)

Medland, E. (2016). Assessment in higher education: drivers, barriers and directions for change in the UK, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education***, 41(1), 81–96.** http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2014.982072

This article gives a recent and useful overview of the many challenges and trends in assessment and feedback in the UK. It present a synopsis of the role of assessment in curriculum change and advocates for a move towards an assessment for learning culture.

National Forum. (2016b). *National professional development framework for all staff who teach in Irish higher education*. Retrieved from https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/our-priorities/#!/professional-development

This webpage sets out a comprehensive set of publications and resources that were developed for all staff who teach in Irish higher education. It is a valuable resource both for those individually working on their professional development and for countries considering developing their own national professional development framework.

O'Neill, G., McEvoy E. & T Maguire (2020) Developing a national understanding of assessment and feedback in Irish higher education, *Irish Educational Studies*, DOI:10.1080/03323315.2020.1730220

This paper outlines the rationale, methodology and outputs of the conversational approach taken to develop a national understanding of assessment and feedback in Irish higher education. The output in itself assists those trying to understand the key concepts around assessment and feedback and the methodology could assist those developing their own national understanding. It advocates for strengthening the assessment *as* learning aspect of assessment, i.e., students' self-regulation/monitoring.

Xu, Y., and G. T. L. Brown. (2016). Teacher Assessment Literacy in Practice: A Reconceptualization. *Teaching and Teacher Education* **58: 149–162.** doi:10.1016/j.tate. 2016.05.010.

This paper provides a comprehensive overview of concepts associated with teacher assessment literacy, based on a scoping review of the literature (n= 100 studies). It summarises the inter-relationship of the concepts, presents a valuable framework, and highlights some implications for policy and practice.

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