

# Balancing the interest groups: group activity

**Collection:** Assessment

**Resource:** What is assessment for?

## Approximate duration

1 hour

## Learning outcomes

To have thought in detail about the attitude to assessment of different interest groups, and thus to have a finer awareness of the different and potentially clashing issues behind the choice of specific assessment forms in a module.

## Introduction

Assessment is a crucial part of any degree programme--many people would argue it is *the* crucial part. Accordingly, various different interest groups have a considerable stake in it. The issues for each group overlap, of course, but not completely--sometimes they will seem to clash. The student need for swift feedback might clash with the administrative processes of a department, for example; institutional (or departmental) requests for comparability between modules might play havoc with lecturers' desire for assessments that creatively extend their students' skills and knowledge; employers may want students to have mastered specific 'key skills', while lecturers and departments might prefer to extend the students' range in other ways.

This exercise will help participants develop a sense of HE assessment in the round, as it is perceived by representatives of some of the different groups of people it affects. The activity should help participants to engage more effectively with the key issues when planning and running assessments in their modules.



**1** | *This resource is part of a set of professional development resources for Higher Education English (including English Literature, English Language & Creative Writing) called 'The Pool'. The resources were developed by the English Subject Centre in 2011 as part of a JISC/HEA Open Educational Resources (OER) Project.*

*This work by the English Subject Centre is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales License.*

## The activity

1. Assign different roles selected from those below to the members of the group. The number of roles you assign and the number of participants you assign to each role will vary depending on the number of people in the group. Try, however, to assign at least two people to each role.
  - Students
  - Lecturers
  - University administrators
  - Heads of department
  - Educational developers
  - External bodies
2. Ask each group to imagine that they are people with the role in question. What do they think are the purposes of assessment? Ask them to write down no more than five answers.

In the 'Links & references' section below, some relevant links are provided that you might like to share with/summarise for the group. If this is a departmental workshop, you might also like to circulate departmental and/or institutional materials about assessment policy.

3. Tell the participants that the different pairs (ie. different interest groups) should now talk to each other, moving around the room to compare notes on the purposes of assessment. You might like to tell them how to start off ('Will the 'lecturers' please talk to the 'students'?), though you should stress that the groups should, after this initial discussion, move about as the spirit takes them (so, for example, the 'lecturers' and 'students' might be joined by the 'educational developers').
4. In the final plenary discussion, each group in turn summarises the discussions it has had from its own point of view.



## Links & References

- Gordon Joughin and Randal Macdonald, [A model of assessment in higher education institutions](#) (Higher Education Academy). A position paper by two educational developers.
- [Assessment and feedback - student views](#) (Higher Education Academy). 'Vox pop' video about student attitudes to assessment.
- Audio interview with Dr. Lesley Coote (University of Hull). Interview with an English lecturer who uses innovative assessment methods.
- [QAA code of practice for assessment in Higher Education](#)
- [English Subject Centre assessment area](#)

## Relationship to the Professional Standards Framework

- **Areas of Activity 3:** Assessment and giving feedback to learners
- **Core Knowledge 2:** Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme
- **Core Knowledge 5:** Methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching
- **Professional Values 1:** Respect for individual learners
- **Professional Values 3:** Commitment to the development of learning communities
- **Professional Values 4:** Commitment to encouraging participation in higher education, acknowledging diversity and promoting equality of opportunity

More information about the Professional Standards Framework can be obtained from the summary factsheet in the *Subject & Pedagogy* collection in HumBox.

<http://humbox.ac.uk/2731/>

---

## Resources in the Assessment Collection

- Assessment: introduction to the collection
- Assessment audit: resource overview
  - Auditing English: individual activity
  - Auditing English: group activity



**3** | This resource is part of a set of professional development resources for Higher Education English (including English Literature, English Language & Creative Writing) called 'The Pool'. The resources were developed by the English Subject Centre in 2011 as part of a JISC/HEA Open Educational Resources (OER) Project. This work by the English Subject Centre is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales License.

- Designing and running innovative assessments: resource overview
  - Creative assessments in Literature: outcomes, criteria: individual activity
  - Creative assessments in Literature: outcomes, criteria: group activity
- Assessment SWOT analysis: resource overview
  - SWOT analysis: individual activity
  - SWOT analysis: group activity
- Mix and match: resource overview
  - Matching assessment to outcome: individual activity
  - Matching assessment to outcome: group activity
- Creative assessment: resource overview
  - Creative criticism
- Feedback and marking strategies: resource overview
  - Marking exercise: individual activity
  - Marking exercise: group activity
- Computer-aided assessment: resource overview
  - Writing multiple-choice questionnaires: individual activity
  - Writing multiple-choice questionnaires: group activity
- What is assessment for? : resource overview
  - Balancing the interest groups: individual activity
  - **Balancing the interest groups: group activity (\*you are here)**

