Assessment and Feedback Practices in UCL Chemistry: Can we work together to make them better?

Year on year the National Student Survey suggests that undergraduates are not satisfied with the level of feedback they receive. Is this because they don't understand what feedback is, or fail to make use of sessions provided or are we failing them by not providing enough time and thought into this important process. Do we plan our assessment strategies carefully enough to enable easy and clear feedback mechanisms? Voice your concerns-opinions at this open session and lets work together to enhance the UCL Chemistry experience

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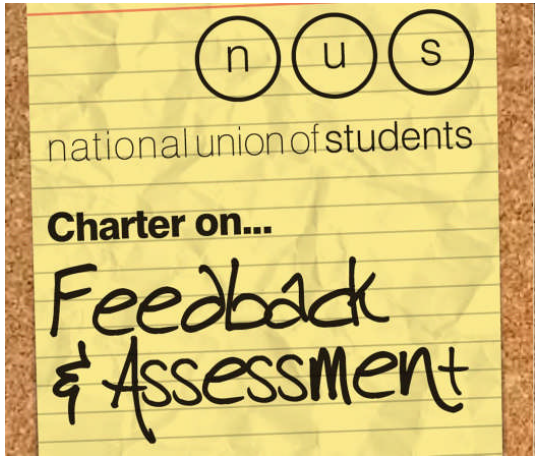
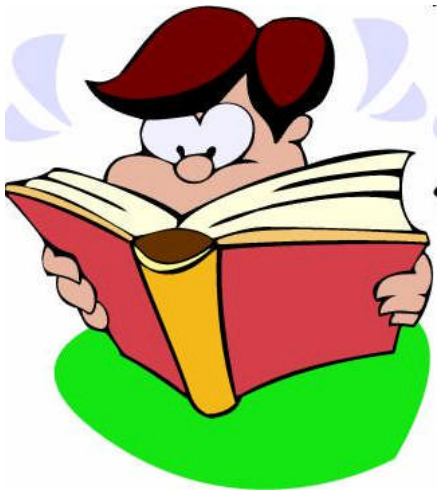
National Union of Students

Since the beginning of the National Student Survey (NSS) assessment and feedback has continually scored poorly in satisfaction amongst students. The recent NUS/HSBC research into assessment & feedback found the following:



- Only 25% of students receive verbal feedback in an individual meeting with a tutor. Of these 2 in 3 said that it would be the most useful way to receive feedback
- Only 60% of students agreed that their coursework feedback makes it clear how to improve their performance
- Students who receive verbal feedback are more likely to say it makes it clear how to improve their performance and motivate them to study
- 90% of students said they would like to receive feedback on their exams

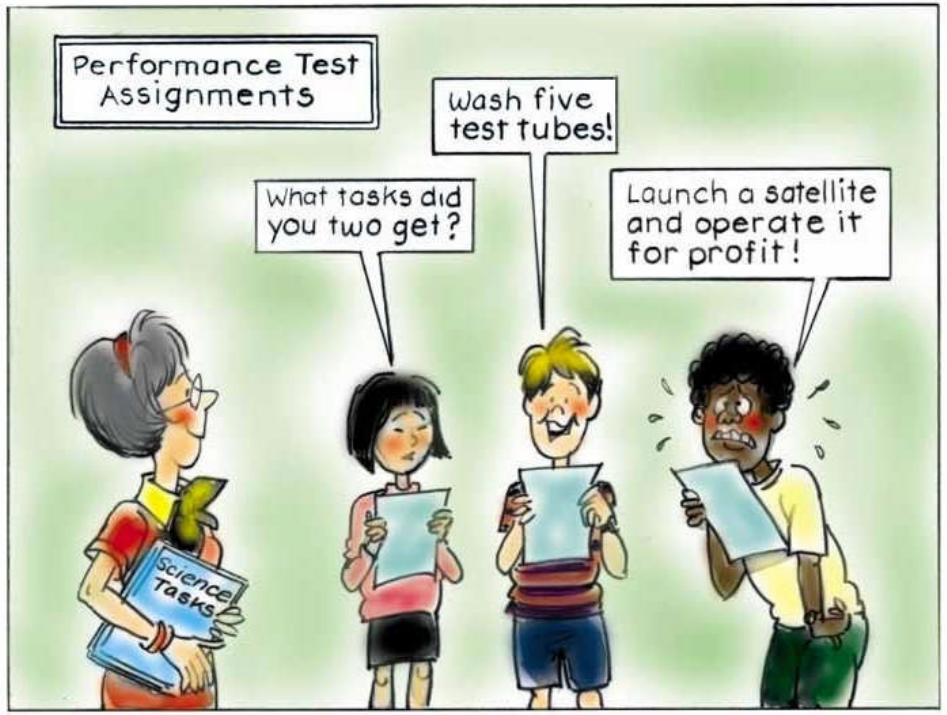


Ten Principles

1. Formative assessment and feedback should be used throughout the programme
2. Students should have access to face-to-face feedback for at least the first piece of assessment each academic year
3. Receiving feedback should not be exclusive to certain forms of assessment
4. Feedback should be timely
5. Students should be provided with a variety of assessment methods
6. There should be anonymous marking for all summative assessment
7. Students should be able to submit assessment electronically
8. Students should be supported to critique their own work
9. Programme induction should include information on assessment practices and understanding marking criteria
10. Students should be given a choice of format for feedback

Current Assessment Mechanisms used in UCL Chemistry Department

Written examinations
Laboratory write-ups
Written coursework
In-lecture tests
Poster presentations
Oral presentations
Oral examinations
On-line tests
Extended essays
Written reports



How do we choose the correct assessment method(s) – how do we assess that we have made the right choice(s)?

Current Feedback Practices

Written examinations – written comments

Laboratory write-ups – face to face marking – individual feedback sessions

Written coursework – variety of practices

In-lecture tests – model answers presented

Poster presentations – verbal feedback

Oral presentations – ?

Oral examinations – ?

On-line tests - ?

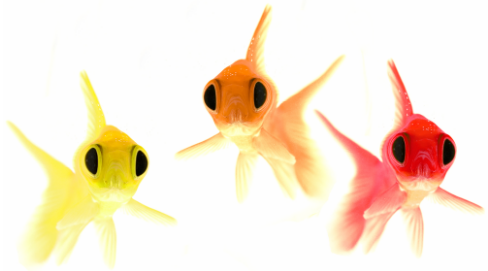
Extended essays – written comments

Written reports – written comments – debrief with staff member

Can we improve our feedback procedures to make expectations clearer to both staff and students?

Possible topics for discussion

- Do we give enough thought to the assessment-feedback process – should we have clear guidelines relating to both?
- How do we best assess lab work and give feedback in a timely fashion?
- Oral presentations and posters to assess student work - are we using the right criteria and how do we give feedback?
- Vivas – how do we give feedback on these?
- Do students want feedback or higher marks?
- Should students have an unequivocal right to feedback?



Do we simply need to formulate and refine current practices or take a "back to basics" approach

The dialogue feedback system – draft and redraft

Recommended pattern:

student →

student/peers/tutor →

student →

tutor →

student →

student

Self Assessment

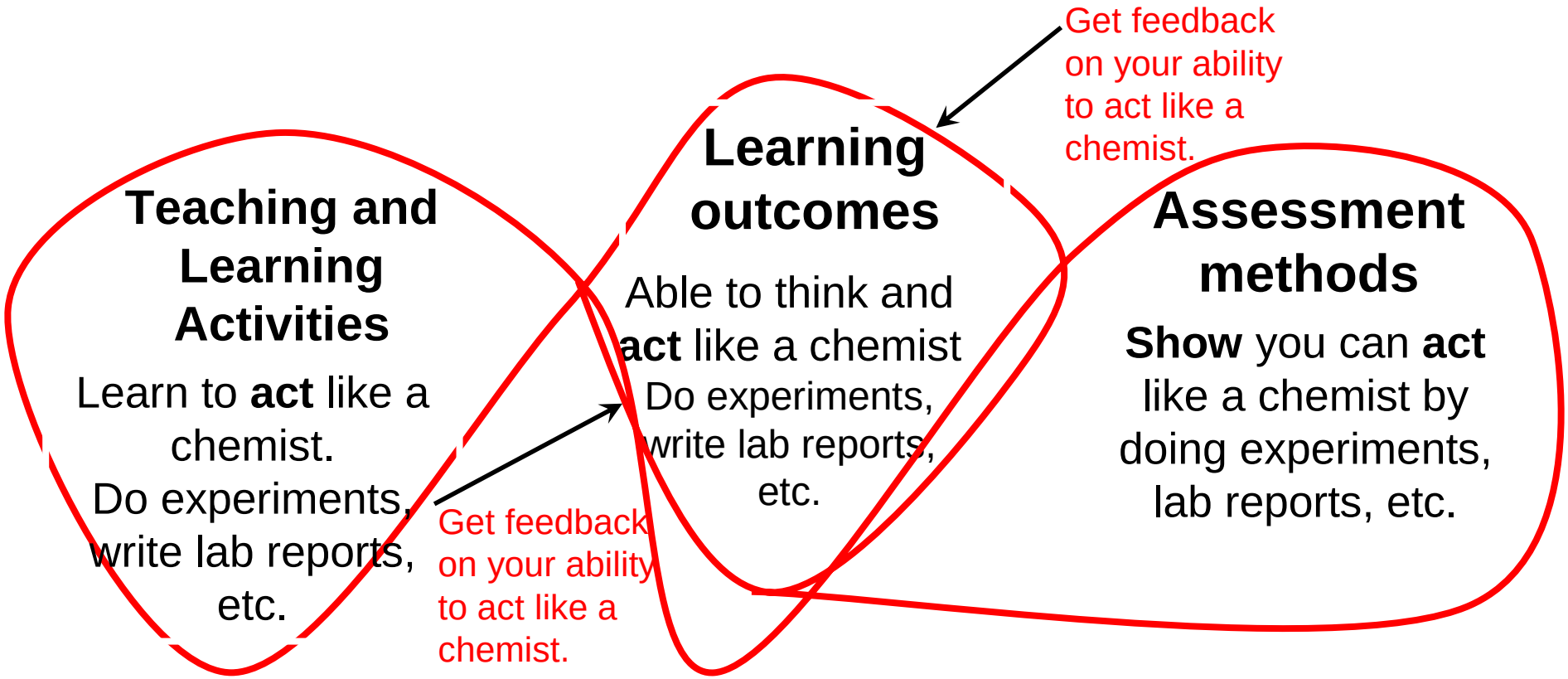
Peer Assessment

Tutor Assessment

Feedback action plan

Use exemplars and apply assessment criteria

Planning aligned assessment methods



Learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment are tightly linked