

Breakout session on “Inclusive Assessment”

Thursday 9th July 2020

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Notes from Inclusive Assessment breakout discussion 9th July 2020

Adjustments to assessment in the pandemic:

Example of issues caused by 24-hour exams, with students told that they should not need to spend more than 2 hours with that time on the paper, but some spent considerably longer than this and became anxious and exhausted, as a result of tackling several exams in similar fashion.

Example of issues arising with exam papers designed for conventional exam setting being used for at-home open-book exam: not surprisingly, when the answer can be copied from a course book, that's what students do. This was probably a poor question in the first place.

Assessment context:

Discussion of difficulties caused when students don't understand the context, or when the actual question gets buried in too many words.

But does adding context add to authenticity? Contrasting view that authenticity is about giving a task that is akin to something you'd do in real life: not likely to be achieved just by adding context.

Do exams have a value? They're often used because of anxiety over plagiarism and because they are relatively easy to mark. Mixed views, but we were agreed that it is important to use a range of assessment tasks.

Should multiple-choice questions be avoided because they may disadvantage some student groups? Probably not, because they have some advantages (e.g. catalytic assessment in which very simple assessment drives learning) but it is worth remembering that just because an assessment type is “objective” that doesn't mean it is fair. Again it is important to use a range of assessment types.