



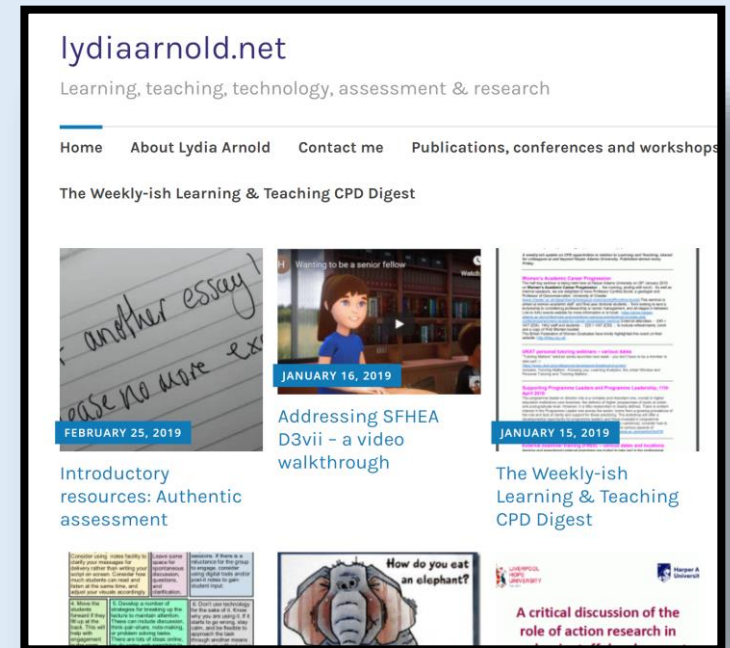
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Unlocking the Power of Authentic Assessment

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About me

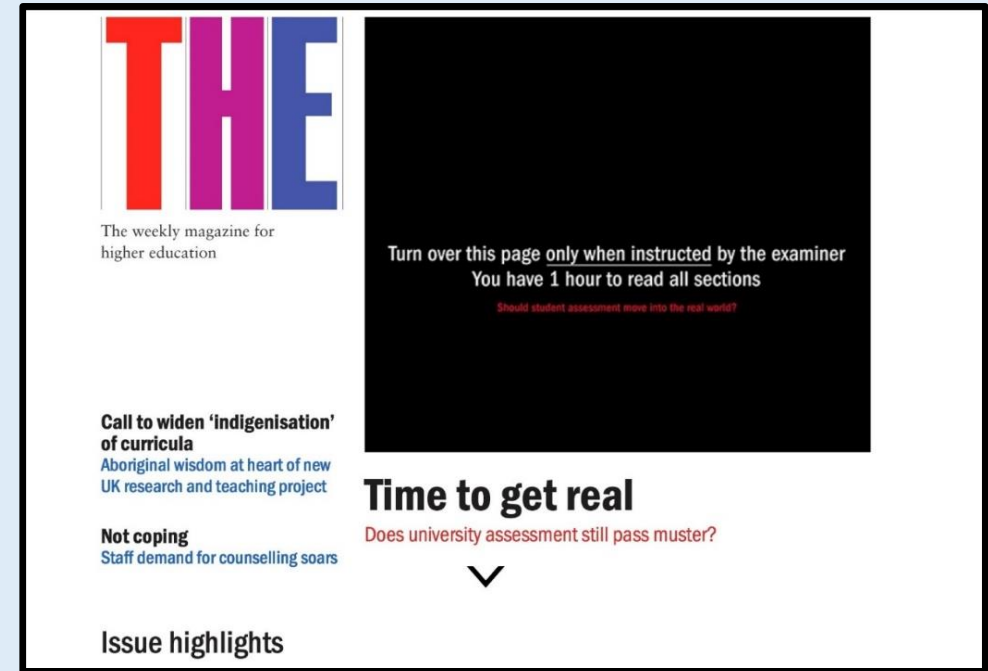
- Educational Developer, Head of eLearning & Principal Lecturer
- Curriculum, eLearning, PgC, internal assessment and feedback consultant, staff development, action research supervisor, undergraduate supervisor, [inclusive practice](#)
- Realist (*or so I hope!*)



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This session

- Explore the **concept** of authentic assessment
- Identify some of the **benefits and challenges**
- **Share examples** of authentic assessment
- Consider the **implications** for teaching
- Consider the **factors which enable** authentic assessment



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What is authentic learning?

Authentic – real and true

1. Authentic to employability (real, like **work**)
2. Authentic to discipline (growing in **discipline**)
3. Authentic to **self** (*as I wish to become*)



Relevant to me, us and them

Different perspectives on ‘authentic’

- Authentic assessment **mirrors practice in the profession or discipline** so that students see how knowledge is created within their field” (Jessop, 2018).
- Like **communities of practice** (Stein et al. 2004)
- Emphasis on **problem solving, meta-learning, self regulation** (not *training*).
- How well does an activity **match the student’s goals and aspirations**? How well does the student connect and see meaning in the knowledge? (Stein et al., 2004)
- “Authentic learning experiences are those that are **personally relevant** from the learner’s perspective and situated within appropriate **social contexts**” (Stein, Isaacs and Andrews, 2004, p239).
- “Worthwhile, relevant and offering students **some level of control** over their work” (Brown, 2018)

What authentic learning is not.

‘Students and teachers are seen to focus on completing assessment tasks and attaining good marks to the detriment of real engagement with learning’ (McDowell, Sambell and Davison on Ecclestone, 2009)

“achievement without understanding” (Torrance 2007)

$$\frac{d}{dx} \int_a^x f(t) dt = f(x)$$
$$\int_a^b f(x) dx = F(b) - F(a)$$

“Students are strategic as never before” (Gibbs, 2019)

What else would you have done in your research project Adam?

~~F~~ MAKING GOOD

Assessment for Learning

(see McDowell, Sambell and Davison, 2009)

- “If you want to change student learning then change the methods of assessment” (Brown, Bull and Pendlebury, 1997, p.7)
- Assessment creates a backwash on learning and teaching (Watkins, Dahlin and Ekholm, 2015)
- It models the learning process
- You just can’t do authentic assessment without learning!



Eight features

1. Challenge
2. Performance
3. Transfer of
4. Metacognitive
5. Recognition
6. Fitting of en
7. Discussion
8. Collaborative

Open ended tasks / No single answer

Involves others (stakeholders)

Provides opportunities for feedback

Involves judgment and application

Allows for changes to behaviour

Has a clear purpose

Involves performance or product

Collaborative (sometimes)

(Summarised from Ashford-Rowe, Herrington and Brown, 2014)

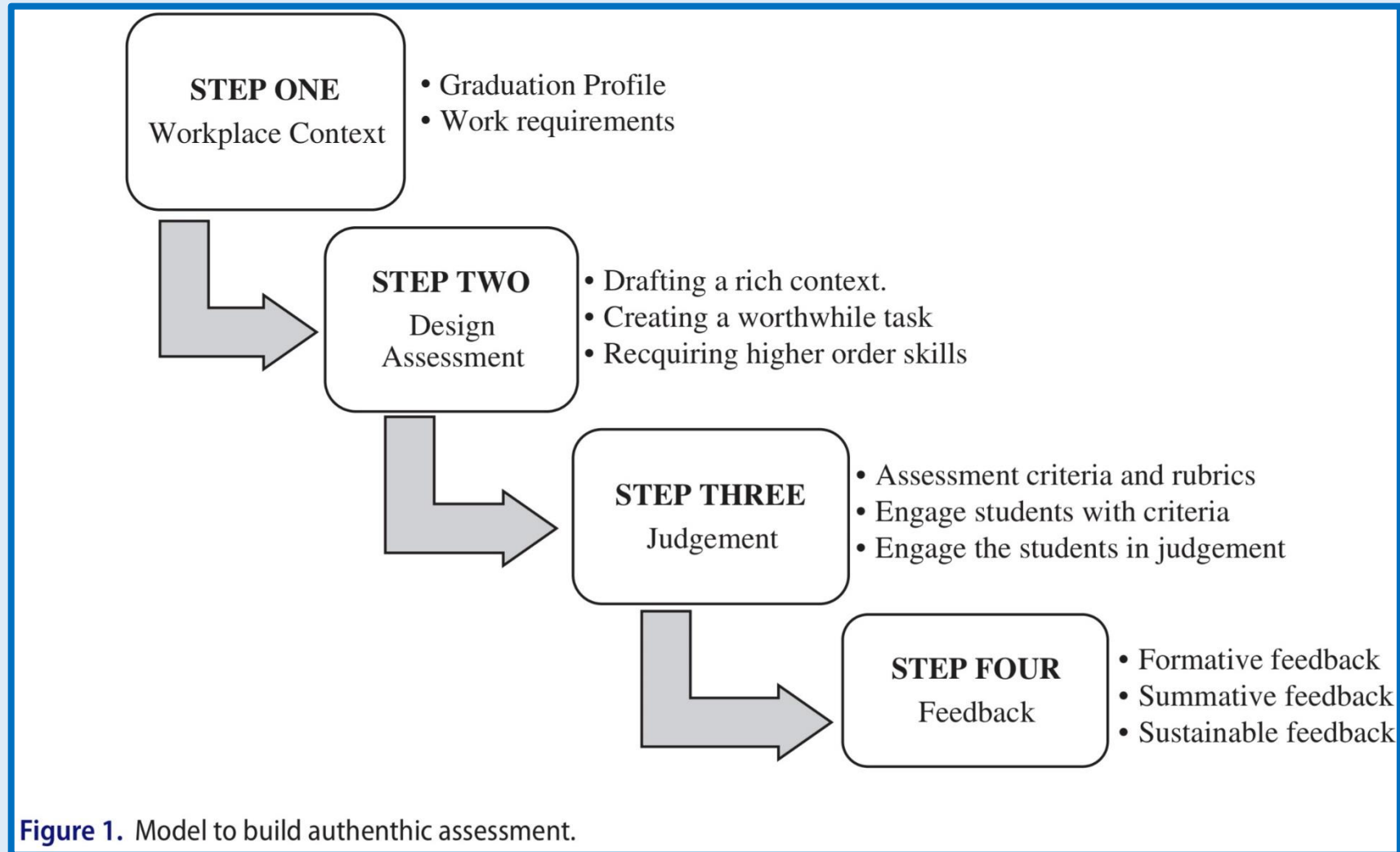
Authentic assessment at it's core

**Authentic assessment is characterised
by realism, cognitive challenge and
evaluative judgment with relevance to
self, discipline community or
professional community’.**



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A strategy for design



(Wiggins and McTighe,2006)



Professional attributes	Digital competence	Use technologies to enable or enhance the performance of specific tasks.	Use technologies to enable or enhance the performance of specific tasks and demonstrate a commitment to developing appropriate digital competencies.	Select and use appropriate technologies to enable or enhance the performance of specific tasks, and appreciate the role information and communication technologies play in the discipline or relevant professions.	Select, use and evaluate technologies to enable or enhance the performance of specific tasks, and appreciate the evolution of technology in their discipline.	Select, develop, use, and critically evaluate technologies to enable or enhance the performance of a range of tasks, and demonstrate the use of technologies at the forefront of their discipline or relevant profession.
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(Find out more about this exercise at Arnold, 2016)

Example: Project management and video creation



[Mr Drip Video](#)

[Shelter wildlife together](#)



[Emma Tappin](#)

- Student projects
- Pair with local organisations
- Create and manage video products
- Team function (team problems)
- The pedagogy of facilitation
- Marked by process and product and meta-reflection
- Exhibition and prizes



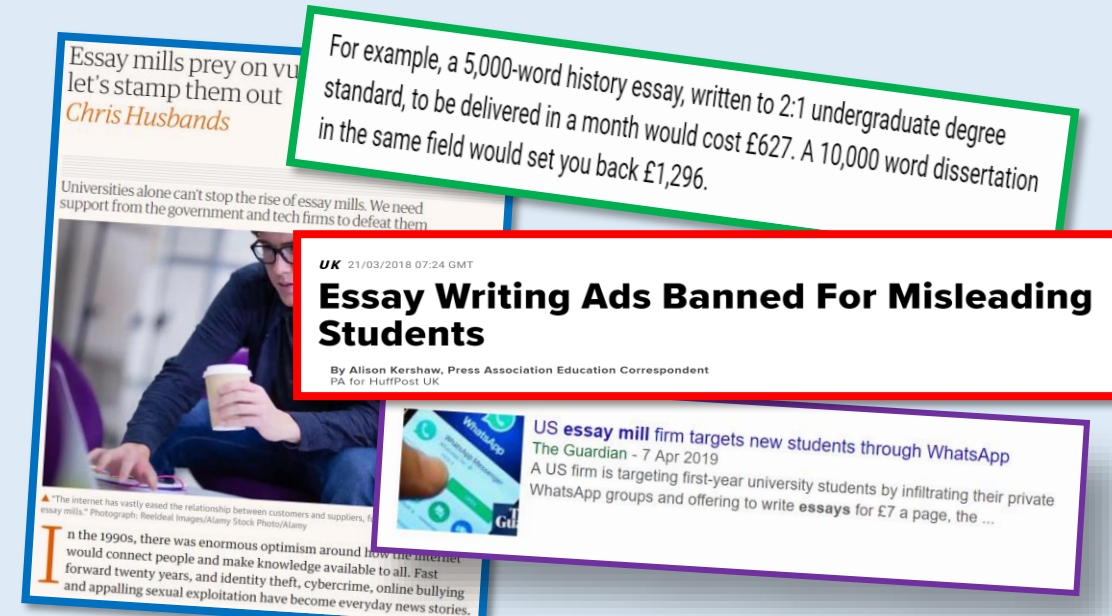
Benefits and challenges

- Assessment FOR learning
- Motivating for students
- Higher order cognitive skills
- Develops a wide range of skills
- Interesting and rewarding for staff
- Helps fight cheating*
- Can feed in to real world challenges when paired with industry
- Risk of **utilitarian narrative** (remember self)
- Time in preparation
- Not all subjects align with a career area (more impetus?)
- Support needs to be aligned
- Facilities can be limiting



Perceived impact on cheating

- Cheating/Plagiarism (see Bretag et al, 2019)
- Authentic assessment perceived to assist
- Little evidence – beyond ‘common sense’
- Students still perceive cheating and possible and likely
- Less likely when: Viva, in-class tasks, personalised and unique, and reflections.
- More about support, satisfaction and pressure.



50,000 cases in 3 years: 17,000 per year = 0.7% (Mostorous & Kenber in King, 2019)

“Hardly the student cheating crisis that the media headline purported’ (King, 2019)

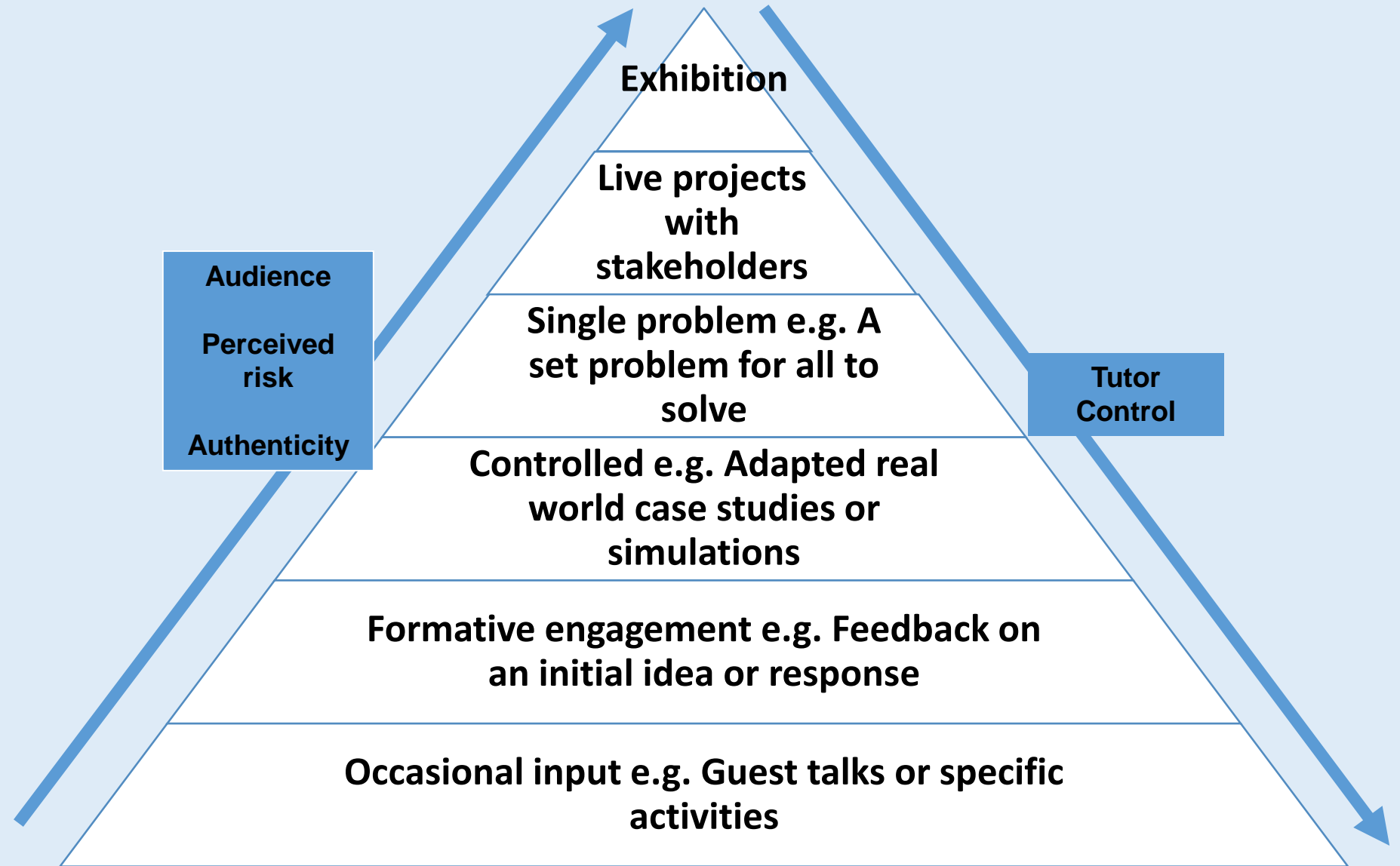
Undermining authenticity

- Misalignment
- Relevance to self and future self
- Risk of misalignment (Ajjawi et al, 2019) – university practices and tasks that don't capture learning
- Risk of 'glossing' – trivialising (Cumming and Maxwell, 1999)
- Ornamental information (Villarroel et al. 2019)



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A spectrum of authentic activity (*My Work in Progress*)



Example: Volunteering and networking

“As a course team we’d recognised that our students engage widely outside their **studies...We wanted a way to recognise this had a value professionally** so created a ‘**networking and volunteering**’ requirement in ...**taken by all the** Business students in their first year. It offered a fun way for them to demonstrate their wider interests as the criteria are broad and subject to negotiation. .. **Students also give a very short talk on one of their activities with very limited notes to their tutorial group.** These are varied and engaging and offer good practice for interviews” (Jane Headley, Principal Lecturer).



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Example: Volunteering and networking

I learnt a lot more than I otherwise would have done, for example **I could use aspects from the Amazon talk in my logistics and distribution module to further my learning of the course.**



Menu

An external speaker event;

Acting as a student ambassador for two events;

Attending a business visit;

Volunteer work in a Harper farm session;

Acting as a committee member for a club or society (at Harper or elsewhere);

Representing an organisation in an event;

Working on a show stand or similar;

Attending an international student event.

Example: Designing for feedback

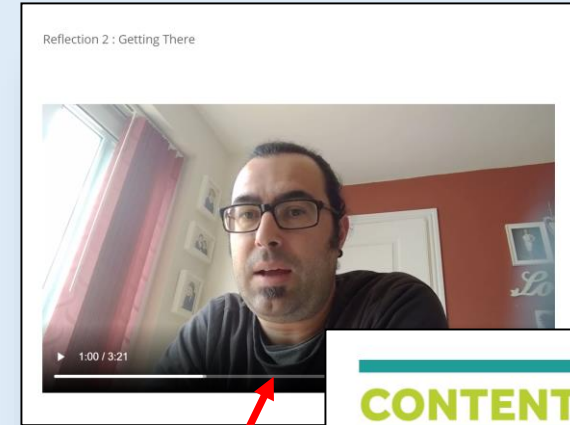
- [The Food Spectacular](#) (0.34)
- Audience
- Industry
- Feedback
- Real
- Enthusiasm



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Example: The action research project

- Action research as an authentic project model (Maxwell, 2012) for the professions
- Negotiated focus (stakeholders); facilitative pedagogy
- Action oriented (practice development)
- Knowledge about and knowledge of 'me'
- Authentic: real world, self, cognitive demand, evaluative
- Librarians, farmers, teachers, administrators, marketing, lecturers.
- An example of an authentic, real word output through a [playful learning guide](#)
- Led to a dissemination requirement for all Master's students
- See [Arnold & Norton \(2018\)](#)



Product
and
process



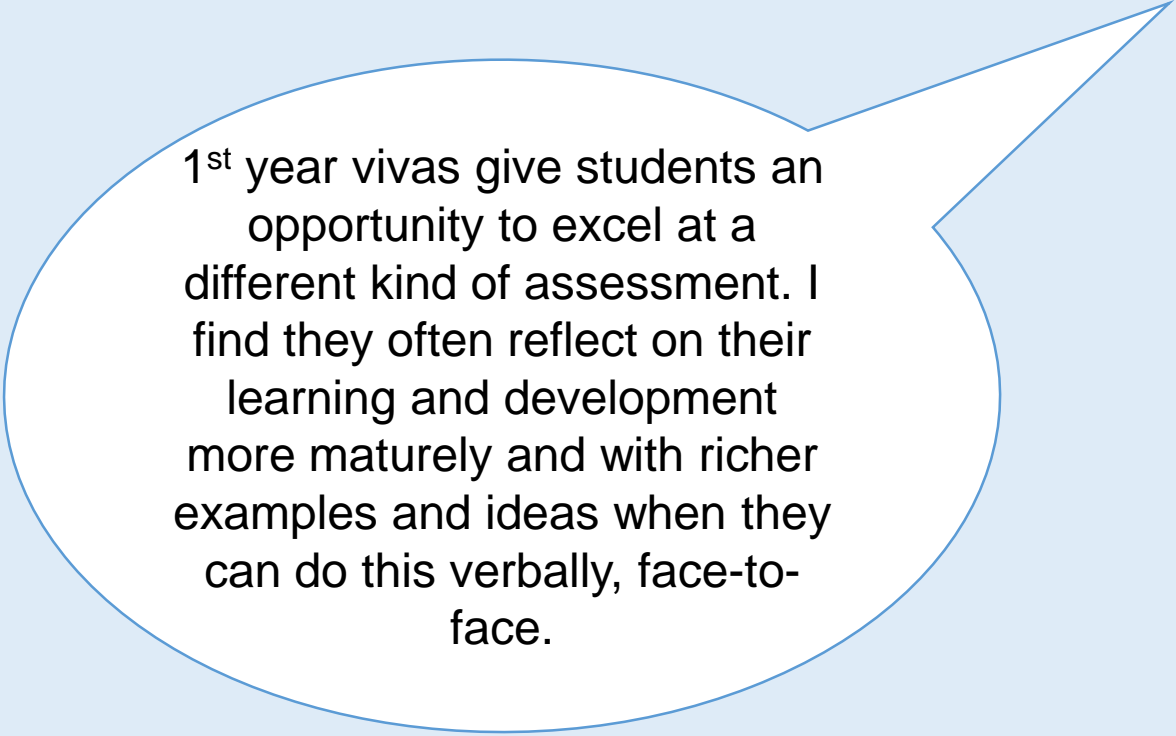
Example: The media patchwork portfolio

- Based on Richard Winter's Patchwork Text, extended by Arnold, Thompson and Williams (2009)
- Artefacts- built up
- Collated by a narrative (stitching)
- Mixed media (prescribed or selected)
- Peer feedback
- Balance professional and academic



And what about exams?

- Can exams be authentic too?
- Viva
- Triple jump
- Open book (reduces anxiety)
- Simulation
- Multiple choices*
- Clinical examinations



1st year vivas give students an opportunity to excel at a different kind of assessment. I find they often reflect on their learning and development more maturely and with richer examples and ideas when they can do this verbally, face-to-face.

Enablers of authentic assessment

Course design

- Backwards engineering (Outcomes driven)
- Programmatic thinking
- Preparatory support

Pedagogic outlook

- Alignment of approach
- Technology
- Feedback

Development of evaluative judgment

- Criteria
- Exemplars
- Dialogue

Institutional alignment

- Enabling regulations and processes
- Supportive colleagues
- Appetite for enhancement (CoPs, external engagement)
- Staff base may include dual professionals



Programmatic thinking for pedagogy

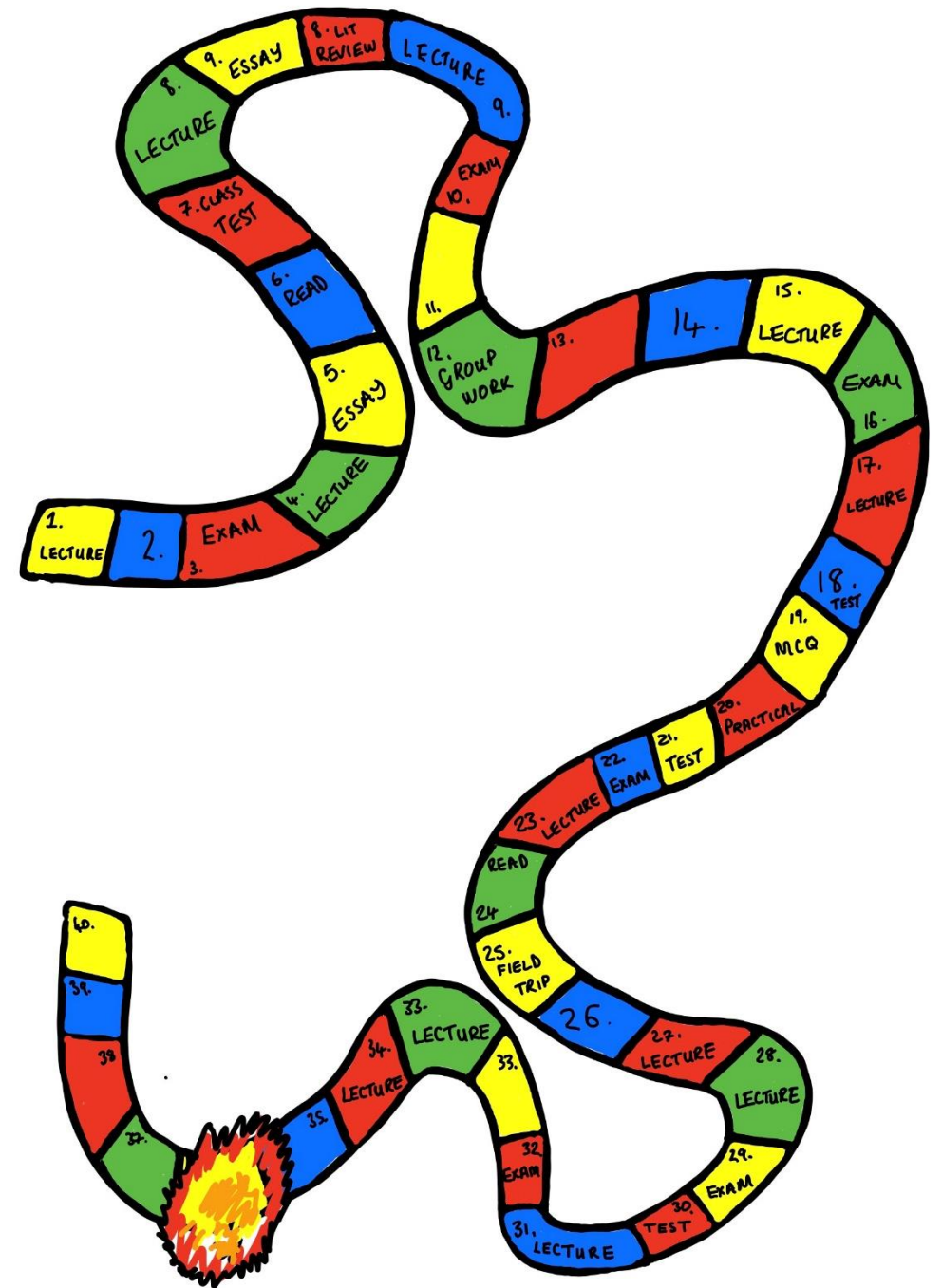
Programmatic design 'involves team decisions about assessment'

It builds 'more integration between assessment tasks, so that students see the connections between knowledge and learning on one module and another' (Jessop 2019, p43).

No surprises please!



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Preparative support

The biggest issue is overcoming students natural preference of the more passive lecture/tutorial model, where they are not challenged about their learning as frequently. I now have data which clearly illustrates that engagement equals success, so will be incorporating this regularly next year. ***Business Lecturer, after introducing Team Based Learning.***



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Aligned pedagogy

- Facilitative, advisory
- Risk taking, risk managing
- Trusting, encouraging independence
- Anticipatory, shift in effort
- Dialogic
- Feedback enabling
- Exposed (I don't know)
- Context aware – engagement beyond the academy
- Sensitive, but fostering robustness



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The pedagogy of letting go

I'm not sure how this is going to go, how students will react and whether they will learn **all of the content** that we usually cover

I always **used to worry that students wouldn't do a good job**, that they won't get what is required. But they always do better than I could imagine! You need a lot of trust and you need know when to step back. It's like **students are in a fog. You have to be confident it will lift.**

I enjoyed the teaching style but others thought I was selling the students short, **they thought it was high risk** – but we need to give it time

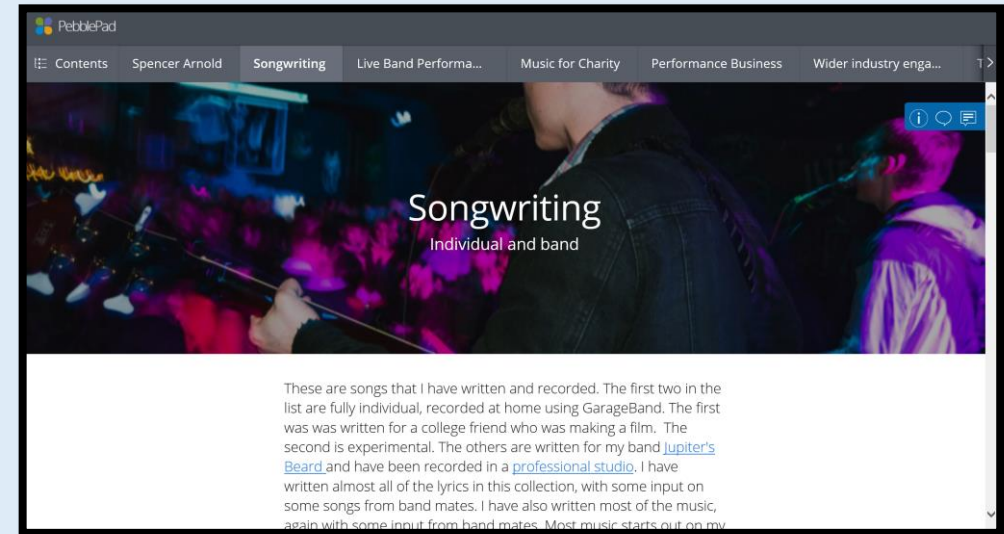


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It really is so much **more enjoyable** having a module where it is possible to engage directly with groups and individuals, as **you get to know many more students as people rather than passive faces in a lecture theatre**, with the benefit that those who were struggling were identified and supported at a much earlier stage.

Digital Skills (presentation media and communication tools)

- **Model** use of appropriate technology
- Negotiate? What **skills** do students want to develop?
- What does the **audience need**?
- Be clear what **support** you can offer.
- **Be honest** if something may not work.
- Take care not to be **wowed** by the media.
- Decide how it will be **marked** (audience appropriate).
- Deal with the **thorny issue** of word count.



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Strategies to develop evaluative judgment

Maximise



Minimise



“It is not until students apply criteria and standards to judge their own work ... that their own work will improve (Gibbs, 2019, p. 27).

‘Providing feedback rendered the students more active and involved in their learning, enhanced their responsibility and commitment to the task’ (Ion, Sánchez Martí and Morell, 2019)

Clear criteria



The Rubric Menu

Specific, generic or hybrid?

Student created, staff created or co-created?

Shared with students or between staff?

How many quality levels?

Who will be using the rubric and how?

With or without exemplars?

Analytical or holistic judgment?

Digital or paper?

Task focussed or skill focussed?

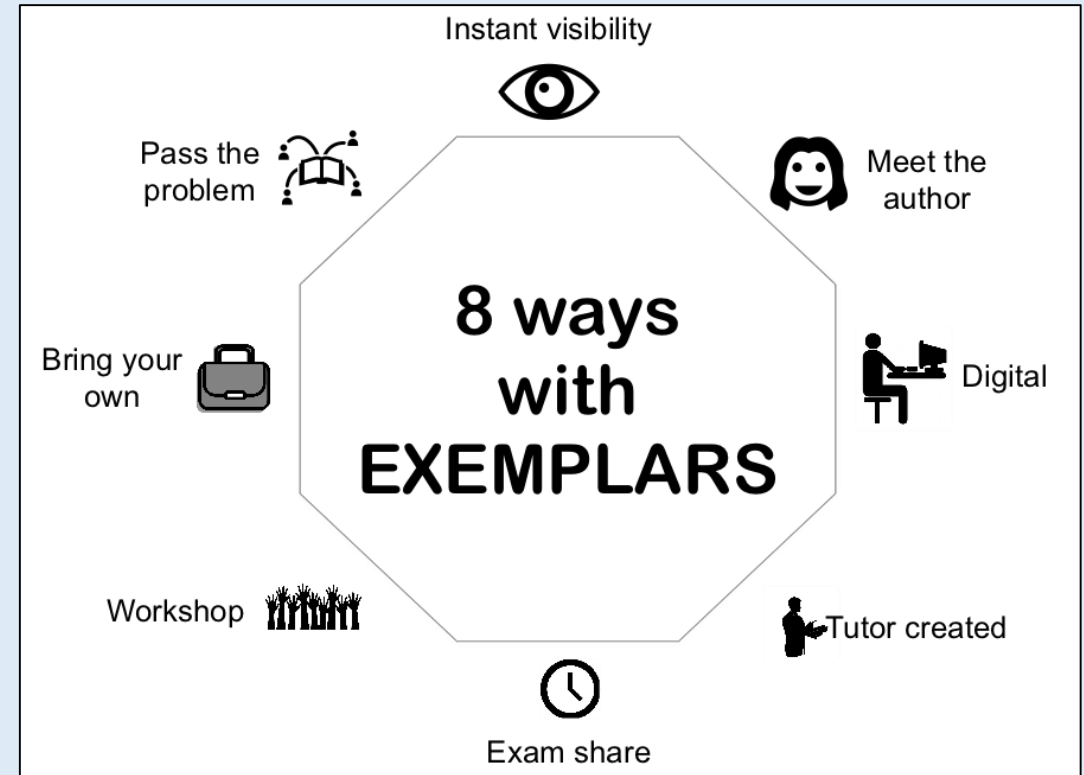
How prescriptive? (headroom)

Presented as a grid, a table or something else?

(drawing on and adding to Dawson, 2017)

Consider exemplars

- Clarify assessment requirements
- Surface tacit assumptions about assessment
- Increase students' self-direction.
- Prompt activities that generate feedback.
- Bring about greater confidence in standards.
- Pro-actively provide feedback
- Improve dialogue around assessment



(Arnold and Headley, 2019 Forthcoming)

Encourage and inspire

Helps students get started

Helps students understand assessment

Visualise different levels

Reduces anxiety

Reduces housekeeping

Enablers of authentic assessment

Course design

Pedagogic
outlook

Development of
evaluative
judgment

Institutional alignment

- Enabling regulations and processes
- Supportive colleagues
- Appetite for enhancement (CoPs, external engagement)
- Dual professionals



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Going forward

- Benefits outweigh limitations
- Join it up! – think as a programme to make the biggest impact
- Institutional conditions matter – make each other brave
- **Be brave, be bold! Grow confidence.**
- Beyond utility – the outside world changes, fast!
- Lots of research outstanding – cheating, planning and exemplars.



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