External-facing assessments: Balancing the needs of students, external partner organisations and the public

Nicole Brown, Pilar Garcia Souto, Nick Grindle, Thomas Kador and Vincent Tong
'Enabling students to handle their own disturbance calls for a pedagogical transaction in which the student has the pedagogical space to develop her own voice'

(Barnett 2000, 160).
The PhD: ‘a paranoid genre’? (Germano 2015, 14)
‘Enabling students to handle their own disturbance calls for a pedagogical transaction in which the student has the pedagogical space to develop her own voice’

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‘Enabling students to handle their own disturbance calls for a pedagogical transaction in which the student has the pedagogical space to develop her own voice’

(Barnett 2000, 160).

Could a concept of ‘audience’ help mark out the space in which students can find their voice?
UCL Connected Curriculum

A whole-institutional approach to embedding research-based education and assessment into programmes of study

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Students learn to produce outputs

• Are some assessments of student learning outward facing, directed at an identified audience, giving students a voice beyond the class?

• Can students demonstrate an ability to use a range of digital media effectively, as well as different modes of writing, visual and oral communication, as they express their insights and arguments to others, both within and beyond the institution?
CC Collab for external-facing assessments

- Fostering inter-faculty, inter-departmental collaborations
- Embedding student-staff partnerships
- Outputs for advancing non-discipline-specific approaches to external-facing assessments
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- Connecting CC Collabs
CC Collab for external-facing assessments

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- Connecting CC Collabs with you all
Exploring issues around external-facing assessments

1. Institutional capacity

2. Working together with entrepreneurship, alumni, student unions, and public engagement

3. Diversity and inclusivity
1. How can the university develop **institutional capacity** to enable the development of external-facing assessments as a core element of its educational programme?
Peer assessing individual contributions in a group project

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How does it work?

GROUP MARK

INDIVIDUAL MARKS

IPAC (tutor moderated)

peers

tutor
Benefits of this external-facing assessment

- Students train to give **constructive criticism** and **meaningful but professional feedback**
- Interact with a **different level of expertise**
- Communicate efficiently in a range of **roles**
- **Engages students** to contribute to the group work → minimizes ‘free riders’
- **Self-reflecting** and **bench-marking** against other peers
- Students get how their work/contribution is **perceived** by the team
- Well received and rated by students

  
  https://www.srhe.ac.uk/conference2017/abstracts/0281.pdf
IPAC Consortium

- UCL–wide consortium looking into IPAC
- Staff, students and technologists involved
- Multi-dimensional study

Key elements of the methodology and options

Institution

Literature review

Commercial systems

In-house IPAC system
Roundtable question

• How can the university develop institutional capacity to enable the development of external-facing assessments as a core element of its educational programme?
Identify suitable educational practices within the institution

Identify current / engaging practitioners and/or case studies

Disseminate within institution

Create support network for new practitioners

Institutional support and recognition to enablers and new practitioners
2. How might educational professionals work together with colleagues in entrepreneurship, alumni, student unions, and public engagement roles to support the university’s development of effective external-facing assessments as a core feature of its educational programme?
Directing assessments at public / non-academic audiences

- Students express difficulty in engaging with notional audiences
- Solution: work with ‘real ones’
- Sounds simple but opens wider range of conceptual, practical and ethical issues
The modules and the project

- Vertebrate Life & evolution
- Third year Biological Sciences
- Mystery specimen Individual student research project
- Public presentation of the findings
- Object Lessons
- Second year interdisciplinary (Arts and Sciences)
- Object-based learning
- Individual piece of writing and curating a (group) exhibition, both aimed at a public audience
A partnership approach

Let's make staff & students think of each other in different ways.

Seeing lecturers as your peers.

Seeing eye to eye.

Student

Researcher

Or are their roles reversed?

Scribing Magic
Final reflection

• Thinking about potential audiences for students learning…

• … who is the learning that students undertake (and the outputs they produce) relevant for; especially beyond the university?

• …what is the value of (HE) learning and how does it relate to the ‘real world’?
3. What are the challenges and opportunities that external facing assessments present for universities and external audiences with regard to diversity and inclusivity, and equality of opportunity?
Developing portfolios to become meaningful, external-facing assessments

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• Portfolios – role and relevance in professional training programmes

• Context of the STEP programme

• Context of the inter-departmental project
• Process, outcomes and results

• Role of stakeholders (academic staff, students, businesses)

• Ownership of assessments and assessment outcomes

• Where do we go from here?
Exploring issues around external-facing assessments

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CC Collab in 2018

Interdisciplinarity themes

Connecting students from different years and alumni

Inter-faculty and inter-departmental collaborations

Student-staff partnerships
Engaging students in research with real-world outputs: Making an impact outside of the lecture theatre

Dallas Roulston with Prof Rachel McGrindle

Editorial commentary by Joe Thorogood

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All IPAC Consortium members, participants of focus groups and respondents to questionnaires