

script

**Some reflections on experiences with innovative
assessment**

Fifth EIP TN Workshop, Prague 2011

Dr Smita Kheria, Ms Jane Cornwell
School of Law, University of Edinburgh



Arts & Humanities
Research Council

Case studies

- **Context**
 - On-campus / online LLM programmes
 - Contribution of 10-20% to overall mark/grade
 - Remainder of mark/grade based on end-of-semester summative essay
- **Case studies**
 - Draft consultation response
 - Poster exercise
 - Wiki-based case study



script

Why use innovative assessment?

“Students will have the opportunity to have their learning assessed in a range of ways and to receive feedback that will help them to continually improve”

University of Edinburgh, College of Humanities and Social Science, Learning and Teaching Strategy 2010

“To test a wide range of intended learning outcomes, diversity of assessment practice between and within different subjects is to be expected and welcomed, requiring and enabling students to demonstrate their capabilities and achievements within each module or programme” QAA code of practice, 2006



script

Why use innovative assessment?

- **Promoting 'real-world' skills**

Advocacy

Effective communication

Problem-solving

Advising

Team-working

Research

- **Complementing learning & traditional assessment**

- Preparation for longer pieces of work
- Appreciation of policy context / stakeholder interests
- Challenges for some students in traditional assessment
- Acting on feedback / reflective learning
- Engagement / enjoyment



script

What were the key challenges for staff?

- ***Validity?* Justifying the choice of method of assessment**
 - How will the assessment method benefit the students?
- ***Reliability?* Setting the assignment instructions**
 - Freedom of approach / clarity of expectation
- ***Fairness?* Setting and applying the marking criteria**
 - Flexibility / consistency
 - Marking for non-traditional skills
 - Dependency on group participation



script

How did the students perform?

- **Positives**

- Strong response to elements of choice
- Enthusiasm for novel formats/group work
- Diversity and inclusivity
- Responsiveness to interim feedback

- **Challenges**

- Promoting understanding that innovative assessments require same level of work & commitment
- Fostering appreciation that, while output is important, so is the learning from the work undertaken



script

Concluding thoughts

- **Key lessons learned**
 - Important complement to ways of learning and teaching
 - Need to ensure clarity of expectation
 - Weighing time & cost
 - Importance of feedback
- **The more “innovative” the assignment is, the more challenges it poses for all involved**



script

References

- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, Integrative assessment: Blending assignments and assessments for high-quality learning (2007) www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (2006) www.qaa.ac.uk
- McDowell L, The impact of innovative assessment on student learning, Journal of Innovations in Education and Training International 32(3):302-313 (1995)
- Gibbs G, How assessments frames student learning in Bryan C & Clegg, K Innovative assessment in higher education, Routledge (2006)
- UK Centre for Legal Education www.ukcle.ac.uk/resources/assessment-and-feedback/



script

script

Dr Smita Kheria

smita.kheria@ed.ac.uk

Ms Jane Cornwell

jane.cornwell@ed.ac.uk

SCRIPT/AHRC Research Centre

<http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/ahrc/>

SCRIPTed

A Journal of Law, Technology & Society

<http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/ahrc/script-ed/>



Arts & Humanities
Research Council