Assessment Case Study

Increasing student engagement: Enhancing students' assessment literacy on a Sino-UK programme
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Course: Intermediate Study Skills **Module:** Intermediate Study Skills for the Coventry University/Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (GDUFS) 2+2 programme **Student Level**: Undergraduate

AN EXAMPLE OF ASSESSMENT THAT INVOLVES…

- Integrative assessment
- Group work assessment
- Ongoing assessment and feedback
- Peer assessment and feedback
- Oral/video feedback

AIMS

This study skills module is delivered for a cohort of around 60 students at one of Coventry University's partner institutions in China. The lecturer's aim was to develop assessment literacy for students. Particular areas of focus were making the **purpose** of formative assessment clearer to students; and enabling more opportunities for **meaningful feedback** in response to these types of assessment.

ACTIONS

The module had been designed to include a mix of **low-, medium- and high- stakes assessment,** i.e. tasks where feedback is provided with the aim of helping students to develop, as well as tasks where marks are awarded (see Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick 2006). However, students did not always see the value of these lower stakes tasks. The lecturer created an **assessment map** (see next page) to help them visualise the various aspects of assessment within the module.

In order to develop their assessment literacy, students were asked to review a draft of their own written work, plus that of a peer, to help them to develop their judgement skills. They had to review the work against a checklist of **key assessment criteria,** taken from the rubric and aligned to module learning outcomes . Students were also asked to comment on each others' group presentations. In this way, they were able to develop **self- and peer-assessment skills**, therefore becoming active participants in the formative feedback process.

Finally, in response to the formative tasks, the lecturer decided to give students **audio- and video-feedback** as well as introducing quizzes using Socrative. This was intended to make the feedback easier to digest, as well as more interactive in nature.

IMPACT

The process was successful as students fully participated in feedback activities, and when they were set Academic Writing coursework, most could **state what the assessment criteria were** that fed forward from the previous semester's Study Skills module.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

- "Seeing the video again made me realise **what I need to improve.**"
- "Replaying the video **helped me understand** what Fred meant when he said I wasn't fluent".
- Overall **course satisfaction** rose from 97% to 98.2%.
- **Feedback and assessment satisfaction** increased from 97% to 99.2%.
- Fred received a **Model International Teacher** award from the Partner University in September 2020, based based on student satisfaction and Dean's views for teaching practices throughout the year.

SUSTAINABLE, SCALABLE OR TRANSFERABLE?

The **approach can be extended** to modules that contain either a written coursework or a final presentation. In last semester's Academic Writing module, self-and peer assessment were introduced for one coursework draft, and as a means of reviewing the final paper post submission. Average coursework **grades increased** from 63.4% to 75.7%. The lecturer is in the process of creating audio/video feedback that will feed forward to a future student project.
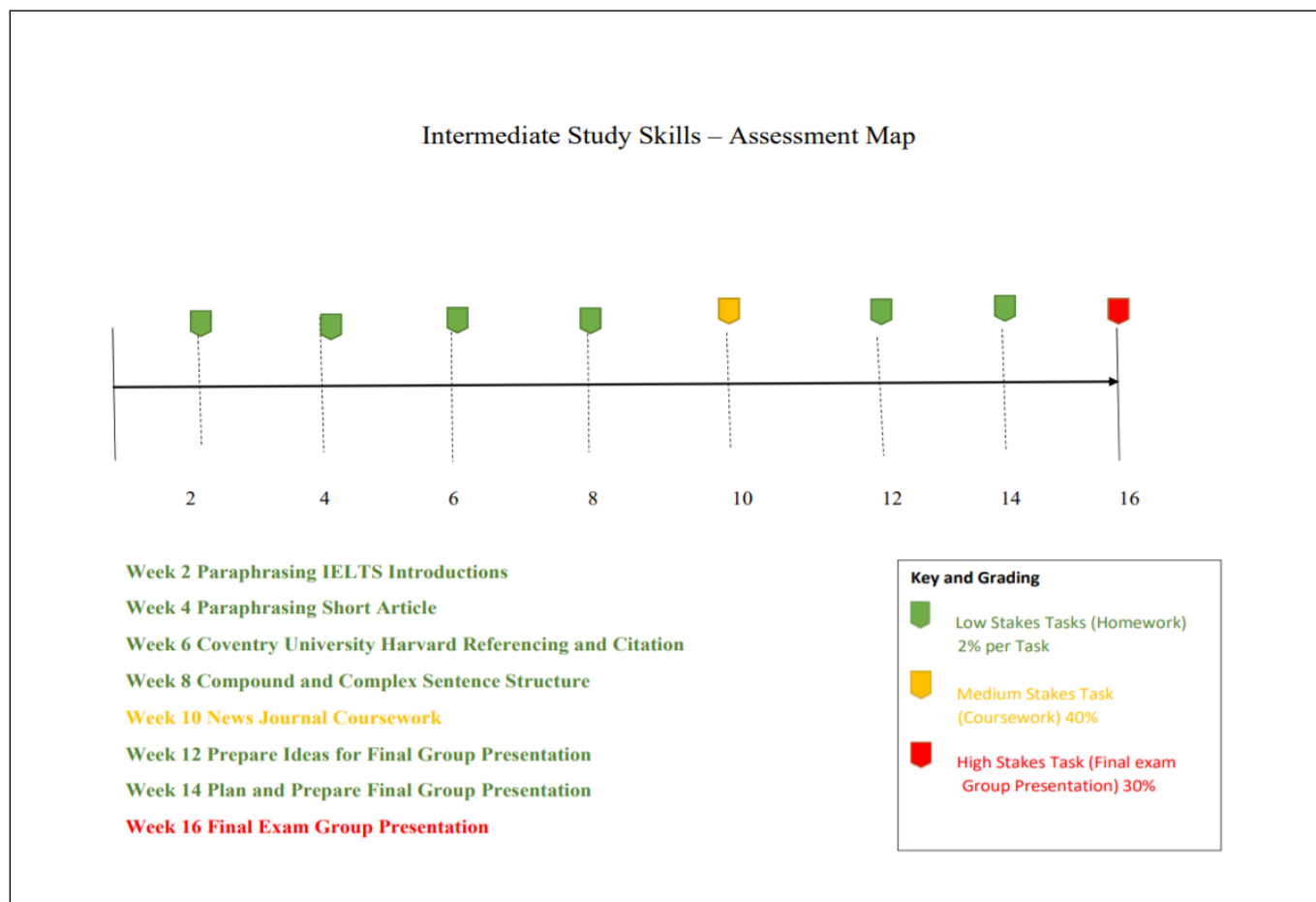
MESSAGE TO PEERS

- Approach assessment and feedback as a **package** (e.g. explain assessment map, give rubrics, use video/audio feedback).
- It is worth **spending time** on these activities; in this module, a two-hour class was allocated for peer self-feedback for coursework.
- Provide **a checklist** of key points to be identified in self- and peer- review exercises to guide the students.
- Keep **videos** short: 5-7 minutes is recommended. Stick to one video per topic. Making videos can take a while initially (it might take about an hour for a video of this length). Practice makes perfect!

REFERENCE: D.J. Nicol & D. Macfarlane-Dick (2006) Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: a model and seven principles of good feedback practice, *Studies in Higher Education,* 31:2, 199-218, DOI: 10.1080/03075070600572090

ASSESSMENT MAP

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Intermediate Study Skills – Assessment Map

Week 2 Paraphrasing IELTS Introductions

Week 4 Paraphrasing Short Article

Week 6 Coventry University Harvard Referencing and Citation

Week 8 Compound and Complex Sentence Structure

Week 10 News Journal Coursework

Week 12 Prepare Ideas for Final Group Presentation

Week 14 Plan and Prepare Final Group Presentation

Week 16 Final Exam Group Presentation

Key and Grading

Low Stakes Tasks (Homework) 2% per Task

Medium Stakes Task (Coursework) 40%

High Stakes Task (Final exam Group Presentation) 30%

The final high-stake exam (group presentation) is based on creating a company and product profile. It is part of a **vertical integrative assessment,** i.e. an assessment pertaining to learning outcomes specified for more than one level/year of the programme. In the current case study, the business idea feeds forward into the second year Trade Fair project, where these "companies" are developed further.

For more on **integrative assessment,** see: https://www.bradford.ac.uk/pass/case-studies/