



Engaging e-learners in developing e-assessment practice

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Introduction

Glyndwr University has an established history of delivering degree and postgraduate courses online and in September 2010 will launch an e-learning foundation degree in the Learning and Development of Babies and Young Children.

During 2009/10, level 4 modules from the FdA were piloted with a small group of mature, non-traditional students with a view to exploring their experiences of assessment to inform the induction stage for new students entering the course in September 2010.

This poster presents some of the key issues from a small part of this study namely stage 1 which examines the general information students need regarding assessment at the beginning of their course.

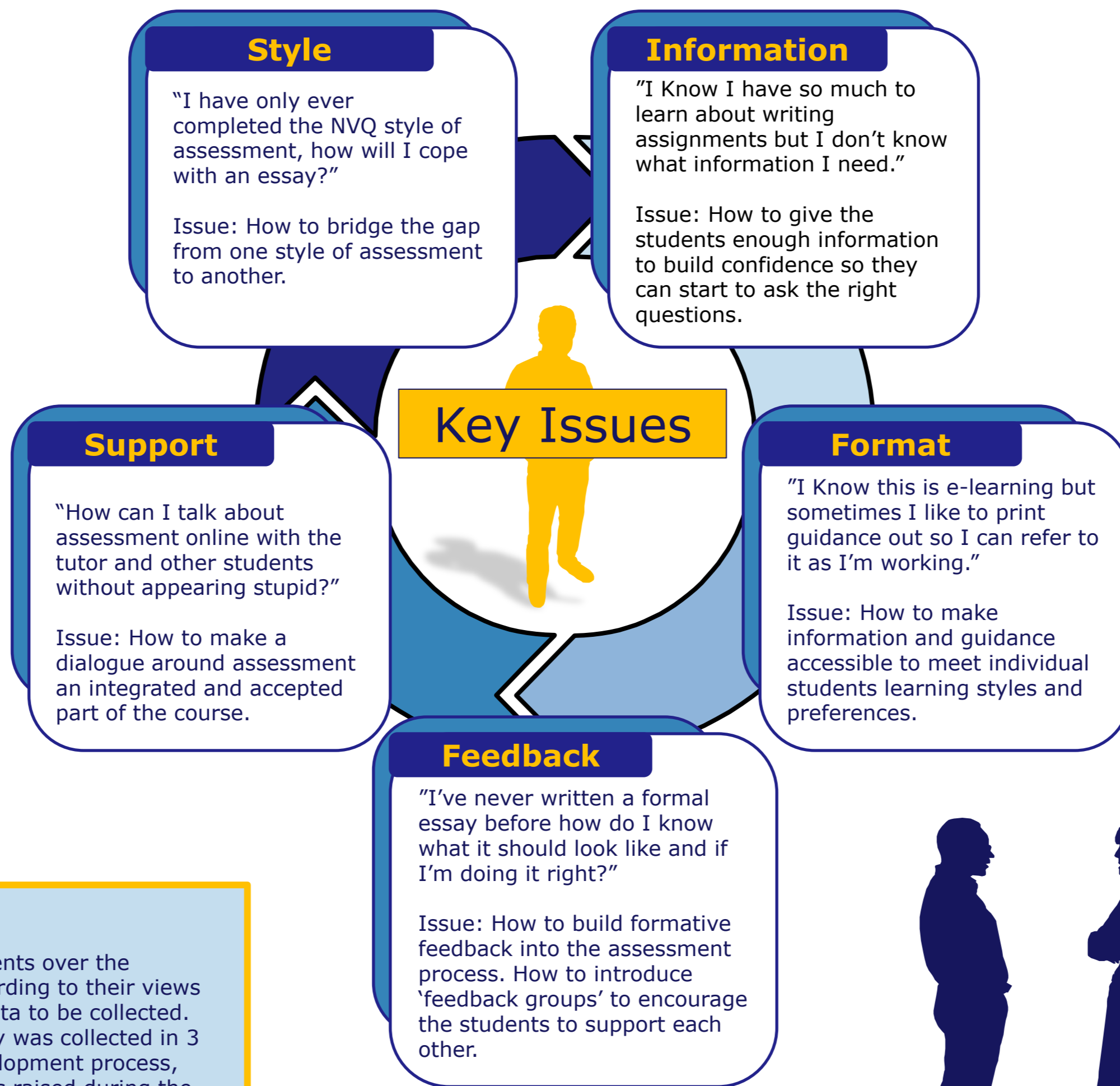
The study will then go on to explore students experiences of the following stages during 2010/11.

Stage 2: Individual assignment guidance and marking criteria

Stage 3: Formative feedback

Stage 4: Electronic submission of assignments

Stage 5: Summative feedback and % marks



Key Issues

A number of issues were raised during data collection regarding stage 1 of the assessment process.

Overall students commented that assessment was the one aspect they were most worried about at the beginning of their studies and that this was mostly due to a lack of information and not knowing what to expect. On the whole students reported that a 'negative' experience with the assessment process initially would affect their willingness to continue on the course.

When questioned most students reported a lack of confidence in their own ability to write assessments based on previous study, however they also made an assumption that the other students on the course would be better prepared and more able.

Moving Forward

Overall the issues raised pointed to the importance of establishing a 'dialogue around assessment' with students during the initial induction period of the course. As a result of these findings the following will be implemented:

- During induction students will be engaged in discussion around how their previous style of assessment differs to that on the FdA. With a view to offering specific guidance in key areas.
- Students will be put into 'feedback groups' during induction and with tutor help will be shown how to give feedback and to support each other.
- Initial guidance regarding assessment will be made available to students from the outset along with established forums to discuss issues and questions.
- Information will be made available in a variety of formats including audio.
- Ensure support for assessment is embedded into the course and ongoing.

Data Collection

Working closely with the pilot students over the course of a year, listening and recording to their views and comments enabled valuable data to be collected. The initial information for this study was collected in 3 ways: As part of the Personal Development process, short questionnaire based on issues raised during the year and telephone interviews.

It is intended that data collection will be ongoing with both old and new students for the duration of the study with a view to using the information to inform discussion and improve practice.

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"The chat forums are very useful to discuss any assessments and gain useful information."

"There needs to be a way for tasks and updates to be emailed through on a daily basis."

"We could start our research and exchange ideas together in groups at the start of each assignment."

"Maybe the 2nd years could relate how useful supporting each other can be, especially with assignments."