Appreciative Inquiry

Assessment and feedback

Lead-in statement:

Mention assessment and feedback and we think about piles of marking, hours spent giving feedback which is then either not collected or acted upon and time taken away from research. For students the assessment is a hurdle to get over and then they are only interested in the mark. Equally, these days whilst almost all student work is word processed it is usually marked with a pen.

Sometimes though, something we mark surprises us by its quality or a student has clearly taken on board the feedback they’ve been given or we have found another technology with which to mark more effectively/efficiently and/or give feedback to students.

Let’s focus on these positives ….Think of a time when you experienced assessment and/or feedback and it was a positive experience. It may not have started that way, but the outcome was positive for you. Discovering what worked well in the past reminds us that we can bring about positive assessment and feedback experiences for ourselves and our students. Building on these capacities envision how you can position yourself to embrace assessment and feedback in a more positive way in the future. Identifying what works, imagine what YOU can do in your modules or the teaching team can undertake to improve assessment and feedback for all.

Discover high points in the assessment and feedback story

Paired interviews – 30 minutes (15 minutes per interview)

1. Thinking back over your previous experiences of assessment and feedback – the lows and highs – but focussing on the highs when it all worked out in the end:
   - Tell your story
   - Describe what happened
   - What was the assessment and or feedback involved?
   - What did the students do?
   - What did you do? –
2. How has technology supported your assessment and feedback?
   - What for you has been the most exciting/innovative use of technology in assessment and feedback?

Three wishes to help create positive assessment and feedback

Interview pairs combine to form a group of four (45 minutes)

1. In your group, interviewers introduce their interview partners and share the high points of their partners’ stories of assessment and feedback and technology:
As you listen respectfully, focus and make notes on the common themes that come up in the stories (20 minutes)

2. From the stories you’ve heard about creating positive assessment and feedback experiences, make a list on the flip chart paper of all the themes in the stories - look for the high points, ideas that ‘grabbed’ you

3. From the list agree on the three to five most important themes – highlight these (15 minutes)

4. Building on your high points, if you could grant three wishes to make the next assessment and feedback experience positive, what would those wishes be for:
   - You and your colleagues
   - Students
   - The University (10 minutes)

Dream: envisioning the best possible pathway to positive assessment and feedback experience

(55 minutes)

1. You are now preparing for another assessment and feedback initiative. Building on your positive stories and wishes, what’s the best possible change you could envision?
   - What are the things you value and want to keep or continue doing?
   - What new things would you create to ensure the change will succeed? – new policies, procedures, structures, tools, technology, communication strategies?
   - What will help you to navigate the transition from old to new? (30 minutes)
   - Present your group’s dream as creatively as you wish – draw a picture, make a collage sing a song, write a poem ....(25 minutes)

Next steps

(20 minutes)

1. In the next session we will look at what the programme team and/or individual module conveners will do or would like to do. ...

2. What can your programme team do to strengthen the assessment and feedback positive experience – in individual modules, across the stage or across the programme?
   - What would you do if you were Module convener/DE/HoS?
   - How would you communicate and inform staff and students of the change?