Learning for a complex world
A working space where SCEPTRE explores and understands its role - learning for a complex world

David Boud - Assessment and Work-Based Learning keynote

David Boud has identified some key challenges that are fundamental to our thinking about the professional training year and enquiry-based learning. Perhaps the real question is how can we help learners deal with problems we have not yet met ourselves? This question takes us beyond the empty rhetoric of lifelong learning and, if we dare, moves us towards considering assessment. For example, if we were daring to think about assessment 'for a complex world', what sort of assessment tasks could be used to:

a) assess knowledge for summative purposes, as warranty for employers and QA, etc.? Arguably, tradition provides the answer to that, though exams and assignments could be more relevant and engaging.

b) provide formative feedback for learning? We are coming to grips with the idea of feedback for learning, but need to note the research about the need for speed and relevance to the next task - the workplace is ideal for this just-in-time feedback and learning.

c) encourage learning for the future - what Boud calls sustainable learning? Enquiry-based learning fits this niche, but do we have the tools to assess EBL in timely and reliable ways?

In a briefing paper on 'Changing pedagogy', Boud and Hawke say:

If we want to pursue the goal of equipping lifelong learners ... we must focus on assessment practices, not just those that involve formal assessment activities, but all those elements of a program that require learners to form judgements about their own learning. This takes us far beyond the normal assessment agenda.

Boud and Hawke Changing Pedagogy: Vocational Learning and Assessment

OVAL Research Working Paper 03-17 4

Report from Health Sciences Subject Centre event for CETLs focusing on assessment in work-based learning. Leeds University, July 6th, 2005.

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2 of 2

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