

Reforming assessment to aid retention and success

Professor Mike Bramhall

University Head of Teaching, Learning & Assessment

| Drivers for change

- Student experience and the quality of learning
- To maintain academic standards
- Over assessment? Efficiency savings?
- The NSS: 'Assessment & Feedback'
- University Regulations/ keeping in line with the sector

Seven propositions for assessment reform in HE *D. Boud and Associates (2010)*

1. Assessment is used to **engage students** in learning that is productive.
2. **Feedback** is used to actively improve student learning.
3. Students and teachers become **responsible partners** in learning and assessment.
4. Students **are inducted into the assessment practices** and cultures of higher education.
5. **Assessment for learning** is placed at the centre of **subject and program design**.
6. Assessment for learning is a focus for **staff and institutional development**.
7. Assessment provides inclusive and trustworthy representation of **student achievement**.

"...when addressed thoughtfully they may contribute to reduced costs through a better focusing of effort on those features of the curriculum and teaching that have most direct impact on learning..."

Retention and Student Success Framework

Launched in 2010

Key core requirements (related to assessment) were established:

- Early formative assessment and feedback by week 6
- Use of 'in-module retrieval' for all first year modules

“Assessment for learning”

and

“Utilising feedback to feed forward”

In-module retrieval – Definition:

"Students achieving below 40% in an assessment task at the first attempt are given an opportunity of re-working that assessment task.

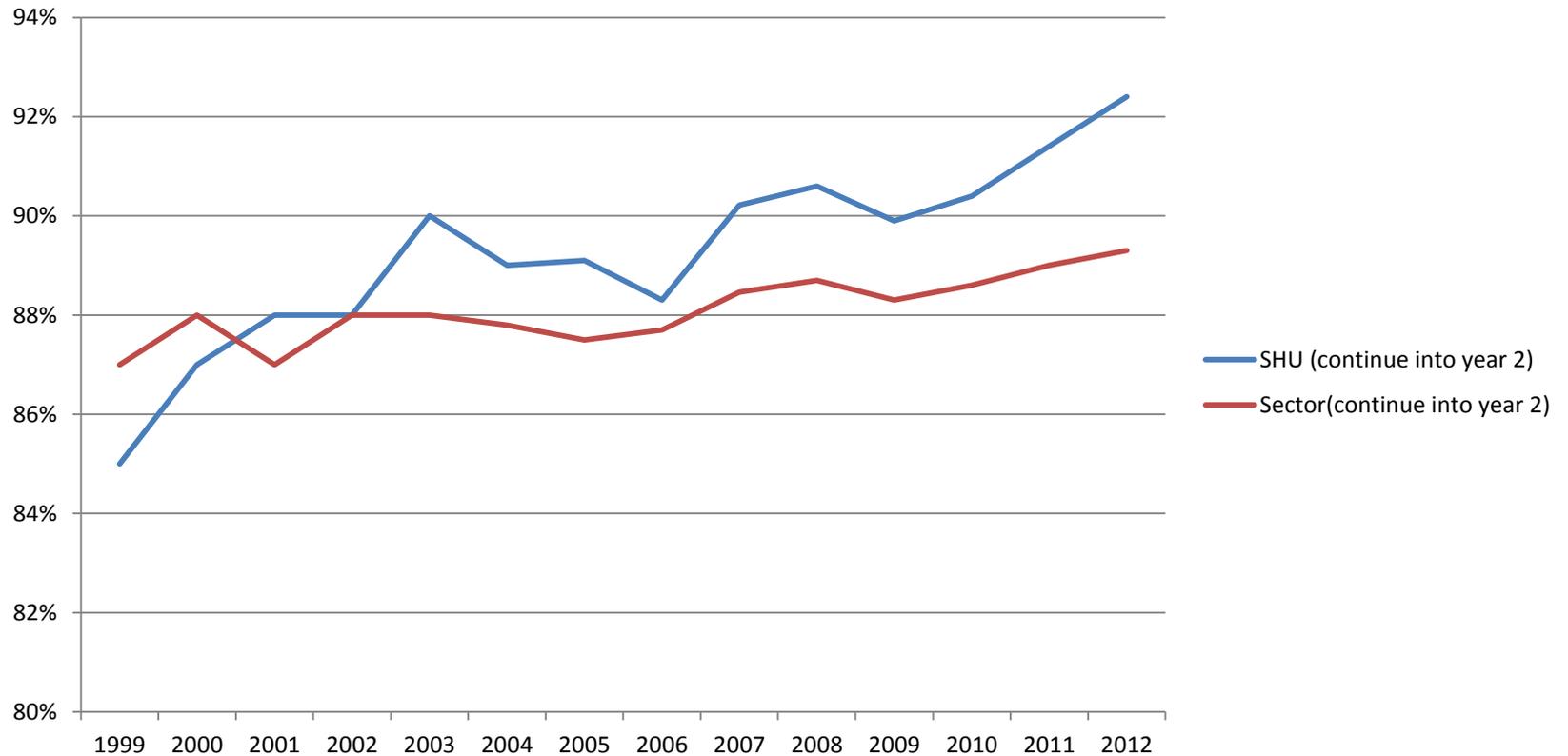
This re-work would normally be within a short time after the initial attempt following feedback from tutors, and the mark for the re-worked assessment task will receive a maximum mark of 40%."

‘In-module retrieval’- impacts and benefits

- More students were successful
(~ 8% improvement in module pass rates)
- Greater student engagement
- Better alignment with QAA Code
 - focussed use of feedback to facilitate improvement
- Assessment not divorced from learning
- Delivery builds on a firmer foundation
- Capping ensures fairness
- Savings as reassessment is based on reworking original assignments

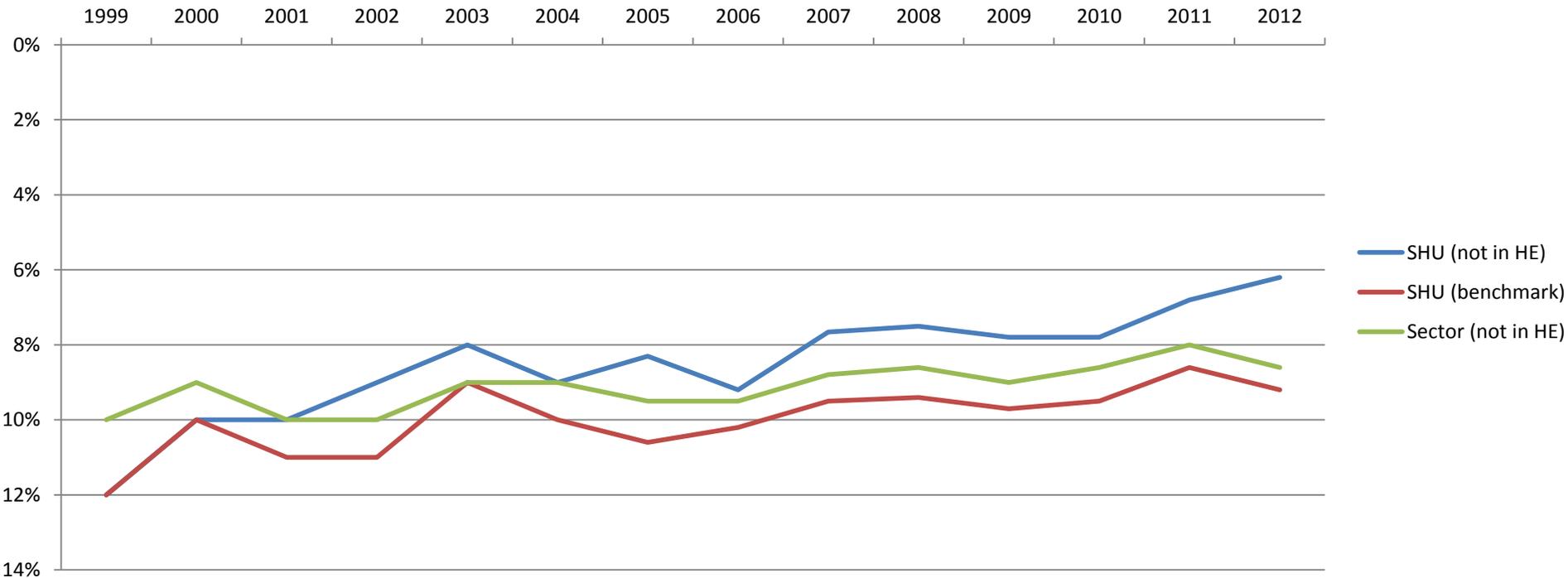
Continuation from year 1 to year 2

SHU Full Time Undergraduates



Students not continuing in HE

SHU Full Time Undergraduates



University Assessment Framework

The purpose of the new SHU assessment framework (2012) is to ensure that assessment policy and practice:

- is clear, rational and easily understood by students and staff
- is learner focused and promotes student engagement and successful learning
- delivers an equitable and inclusive assessment regime for all students
- ensures broad consistency in the student experience
- minimises the assessment burden on students caused by over-assessment and assessment bunching

Change 1:

Number of assessment tasks and volume of assessment

Limit the number of assessment tasks and the volume of assessment by setting:

- a maximum of two assessment tasks per 20 credits
- a maximum of twelve assessments per level
- a maximum of three assessment tasks for a module, regardless of module size

Change 2 :

Avoid bunching over the level through consistent use of assessment scheduler

Change 3:

Issue an Assessment Statement for the level to students at the start of the teaching year (Sept)

Addresses

Volume of assessment and clarity to students

Change 4:

Set University wide feedback protocols including turnaround periods for marking and feedback to students

- the norm for the return of student work will be three working weeks
- feedback for examinations will be provided
- students will be provided with guidance on feedback

Change 5 :

Set university wide protocols around the setting and moderation of assessments and publication to students of assessment information

Addresses

the setting, marking and moderation of assessment and feedback to students

Change 6 :

Make changes to the current assessment regulations for 2012/13 and 13/14

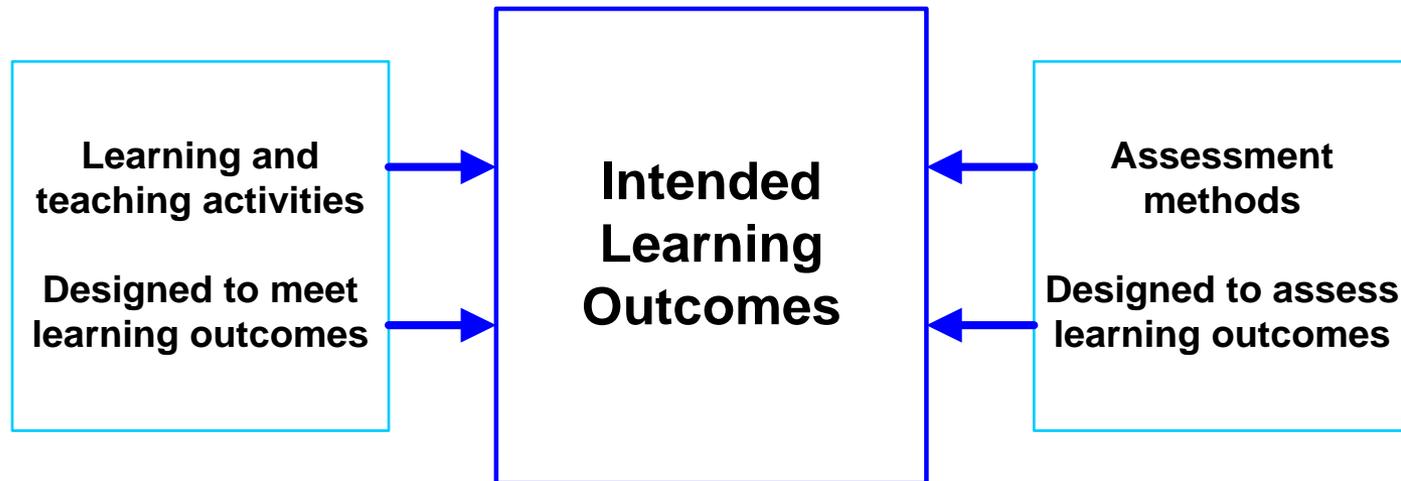
- 'task' for 'task' referral and deferral
- Implement 'valid attempt'
- 'best mark stands' for referral and deferral
- Introduce compensation and profile for progression across all levels.
- introduce a coherent suite of extenuation related policies

Addresses

assessment regulations and associated policies

| Assessment aligned within the curriculum and how
| it is delivered

| **Constructive alignment**



Weekly Assessed Tasks (WATS) - an assessment programme developed by Mark Russell*:

An approach to assessment that provides students with unique weekly tasks. The tasks are formally assessed and contribute towards the students' marks for the module.

To ensure the viability of the assessment programme, **bespoke computer tools** were developed to create, collect and mark the tasks, and to provide feedback to the students.

Result: significantly improved pass marks on a difficult module

“assessment shapes learning, so if you want to change learning then change the assessment method” (Brown, 2001, p. 6)

| Personal Development Planning - Progress Files

- PDP is part of an electronic Progress File, based in one module in each year of the courses in Mathematics, Business & Technology...
- In year 1, students make weekly entries for all modules
- In year 2, students make bi-weekly entries for all modules
- For final year students, it is part of the Project module.
- In all years, students receive academic credit for engaging with PDP
- Placement students are now using the system

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Posted on [January 20, 2013](#)



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[Sue Beckingham](#)

Introducing Social Media

So what is social media you might ask? Social Media is an umbrella term for web based and mobile technology that allows the user to produce and share information with others using text and/or media (video, audio, images), who in turn are then able to engage in a interactive dialogue about the content.

SocialMedia4Us

The aim of this blog is to help you explore the different ways you can interact online using social media

| Student Group Blogs

- Peer group learning
- Feel part of a team, contributing different skills
- Showcase work externally

Peer feedback:

- Follow and 'like' other group blogs
- Leave useful comments

Safety

We are all using the web more than ever before and saving information including digital photos and videos on our laptops, tablets and PCs; shopping online and sharing information via the social networks we have joined. Something we need to think about however is how safe is our data and what are we sharing? [Continue reading →](#)

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AIMS

To provide a new resource in an attractive 'toolkit' style to encourage active student engagement through the use of video reporting.



The primary targets are HE lecturers in STEM disciplines who share our desire for more active student participation in learning.

PROGRESS: The 'toolkit' has been evaluated and tested and will soon be ready for distribution amongst the STEM community.



WHAT THE STUDENTS DO

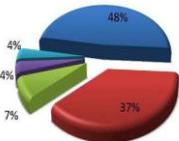
A video documentary replaces the usual written report



BENEFITS

Did you learn about Engineering Principles ?

- Yes, definitely (5)
- Yes, a little (4)
- Neutral (3)
- No, not much (2)
- Not at all (1)



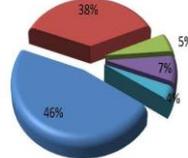
"you are physically involved in filming and looking for information, which meant that I was more engaged in the project"

"Being able to present your research in a different and interesting way"

"I found it quite fun and fulfilling"

Did you enjoy the task?

- Yes, definitely (5)
- Yes, a little (4)
- Neutral (3)
- No, not much (2)
- No (1)



ISSUES

Literature confirms

21st students have

- Intelligence
- Creativity
- Ability to respond to a challenge
- Rote learning ability
- IT familiarity and skills
- Desire to gather marks

Lecturers & employers say

21st Century students lack

- Engagement
- Key employability skills
- Drive and motivation
- Knowledge of the engineering profession
- Team dynamics
- Practical skill and awareness



Summary

Reforming assessment

- Reduction in assessment
- Early low stakes assessment
- Assessment for learning
- Aligning assessment with teaching methods
- Quicker (quality) Feedback to feed forward and develop student confidence
- Assessment Regulations aligned with Sector best practice and any Professional body issues
- All assessments well planned and clear for students across the 'course'