

Re-imagining assessment and authenticity in an unimaginable world

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Educational
Research



‘There is no use in trying,’ said Alice; ‘one can’t believe impossible things.’ ‘I dare say you haven’t had much practice,’ said the Queen. ‘When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.’



Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland* quoted in Law, John. *After Method : Mess in Social Science Research*,







The Challenge

Not that some worlds are unimaginable

But rather that we approach new worlds
with a lack of imagination

Colonial mindset

Inability to imagine a life
lived otherwise

Assumed supremacy

Even greater danger
– assumed nothingness

Terra nullius



Artificial Intelligence

Are we the colonizers or the
colonized?



Decolonial Age

We would hope to be neither
colonizer nor colonized

Maxine Greene – imagining
otherwise

Academic work – engaging with the
minds of others



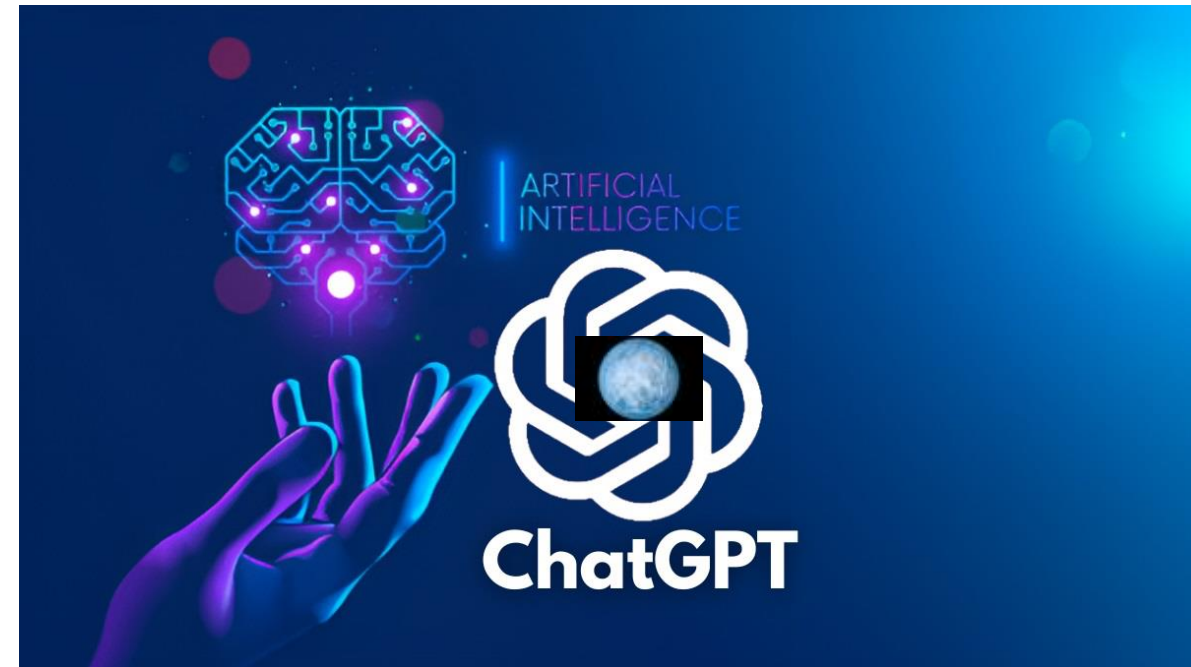
And back to assessment

Learn lessons of decolonialism – going back and imagining again

Engaging with the minds of others

Putting this at the forefront of assessment

NOT – more of the same but louder, more expensive or more hyped



Re-imagining assessment and authenticity in an unimaginable world



Technology

Academic Integrity

Achievement and Authenticity

Technology

We worry about students misusing technology

But it is where we turn for our solutions

Even when it is the “problem” as in Chat GPT





Conflation of technology and innovation

Inevitability argument

= no imagination

Are you sick of being forced to use solutions to problems you don't have?

Mr. Wood received the following Letter on Monday evening, the 1st of June, by the Post.

"HARRY WOOD,

IT having been represented to me that you are one of those damned miscreants who delight in destroying and bringing to poverty those poor unhappy and much injured men called stocking makers; now be it known unto you that I have this day issued orders for your being shot through the body with a Leadn Ball on or before the 20th Day of June, therefore it will be advisable of you to settle your worldly affairs and make the best use of your spare time, as nothing can or shall save you from the Death you so justly deserve.

I am

a friend to the Poor.

N. LUDD.

Writings OF THE Luddites

By Order of the Committee
Of the House of Commons,
T. ALLEN, Sec^y

A copy of the above has been sent to the Secretary of State, and also to every Member of Parliament, and a Reward of

TWO HUNDRED GUINEAS

is hereby offered to be paid by Ann Wood & Sons, to any individual who will give such evidence as shall be the means of convicting the person or persons guilty of sending the above threatening Letter. And if two or more persons were concerned in writing and sending the said letter, and one of them will inform his accomplices or accomplices, or give such correct information as shall lead ultimately to a conviction, he or they shall receive the said Reward of TWO HUNDRED GUINEAS.

Kevin Binfield

Who give or send any threatening Letter, shall receive a Reward of TWO HUNDRED GUINEAS to be paid by Ann Wood & Sons, and shall also be punished by the

turnitin



Light blue: 0% matching text



Dark blue: 1-24% matching text



Yellow: 25-49% matching text



Orange: 50-74% matching text



Red: 75-100% matching text



Academic Integrity

Students learn better in low stakes assessment environments

There is an assumption that high stakes assessment environments do more to ensure academic integrity

LEARNING

INTEGRITY

INTEGRITY

LEARNING

LEARNING

INTEGRITY

INTEGRITY

LEARNING

Not suggesting:

- a learning:integrity binary
- a necessary trade-off between learning and integrity

Am stressing:

- we currently do make choices
- those choices are not inevitable, natural or uncontested

The conflation of poor referencing skills and plagiarism – as the deliberate intention to deceive – has been disastrous for academic integrity, academic writing and authentic assessment.



- Understanding of the literature
- Critical Analysis
- Clear writing and presentation
- Good referencing skills
- Clear building of an original argument

Achievement and Authenticity

Starting place

Why do we assess?

We assess for that time and place where there is no assessment.

Axel Honneth

We know what is just by:

‘that which allows the individual member of our society to realize his or her own life’s objectives, in cooperation with others, and with the greatest possible autonomy’

(Honneth, 2010, p. 13)



Axel Honneth

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‘that which allows the individual member of our society to realize his or her own life’s objectives, in **cooperation with others**, and with the **greatest possible autonomy**’

(Honneth, 2010, p. 13)





Why we assess?

Certification

Learning

Future Learning (sustainable assessment)

David Boud



Individual/Not explicitly socially-situated

Very like the way we used to understand learning
– transition from approaches to learning to social
practices of education

None of these require a grade

Learning Outcomes

There is NO how
much.

The student will be able to:

Critically analyse research methods literature

Explain the difference between nuclear fusion and nuclear fission

Analyse the representation and significance of gender in *A Midsummer's Night's Dream*

Successfully undertake an invasive biopsy procedure

Demonstrate critical understanding of contemporary debates in Scottish literature.

Marking Criteria - basic

Has the learning outcome been met? Criteria for understanding that border –

Successfully undertake an invasive biopsy procedure:

- Obtain full sample

- Ensure no cross contamination

- Maintain patient wellbeing

There is NO how
much.

Marking Criteria – how much

Differentiation beyond met / not met the learning outcome

Why?

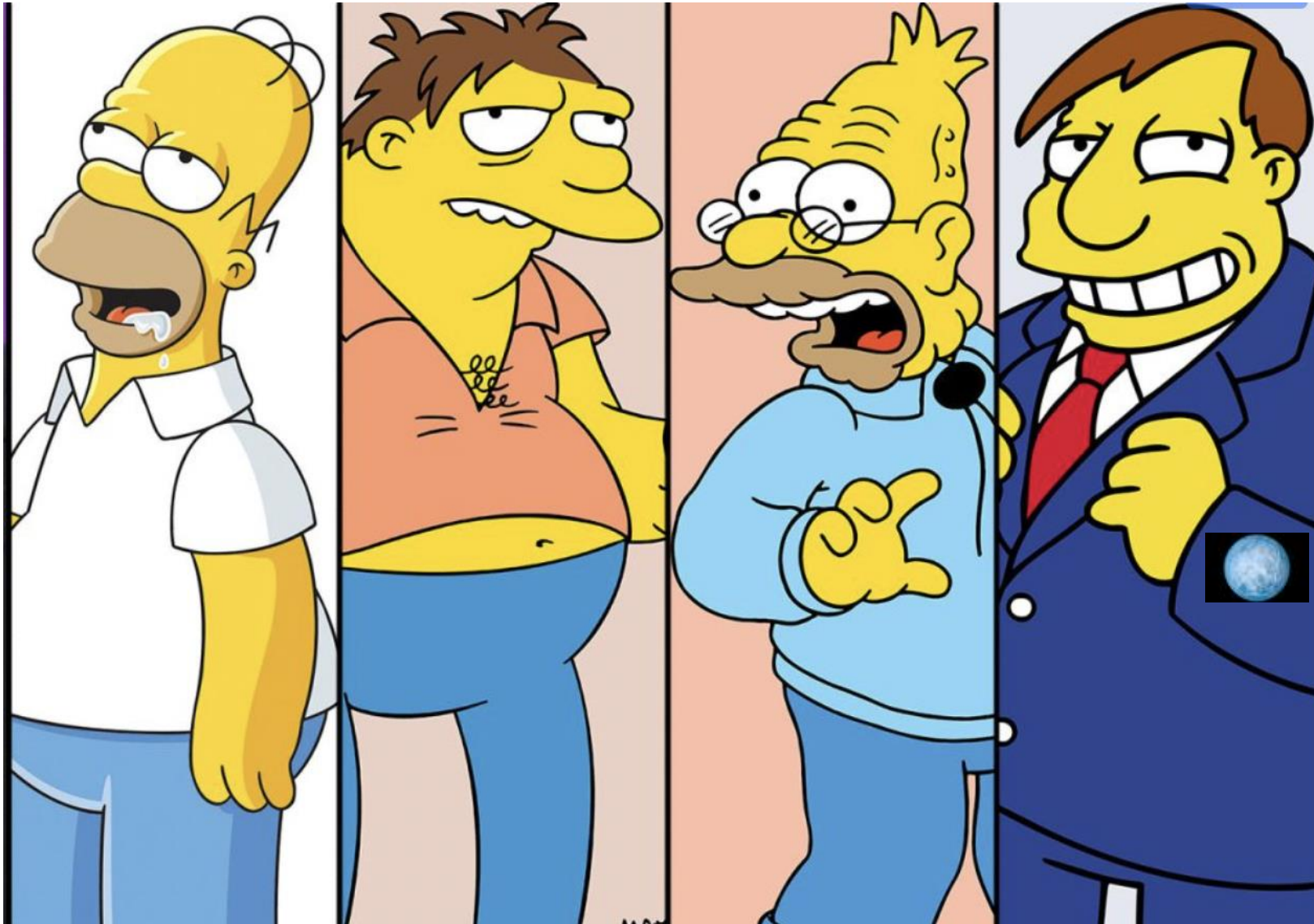
History here

Myths – incentives, feedback

Realities – pressure to replicate a competitive grading system – in the spirit of norm-referenced marking – to enable easy and ‘efficient’ differentiation of graduates

A	94.5 - 100
A-	91.0 - 94.4
B+	87.5 - 90.9
B	84.0 - 87.4
B-	80.5 - 83.9
C+	77.0 - 80.4
C	73.5 - 76.9
C-	70.0 - 73.4
D+	66.5 - 69.9
D	63.0 - 66.4
D-	59.5 - 62.9
E	59.4 or less







I want a nurse, surgeon, anesthetist etc who have met the criteria and demonstrated they can perform this task.

AND who have committed to ongoing professional development (learning) to ensure that remains the case.

It is far more important what sort of lifelong professional learner our assessment practices have nourished, than the mark they got on an exam 20 years ago.

Confusion

What is the relationship between the learning outcomes and the marking criteria?

Who uses learning outcomes to mark?

How do we robustly justify different grades and scores?

How do we ensure transparency with students about marking?

Just sharing learning outcomes or marking criteria not enough

Imagine a way through all of this?

Rubrics

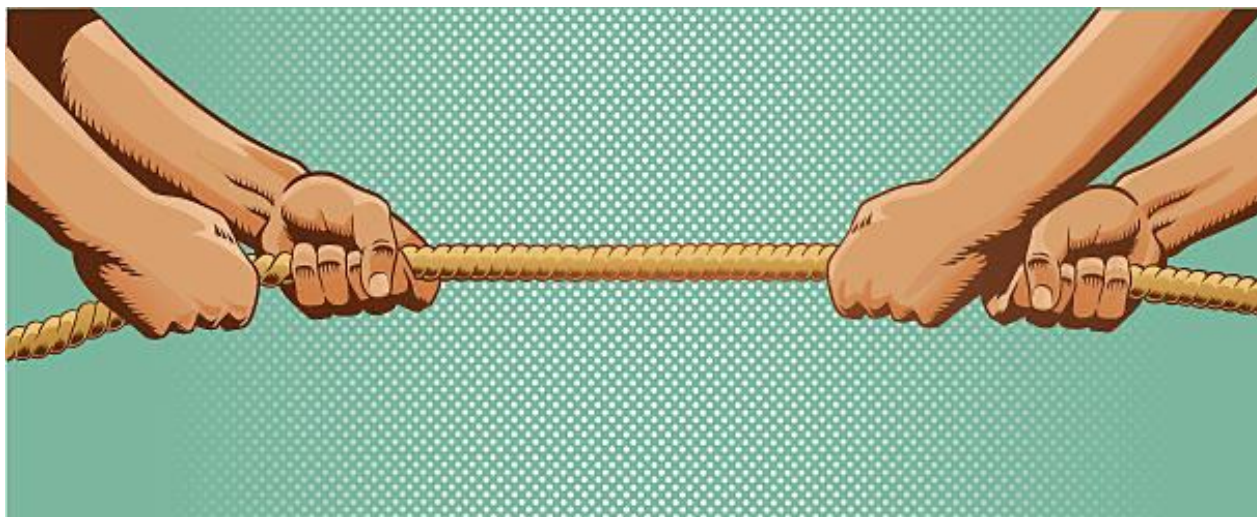
- atomization to avoid imagination



If this is an awful mess . . . then would something less messy make a mess of describing it?

John Law

Complex Nature of
Inter/Disciplinary
Knowledge We
Assess in Higher
Education



“Good Practice”
of making
assessment and
marking criteria
clear and
transparent

Name	Research Paper Rubric 2	
Description	Research Paper Rubric 2	
Rubric Detail	Levels of Achievement	
Criteria	Does Not Meet Expectations	Approaches Expectations
Development Originality Weight 8.00%	0 % Thesis statement or research question is trite or absent.	25 % Thesis statement or research question is overly general but makes an arguable claim.
Development Thesis Statement Support Weight 10.00%	0 % Thesis statement or research question is unevenly or illogically supported and citations are less than apt.	25 % Thesis statement or research question is supported by some evidence with citations.
Development Scholarly Conversation Weight 8.00%	0 % Does not present an adequate array of scholarly ideas.	25 % Does not engage successfully with scholarly conversation in the subject area.
Critical Thinking Content Discourse Weight 9.00%	0 % Does not consider the context or considers it in an ego- or socio-centric way.	25 % Considers the context and assumptions of the scholarly discourse in a limited way.
Critical Thinking Integration of Ideas Weight 9.00%	0 % Does not consider multiple points of view.	25 % Considers multiple viewpoints and ideas tentatively or overstates the conflict.
Critical Thinking Conclusions Weight 9.00%	0 % Fails to identify conclusions or conclusions presented are simplistic or absolute.	25 % Conclusions only loosely follow from arguments and evidence presented.
Organization Facilitates Understanding Weight 8.00%	0 % Shows little attempt to guide the reader through the document.	25 % Facilitates understanding but has occasional lapses.
Organization Order of Ideas Weight 8.00%	0 % Order of ideas in paragraphs is usually difficult to follow.	25 % Order of ideas in paragraphs is apparent but occasionally difficult to follow.
Language Fluency Weight 8.00%	0 % Incorrect word choice or syntax often interferes with meaning.	25 % Incorrect word choice or syntax often interferes with meaning.
Language Voice Weight 8.00%	0 % Voice fluctuates repeatedly.	25 % Lapses in tone and voice are distracting.
Mechanics Grammar Surface Features Weight 7.00%	0 % Grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors are prominent.	25 % Some grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors throughout.
Mechanics APA Weight 8.00%	0 % Little or no attempt to follow APA conventions.	25 % Some APA conventions are followed.

Development Thesis Statement Support Weight 10.00%

0 %
Thesis statement or research question is unevenly or illogically supported and citations are less than apt.

25 %
Thesis statement or research question is supported by some evidence with citations.

75 %
Thesis statement or research question is supported by evidence and appropriate citations.

100 %
Thesis statement or research question is supported by evidence and appropriate citations.

Development Scholarly Conversation Weight 8.00%

0 %
Does not present an adequate array of scholarly ideas.

25 %
Does not engage successfully with scholarly conversation in the subject area.

75 %
Engages in scholarly conversation through inter-textual means.

100 %
Engages in scholarly conversation through inter-textual means.

Critical Thinking Content Discourse Weight 9.00%

0 %
Does not consider the context or considers it in an ego- or socio-centric way.

25 %
Considers the context and assumptions of the scholarly discourse in a limited way.

75 %
Examines the context and explores the assumptions of the scholarly discourse.

100 %
Examines the context and explores the assumptions of the scholarly discourse.

Critical Thinking Integration of Ideas Weight 9.00%

0 %
Does not consider multiple points of view.

25 %
Considers multiple viewpoints and ideas tentatively or overstates the conflict.

75 %
Integrates multiple viewpoints and compares ideas or perspectives.

100 %
Integrates multiple viewpoints and compares ideas or perspectives.

Critical Thinking Conclusions Weight 9.00%

0 %
Fails to identify conclusions or conclusions presented are simplistic or absolute.

25 %
Conclusions only loosely follow from arguments and evidence presented.

75 %
Conclusions are logical based on arguments and evidence presented.

100 %
Conclusions are logical based on arguments and evidence presented.

75 %
APA conventions are usually followed.

100 %
Follows APA conventions carefully.





You don't have to go gradeless to move towards more holistic approaches to assessment

Trust

Make a stand against pseudo-normative marking

Embrace the messiness of the whole

Resist propping up the false *education as competition* narrative

See assessment as about genuine achievement

Mutual recognition: interplay of social and individual

Authentic Authentic Assessment

Rethinking Authentic Assessment: work, wellbeing and society (McArthur 2023)

[Open Access](#) | [Published: 17 February 2022](#)

Rethinking authentic assessment: work, well-being, and society

[Jan McArthur](#) 

[Higher Education](#) **85**, 85–101 (2023) | [Cite this article](#)

12k Accesses | **7** Citations | **143** Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

Abstract

This article seeks a deeper understanding of the concept of authentic assessment which ensures it does not become another educational buzzword, slowly diminishing in real

Real world tasks

Real world : World of Work

Real world : External to us

Real world : Something we
cannot change

What employers want

Assessment for a compliant
workforce

Authentic Assessment

From real world/world of work to society

Compliant workers & Monetised self-worth

“graduate premium”

Externalised ‘real world’

Rarefied and we cannot change

Re-embrace society

Make implicit – explicit

Eg engineering assignment

McArthur et al (2021) challenges of socially-relevant assessment tasks

Eg gothic literature – social marginalization and exclusion

From task performance to why we value the task

Focus on value of task, not task itself, helps transcend associations with vocational studies alone

The reason for the task should help shape the task

- eg responding to climate emergency, not simply demands of employers

- Students to challenge system where pollution is allowed and then mitigated through public spending (provided by the less well off)

Also see value in the smaller things

- connection of climate emergency to everyday lives

- Eg – child with asthma suffering just down the road (or on the other side of the world)

- English literature student – oppression carried through fiction

From the status-quo of real-world/world of work to transforming society

Richter (2007) – paleontology – standing inside and outside at the same time

Authentic is not to join the world that exists – but to contribute to the world that could be

Human flourishing

Fraser (2003) Affective and Transformational change



Imagining Otherwise

University managers – how easy is assessment reform?

Academics – do you believe in your assessments?

Students – are you sending mixed messages to your teachers?

Careers staff – are you promoting the education as competition narrative?

Professional services staff – has procedure overtaken purpose?



How we respond to ChatGPT and how we nurture authentic assessment, rests on values and principles that we should have attended to, *long before ChatGPT*



Imagining otherwise

Time and space for impossible thoughts

Academic work as engagement with the minds of others

