



Using Enhancement Themes to Build Strategic Convergence and Mobilize Sectoral Energy in Higher Education

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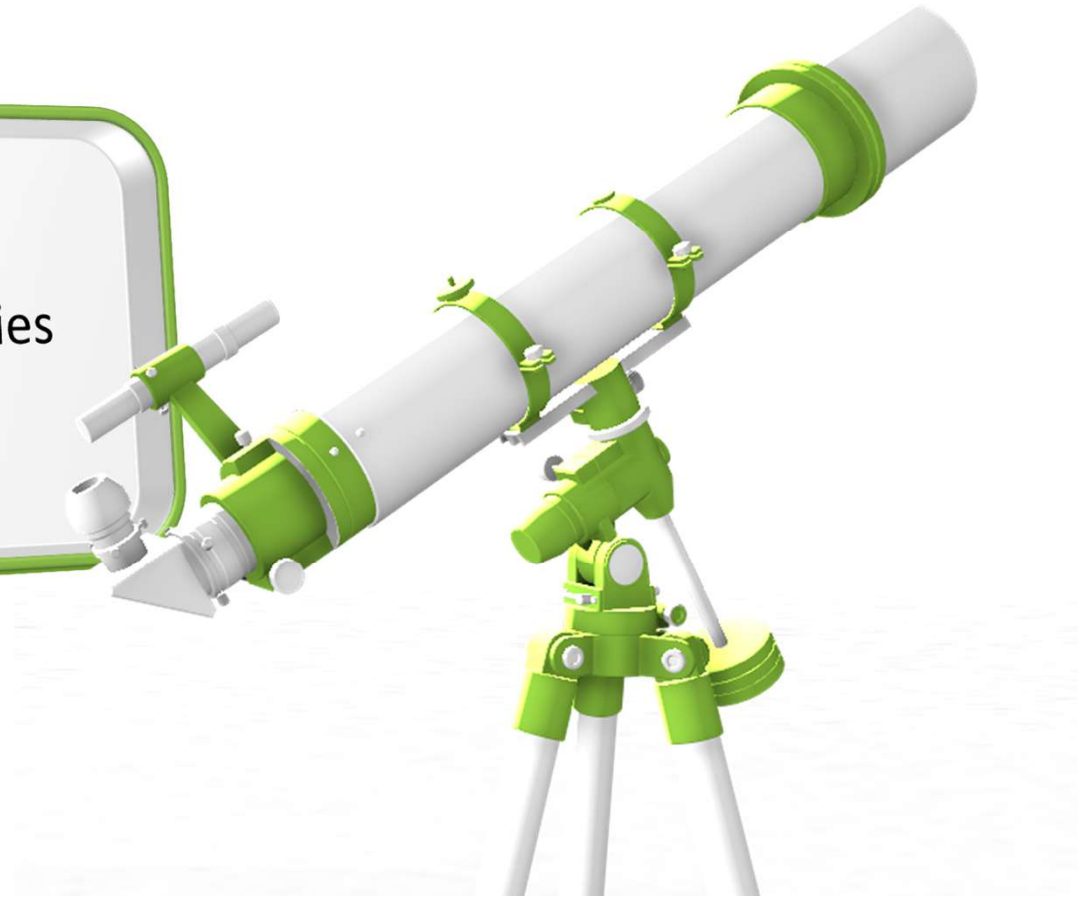


The Enhancement Theme Process

Strategic convergence

Focusing and scoping activities

Mobilising sectoral energy

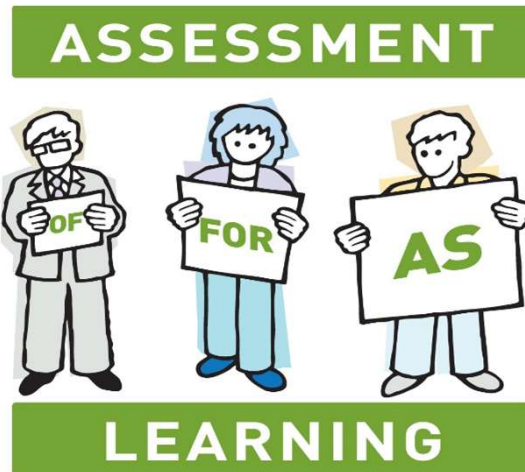


Enhancement Theme

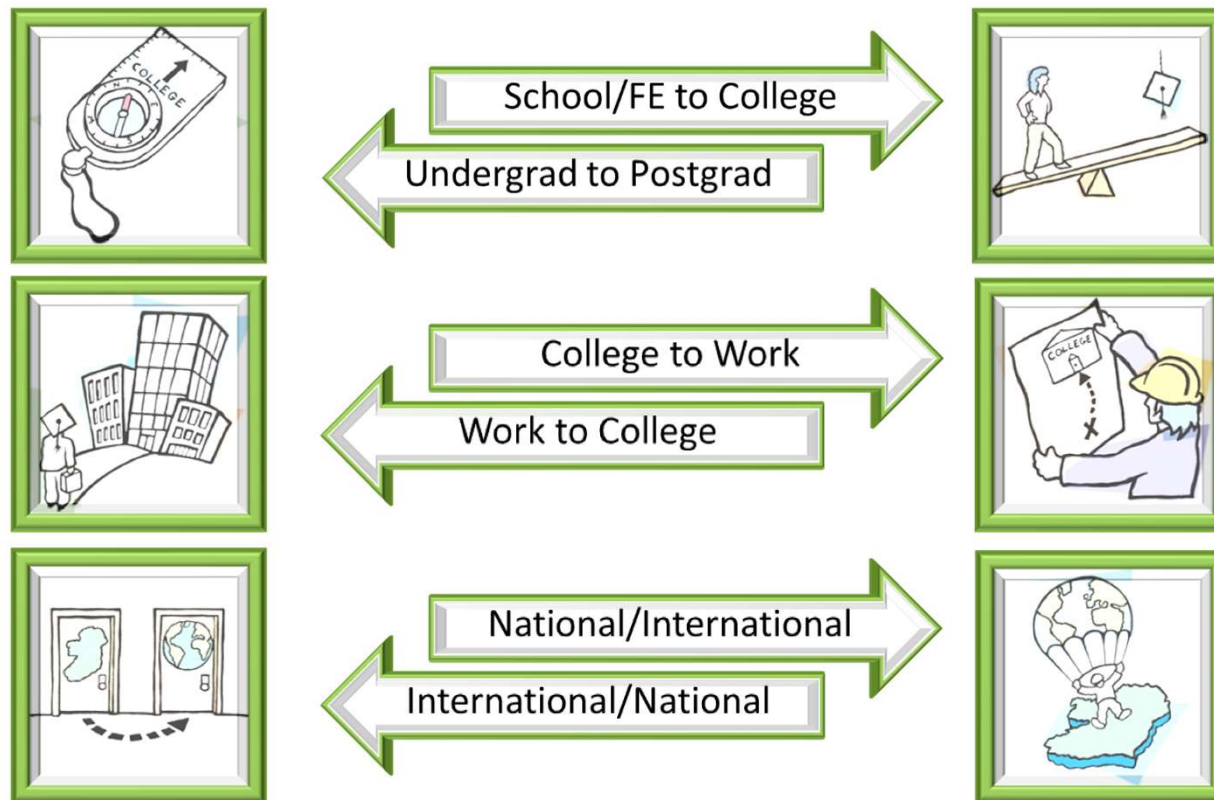
2013/15

Teaching for Transitions

2016/18



Forum Theme: Teaching for Transitions



Teaching for Transitions – Research Projects

- Why do Students Leave Higher Education? (UCD) 2015
- Reaching Out: Student Drop-out (NF&USI) 2015
- Transition from Second Level and Further Education to Third Level (2015)
- Reaching Out: Why Students Leave (NF&USI)(2016)
- Transition from Further Education and Training to Higher Education (NF) (2016)
- ICT Retention Scoping Group Recommendations (NF)(2016)

Indicators of Success

- Influencing National Policy
- Evidence-based approach to decision making
- Recognising students experience of transition
- Building Bridges from both sides
- Made a priority for sectoral funding 2017

Teaching for Transitions 2013/2015



- Building on what we learnt
- Setting priorities for enhancement
- Supporting Institutions

ASSESSMENT



LEARNING

Assessment Enhancement Theme: Assessment OF/FOR/AS Learning 2016-2018

National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education



What is meant by the terms *Assessment OF, FOR and AS learning?*

- *Assessment OF Learning: completing assessment to demonstrate learning*
- *Assessment FOR Learning: using assessment to give feedback on teaching and student learning*
- *Assessment AS Learning: student empowerment and engagement to become a better learner.*

What is meant by the terms Assessment OF, FOR and AS learning?

<http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Insight-Assessment-OFFOR-and-AS-Learning.pdf>

TL NATIONAL FORUM FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION
Forum Insight | October 2016

ASSESSMENT
LEARNING

ENHANCEMENT THEME
Assessment OF, FOR and AS Learning: Continuing the Debate and Creating a Focus

Assessment OF, FOR and AS Learning is the National Forum's enhancement theme for 2016-2019. The National Seminar Series 2015-2016 has already facilitated some initial explorations on this theme. Feedback captured at the National Summit for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education 2015 highlighted the significant changes to assessment practices and policies that should be driven by this enhancement theme. This Forum Insight differentiates between Assessment OF, Assessment FOR and Assessment AS Learning. It highlights some of the tensions that have to be accommodated, identifies a range of enablers that should drive this significant change, and it provides some questions to drive further discussion.

Assessment OF, FOR and AS Learning: What do we mean?

Assessment OF Learning: completing assessment to demonstrate learning
This is the classic approach to assessing students' learning in order to ensure that they have achieved the learning outcomes and have met a specified standard. Designed to provide evidence of achievement, Assessment OF Learning is the assessment that becomes public and results in statements or reports about how well students are learning. It often contributes to pivotal decisions that will affect students' futures (Earl & Katz, 2006). It is important, therefore, that they produce sufficient information to support credible and defensible statements about the nature and the quality of their learning, so that others can use the results in appropriate ways (Earl & Katz, 2006, p.10).

Assessment FOR Learning: using assessment to give feedback on teaching and student learning
This involves teachers taking the lead in exploring and understanding student progress in order to enhance teaching approaches. It focuses on how teachers can use information about students' knowledge, understanding and skills to inform their teaching strategies and their students' learning. Assessment FOR Learning is strongly formative in nature, as, in addition to giving feedback to staff, it also is used as the basis for providing descriptive feedback to students.

Assessment AS Learning: student empowerment and engagement to become a better learner
The process of students actively engaging in self-monitoring or self-regulating their own learning is often described as Assessment AS Learning. This has some overlap with Assessment FOR Learning and it is also described as formative assessment (O'Shea et al., 2016). It is characterized by students reflecting on their own learning and making adjustments so that they achieve deeper understanding (Earl & Katz, 2006, p.10).

There have been strong arguments to establish the traditional assessment in the curriculum, requiring the best of weighting given to high-stakes Assessment OF Learning (unmarked and being stronger emphasis to Assessment OF and Assessment FOR Learning) (see Figure 1). This shift in emphasis puts the students in control of the assessment process (Earl & Katz, 2006; Knight, 2002; Senter, 2010).



Figure 1: Shift from Assessment OF to Assessment FOR and AS Learning

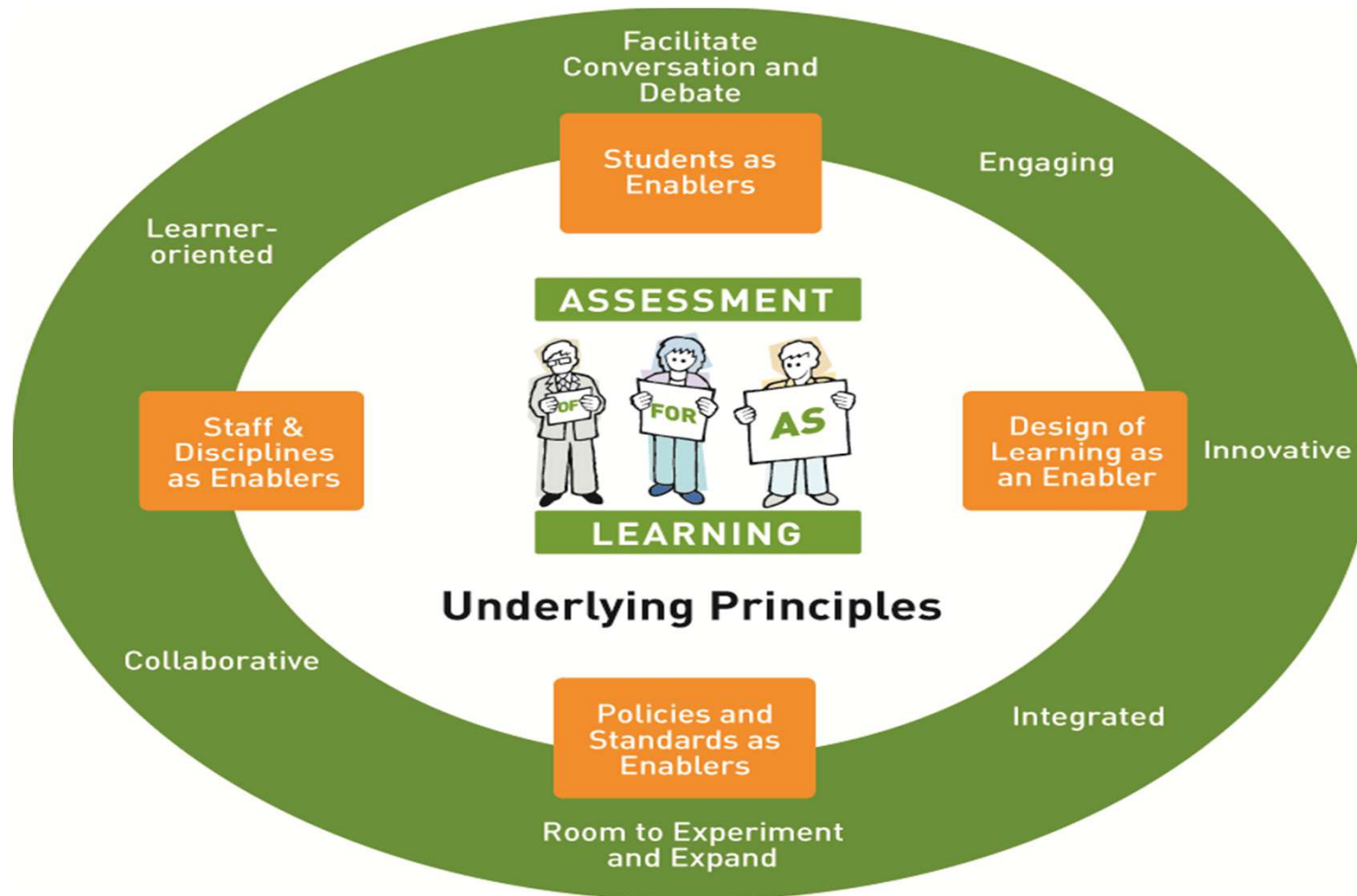
How do we enable significant changes to assessment practices and policies?
Students' and Teachers' knowledge, skills, attitudes and emotions are central to enabling changes in many of these assessment forms in higher education. Students' involvement in Assessment AS Learning leads to the cultural shift towards the purpose of assessment (Kortz, 2015; Senter, 2010). In addition, assessment changes can be supported by the professional development of the range of staff across the disciplines who teach (i.e. academic staff, educational developers/technicians, teaching assistants, library staff). Given the importance of teacher skills and professional development in assessment innovation and enhancement, the emerging National Pedagogical Development Framework will be key to supporting this activity. National Forum, 2016). Strategic approaches to design of both the curriculum and the learning environment can also enable change (Knight, 2002), recent accelerated opportunities in the digital learning environment have a part to play in enabling significant assessment changes (Shanahan et al., 2016). National institutional and disciplinary policies and standards in the areas of assessment and feedback can also be strong enablers of change for some of the more complex and challenging changes that are required.

Key differentiating and integrating questions (re assessment OF, FOR and AS) might include:

1. What is the purpose of assessment?
2. What is meant by the terms Assessment OF, FOR and AS Learning? Different context?

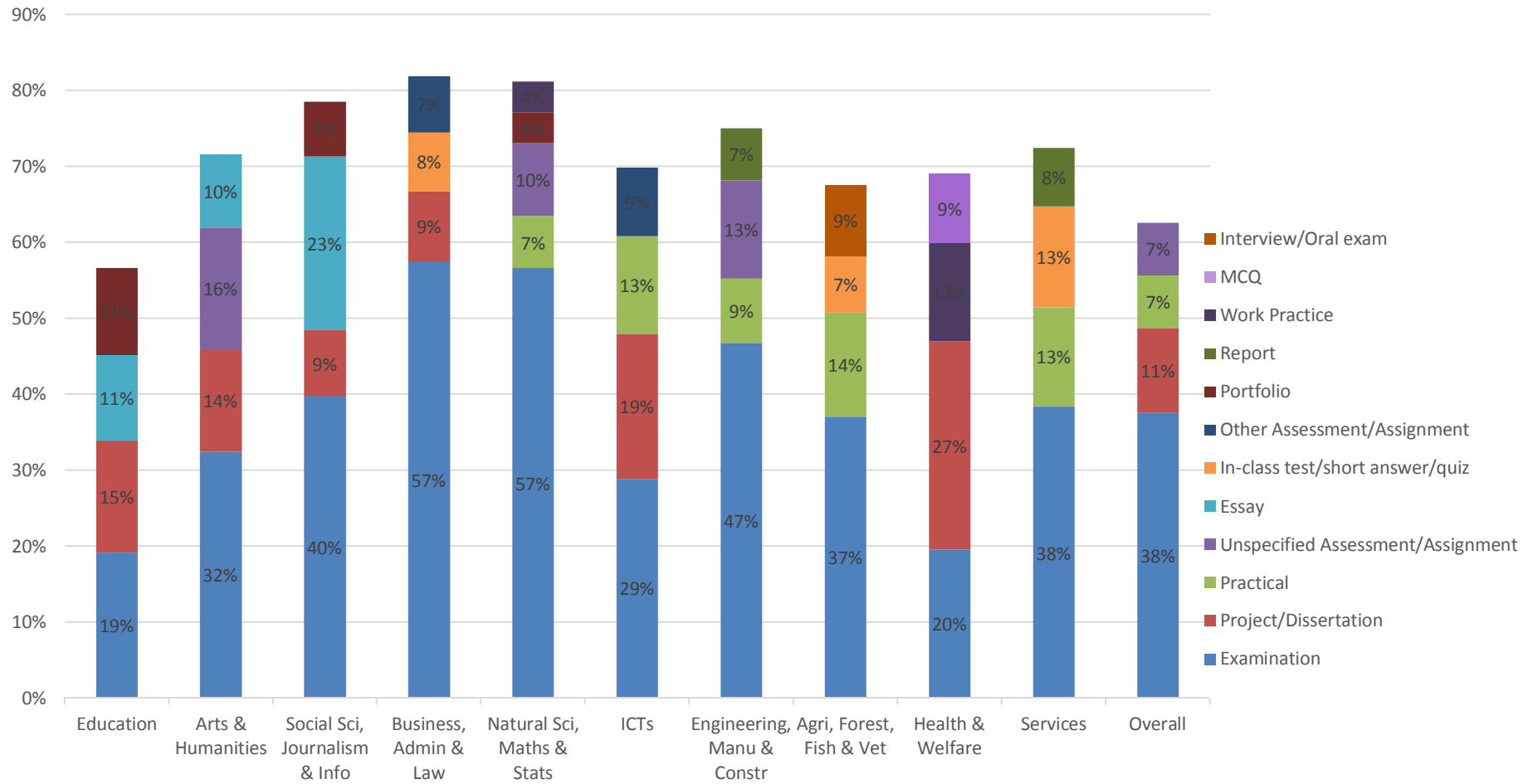
Aims of the Enhancement Theme

- To identify current Assessment OF/FOR/AS Learning practices, strategies and policies
- To support the shift to Assessment FOR and Assessment AS Learning, and adopt a partnership approach with students in key aspects of assessment
- To stimulate general and more focused conversations with different stakeholders in order to develop awareness, analyse needs, inform and enhance Assessment
- To identify enablers, opportunities, issues and barriers to the transformative enhancement
- Consider the potential that technology might bring to enhance approaches to assessment.



Building the evidence-based

- Find out what is happening now?
- Tackling the Myths and Realities around Technology Enhanced Assessment
- Developing a tool to support Programmatic Approach to assessment.



Building Capacity Through Conversations (September 2016 to October 2017)

Face-to-face



On-line discussions

The screenshot shows a web interface for the National Forum Assessment Group. The header includes the group name and a navigation menu with options like 'ABOUT THE EXPERT GROUP', 'DISCUSSION FORUM', 'BLOG', 'MESSAGES', 'DOCUMENTS', 'MEMBERS', 'SL WEBSITE', and 'LOG OUT'. The main content area displays a list of discussion topics with columns for topic name, number of topics, number of replies, and the time since the last update.

TOPIC	Topics	Replies	Last Updated
DISCUSSION ON PROGRAMME APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT AND SHARING OF CASE STUDIES Started by: Geralline O'Neill	5	18	21 hours, 48 minutes ago Claran Dawson
Y1 FEEDBACK SYMPOSIUM Started by: Dina Farrell	1	1	2 weeks ago Dina Farrell
INTRODUCTIONS TO EACH OTHER AND WHAT YOU BRING TO THE GROUP Started by: Geralline O'Neill	43	46	2 weeks ago Sobhan Gulim
KEY PRINCIPLES IN ASSESSMENT Started by: Shirena Hyland	6	9	2 weeks, 5 days ago Geralline O'Neill
THOUGHTS/REFLECTIONS/REACTIONS FROM WORKSHOP	5	6	3 weeks ago

Blog

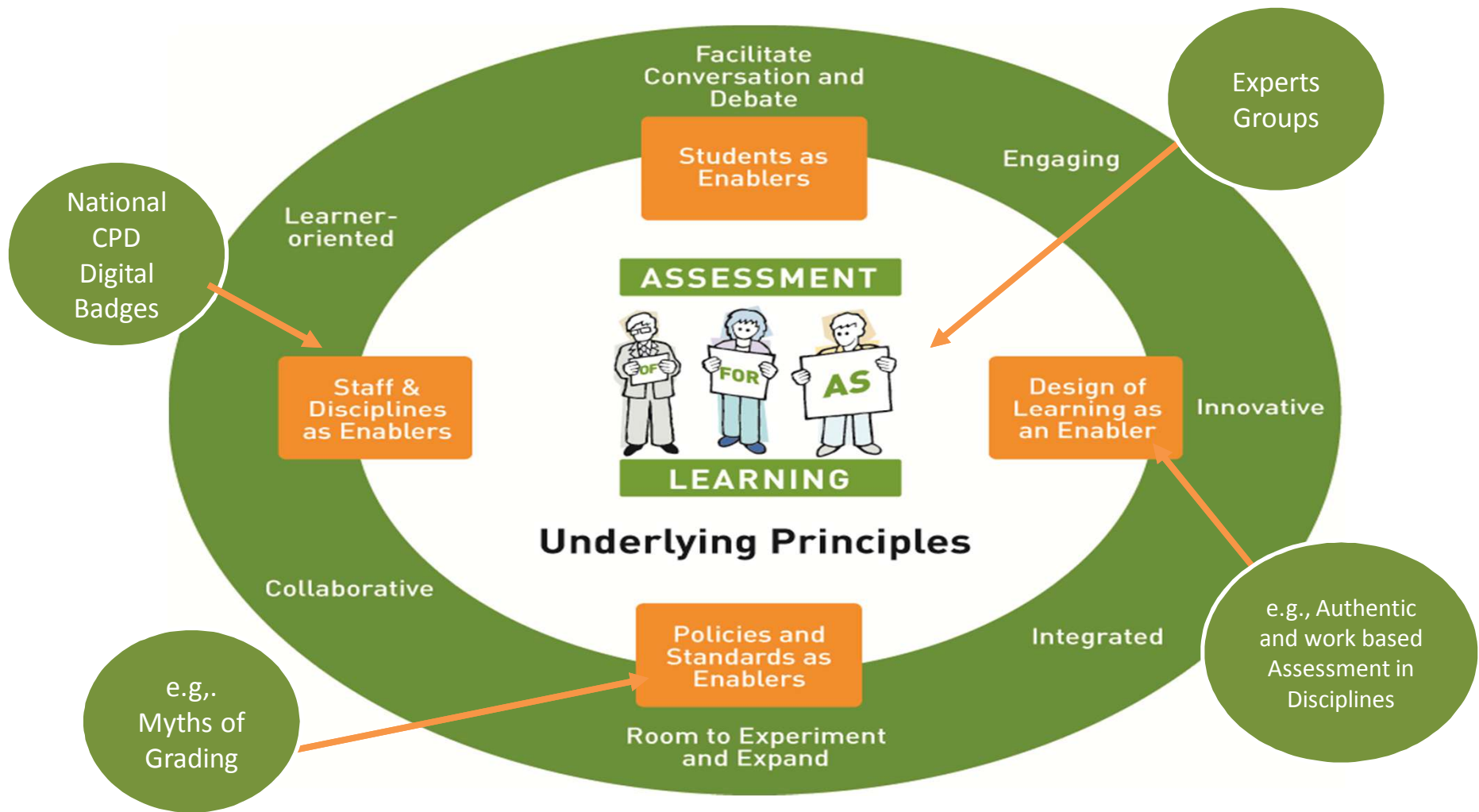
The screenshot shows a blog post on a website. The header is green with the word 'News' in white. The main title is 'Updates on the Assessment OF/FOR/AS Learning Enhancement Theme'. Below the title, it says 'December 16, 2016' and 'Geraldine O'Neill'. The post text discusses the aims and objectives of the theme, recent discussions, and an event on 9th November. There is a photo of a meeting and a poster.

<http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/updates-assessment-offoras-learning-enhancement-theme/>

Twitter

The screenshot shows a Twitter profile for 'National Forum T&L' (@ForumTL). The profile picture is a green square with 'T&L' in white. The bio says 'The National Forum for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. #heie'. The location is 'Ireland' and the website is 'teachingandlearning.ie'. The profile was joined in January 2014. The stats show 2,044 tweets, 2,038 following, 1,745 followers, 643 likes, 11 lists, and 1 moment. A tweet is visible: 'Blog: Updates on the Assessment OF/FOR/AS Learning Enhancement Theme by @gmonell2 teachingandlearning.ie/updates-assess ... #heie #highered'. There is a green banner at the bottom of the tweet that says 'ASSESSMENT'. The 'Who to follow' section lists 'Boss @Boss', 'TELU @TLU_TELU', and 'Shawn Day @birdum'.

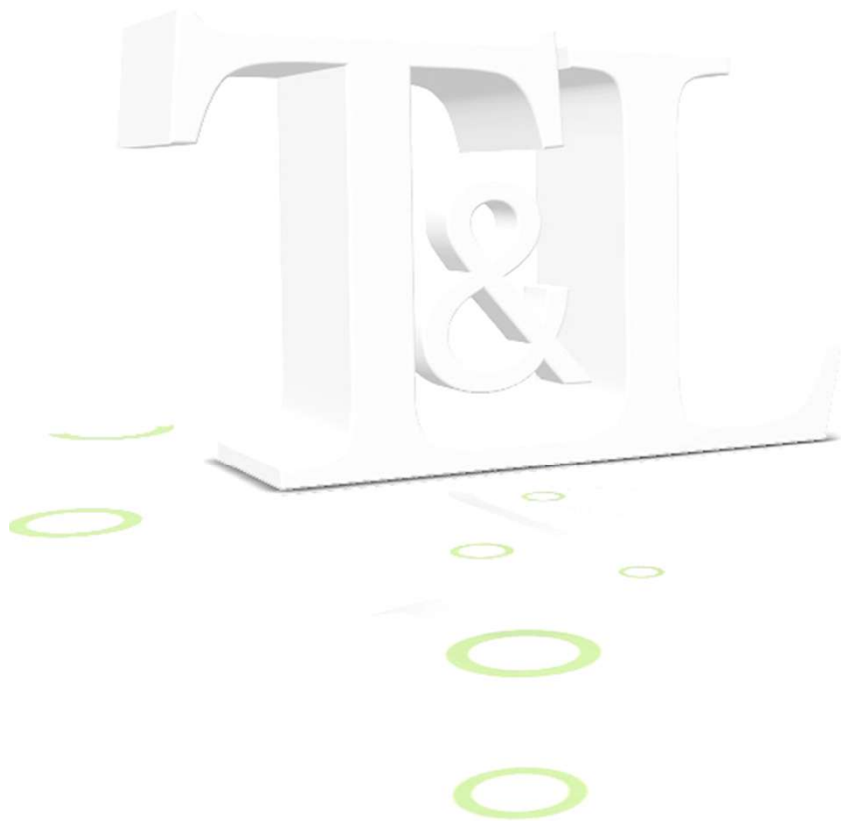
[@ForumTL](https://twitter.com/ForumTL)



Indicators of Success Identified by the Sector

- Creativity in assessment
- Integration of assessment methods
- Integration of technology for assessment
- Greater involvement by students in assessment
- Emphasis on assessment for learning and manageable assessment workloads

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