



8.4 Interventions to raise attainment with a third year cohort: BA (Hons) Education Studies (non-work-based)

The cohort

42 students in the 3rd year of a BA honours course. Three students (7%) are white; 39 students (93%) are BME.

Factors which triggered the interventions

- 1. Cohort attainment data** The average grade for the cohort at end of year 2 was 54%. 10 students (24% of the cohort) had an average grade in the 40-49% range. Five students (12% of the cohort) had an average grade in the 60-69% range. The rest of the cohort (27 students, 64% of the cohort) had an average grade in the 50-59% range.
- 2. Informal analysis of student engagement** I recognised that many students struggled in relation to academic writing and clarity in articulating ideas. Making clear links between theory and practice, which was central to the module was particularly challenging.

Interventions

- 1. Explicit engagement with assessment criteria** The focus of the module is Assessment in Education so it was apposite to get the students to engage critically with the assessment criteria for the module. I was able to identify elements of the assessment criteria that were not clear. For example, the assessment criteria referred to students addressing *values* associated with assessment, and the discussion around the criteria made it evident that these values needed to be unpicked more explicitly.
- 2. Clear expectations around structure** I provided a systematic breakdown of the assessment with suggested word counts which reduced unfocused writing whilst maintaining variety in student responses.
- 3. Modelling of the use of literature** I included in lectures and seminars examples of literature used to support points, and explicitly modelled and explained referencing practice (Harvard LSBU).
- 4. Use of screencasting** In response to questions from students, I developed Screencast resources. Here is an example: <https://screencast-o-matic.com/watch/cbfhDB6Pd9>. There was a



high level of engagement with the screencasts – the website provides a record of ‘hits’ and this suggests that 50-100% of students viewed the screencasts.

5. Use of detailed, transferable feedback comments I approached feedback with a view to ‘feedforward’, with a more generic formative purpose.

Outcomes

All students in this cohort completed their degrees with a significant improvement in the distribution across the good honours outcomes compared to the year 2 cohort data.

Degree class	Number of students	% of cohort
1	8	19%
2:1	16	38%
2:2	15	36%
3	3	7%

It is perhaps notable that students who were performing more strongly at the end of Year 2 were not necessarily those with the highest outcomes at the end of the course.

Whilst the majority (93%) of students in this group are BME, I would argue that the interventions represent generic good practice for assessment.

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