



## GEES Assessment for Learning Conference held at the University of Manchester on 22 June 2009

The Student Learning and Teaching Network is an informal community of students actively engaged in learning and teaching. It is coordinated by a committee of student volunteers, originally students engaging with Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) who have been working together since March 2006. The Network's core aim is to promote students as valid and active members of learning communities.

The Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (GEES) Subject Centre invited members of the Network to participate in a panel session as part of their Assessment for Learning conference, in June 2009. The following is the reflections of one of the students involved who studies Advertising and Marketing Communications at the University of Bedfordshire.

"I am a student who will be starting a work placement with the Bridges CETL in September 2009 as a Student Liaison Officer. On 22 June I attended the GEES Assessment for Learning Conference as a representative of the University of Bedfordshire. I was interested to understand how assessment and feedback is perceived by academia.

I enjoyed Aaron Porter's keynote session and was surprised to hear that the majority of students, 57% (NSS, 2008), are not satisfied with the standard of feedback they receive because of ambiguity, lateness or negativity. As an Advertising student I understand that effective communication should be at the forefront of a successful relationship between students and staff, particularly when it comes to the feedback that students receive for assignments.

It was interesting to hear different perspectives on some of the topics relating to assessment and feedback. The conference emphasised the importance of effective feedback and I know from my own experience that good feedback can be invaluable and help my development as a student and an individual. As a student I was able to reflect on my own experiences for the panel session.

Some of the key ideas which emerged from the discussion where:

- The best feedback is achieved through dialogue between students and staff and students and peers;
- Feedback should be constructive to enable students to develop;
- Courses should be designed to enable students to receive and act upon feedback throughout (rather than at the end of) a module

It was a pleasure to be given the opportunity to attend and contribute to the conference. I particularly enjoyed discussing issues with staff about our understanding of assessment for learning and ways in which assessment for learning might develop for students in the future."

The Network welcomes all students and staff with a passion for learning and teaching to get involved through our website <http://studentlandtnetwork.ning.com/>.