

Chapter 11

Students as Zombies: How Can We Awaken the Undead?

Rebecca Westrup

Introduction

Every year I welcome another cohort of students into the University. At the beginning of each year these freshly-faced young people start of a new journey studying for a degree in the Social Sciences. There's often an odd smell of excitement and anxiety in the air as everyone settles in the lecture theatre eager to begin the course. I look around and experience the things I have come to expect at the beginning of a new course; bright-eyed students nervously chatting with the person next to them, introducing themselves by usually talking about what they are looking forward to on the course. There's another sign that a new term is commencing; the rustle of bags as students hurriedly take out their new shiny pens, notebooks, laptops, and increasingly iPads and Smartphones. One year, after welcoming everyone and as I was starting to address the class and to tell them about the course, no sooner had I told them the title and 'bam!' I was asked the question "So Miss, what are the assessments?" There it was, I had barely been talking for a couple of minutes and already the question had been asked. Before I could respond the smell in the air changed. It was no longer balanced between excitement and anxiety, there was an unpleasant odour as the fresh-faced students started to decay right in front of my eyes. They were no longer interested in the content of the course and the weekly topics we were going to explore. Nor the different and creative pedagogies we were going to use. Instead they were only interesting in sniffing out the information about the assessment. These students are zombies, I thought to myself.

This short reflective piece, describing an encounter with first year students at the beginning of every new academic year is characteristic of my experiences of

R. Westrup (✉)

School of Education and Lifelong Learning, University of East Anglia,
Norwich Research Park, Norwich NR47TJ, UK

e-mail: r.westrup@uea.ac.uk

teaching students. During nearly the last ten years I have been teaching students in a variety of different roles; Postgraduate Seminar Tutor, Writing Specialist, Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellow and more recently a Lecturer and while this experience was not surprising because it is well-known that students are assessed at university, I was surprised by the timing and the tone of the question and I was equally surprised by the reaction of the other students in the group. Suddenly the air was silent as they had stopped scribbling notes or tapping on their technology. Drawing on a recent book by Sambell et al. (2013) about assessment practices in Higher Education (HE), it is essential that students ask questions about assessment, but it is important that the students also understand why they are being assessed rather than just focusing on what the assessments are. This is particularly important because as Sommerville and Creme (2005) have previously argued, success in HE is inextricably entwined with learning and knowledge construction demonstrated in academic writing (Sommerville and Creme 2005) as summative assessments usually contain a written element (Lea 1998). Students need to know and understand the process of assessment rather than only thinking about the product, the essay, the exam or the presentation and ultimately, only the grade. Research conducted by Lillis and Scott (2007: 9) highlights students' confusions with assessment and that this can be exacerbated by tensions between writing being considered as a 'high stakes' activity and the notion that students cannot write at a university standard because they are insufficiently prepared for such demands in their previous education (Lowe and Cook 2003). At a time when young people are facing an ever-increasing global competitiveness (Brown 2013), academics and practitioners working in HE have also focused their attention to assessment practices to ensure that students have the knowledge and essential skills and attributes required to compete within this increasingly individualised society (Beck 1992). However, it is questionable whether universities should take sole responsibility for this or whether we should rethink the assessment systems in compulsory education in addition to higher education interventions to support the learning and transitional periods of assessment for children and young people. Such an idea is not a new one, assessment systems, practices and methods and how they influence learners and educators have been the focus of much research and debate. In the mid-1990s Hanson (1994) argued that individuals in America were defined and dominated by testing. He described how the 'examined life' was inventing and controlling people as testing gave 'the testers' – schools and employers, for example – a god-like status, and an increasing amount of knowledge than had been available to them before. In more recent years the debates about how we assess children and young people in the United Kingdom and internationally have continued amongst educators, academics and Governments (Alexander 2010). For example, researchers such as Reay and Wiliam (1999), Filer and Pollard (2000), Alexander (2010), Green et al. (2001), Hall et al. (2004) and more recently Carless and Lam (2014) have highlighted the damaging nature assessment can have on children in primary schools. As the experiences of many academics and my own experiences illustrate, over-assessed young people share characteristics similar to zombies and the dead are still walking (Bishop 2009) into universities. Drawing on my reflections as a lecturer, the findings of a small-scale study which explored students'

and lecturers' experiences and perceptions of an intervention designed to support first year students' developing participation with, and understanding of assessment and feedback processes, assessment literature and using the metaphor of the zombie as an analytical tool, this chapter will consider the role of assessment in compulsory education and how it is creating a living dead culture within children and young people's educational careers.

Following my experiences of witnessing first-hand the 'zombification' of students and the apparent link to assessment during the last ten years I undertook a piece of small-scale research during 2013–2014 to explore this further. The project entitled 'Dialogue+' aimed to support first year students' developing participation with, and understanding of assessment and feedback processes and the research explored students' and lecturers' experiences of using it. During the first stage of the research project I interviewed 35 first year undergraduate students in small focus groups. They were studying within the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at a university in the south-east of England. Extending the earlier research of Bloxham and Campbell (2010), the second phase of the project was to introduce to the students an interactive coversheet (ICS) which promoted and enabled dialogue between themselves and their lecturers who were marking their assignments. The students were given the opportunity to ask the lecturers who were marking their work any questions that they felt would be useful to enable them to use the comments and 'feedforward' into future assignments. For example, the students were asked to comment on what they thought was good about their argument and they could also ask their lecturers for advice on how they could improve this further. The ICS was designed to empower students by giving them a voice to ask questions that they perhaps did not feel able to ask face-to-face in conversation. The introduction of peer mentoring was also crucial to this stage in the project. Previously, in their study Bloxham and Campbell (2010) reported that although the ICS did encourage students to think about their work, many found the questioning aspect of the process problematic as they did not have a clear enough understanding of the standards and requirements of the assessment, writing an essay, to engage in meaningful discussion. For the majority of the students this was exacerbated by feeling too embarrassed or intimidated to ask their tutors for help. Previous research suggests that this may be a result of a perceived power imbalance between students and their tutors (Boud 1995). The peer mentors were second and third year students who were studying in the same degree courses as the first year students. Recently, peer mentoring has been the focus of much research with lecturers and educational developers highlighting the potential of different programmes which can engage students within HE (see for example Andrews and Clark 2011). Drawing on the work of the WriteNow CETL and peer academic writing mentors (O'Neil 2008), it is clear that peer mentoring may provide a less embarrassing or intimidating opportunity for students to develop a meaningful understanding of the standards and requirements of assessment and writing that will then enable them to ask questions on the ICS. As Andrews et al. (2012: 72) state, peer mentoring can also enhance learning opportunities for other students as it provides 'unique methods of engaging second- and final-year students'. In the final stage of the data collection the first year students,

and the lecturers and mentors who had been involved with the project were interviewed about their experiences of the interactive coversheet and the peer mentoring. In particular the discussions focused on whether or not they thought the intervention had supported students' understanding of assessment and feedback processes and whether it had enabled them to engage in dialogue with their lecturers. In this chapter I will highlight the students' perspectives.

'The Death of the Author' (Barthes 1967)?

Analysis of the focus group data revealed that the first year students did not see themselves as 'authors' and many of them described their struggles with learning how to write in the style required for university. This supports the work of Ballinger (2003) and Smith (2004) who have both reported similar findings. While the media may lead us to believe this may be because the standards of students' literacy is falling and needs to be tightened (Clark 2010), the majority of the students were not concerned with surface features of their writing such as spelling, punctuation and grammar. Instead, when the students were asked 'what is the purpose of writing at university?' their responses included; 'to test knowledge and understanding', [to] 'check academic level', 'to test our skills', 'to get a mark' and 'to monitor development and understanding'. Only four of the students included 'feedback' and 'help' and 'support' in their responses. Unfortunately the unequal balance of responses found in this study and students not seeing the 'bigger picture' are not unique. Sambell et al. (2013: 1) noted lecturers' frustrations highlighting notions that 'students are very dependent' and often adopt a surface learning approach to their studies and assignments 'because they seem willing to only spend time and effort on things that carry marks' (Sambell et al. 2013: 33).

Similarly to the students Sambell et al. (2013) mention, I have also realised shortly after the beginning of the new academic years that increasingly the majority of the students are only interested in working on tasks and assignments that contributed to their final overall grade. For example, they seem to constantly refer to the learning outcomes and marking criteria, continually asking me what marks they were as this extract illustrates:

The class are like the walking dead, zombies wandering in, sitting lifelessly, staring into blank spaces or frantically writing or typing when they think something will prove useful for their assignments and exams. They're only active when there's a smell of learning outcomes and grade indicators. When did the university become a mortuary? It's as though the students cannot think for themselves, their creativity is paralysed by pressure to perform. Today a student came to see me and wanted some advice about her assignment because she was worried about getting it wrong. I gave her some advice and asked her what she thought about it. She replied that it didn't matter what she thought because I'm the one marking it. When did assessment become so soul destroying?

In addition to being concerned about the marks and level they were working at, students tend to also want to be spoon-fed information, especially that which was related to their assessments (Smith 2008). Gil (2014) highlights how some students

following their transitions into university find it difficult to adjust to the need to be independent and the lack of spoon-feeding compared to the sixth-form centres and colleges. Authors such as Kantanis (2000) suggest that this is because there is a gap between the guidance university students receive to complete a task and the close scrutiny of work, positive feedback on numerous drafts and high grades students receive at a secondary school. There is a danger that by focusing on assessment and in particular learning outcomes, students will become learning outcasts, where 'only the basic instinct of looking for whatever they yearn for most remains' (Horning 2014: 18). The creativity, knowledge and attributes that education should nurture and develop are decaying in young people as a result of the assessment systems in compulsory education. The students are so concerned about using their ideas and doing it wrong that they often perceive it is not worth the risk. As Horning (2014: 19) states, 'we have created a nation of student zombies, who have been led to believe that the knowledge most worth having is how to choose the correct answers on standardised tests'. It seems this was the case recently when during the summer students were 'penalised for good answers' in language exams (Hopkins 2014). The media reported that basic responses to questions in language GCSEs this summer were awarded higher marks than less formulaic answers to extended- answer questions. Arguably, such experiences and processes are a product of the 'zombification of education' (Horning 2014: 18).

Assessment and Compulsory Schooling: The 'Zombification of Education'?

An important question to ask is why in my experience (and in the experiences of others) are some students lifeless yet anxious, aimlessly wandering from lecture hall to seminar room and only interested in sucking the life out of lecturers when they hear the words 'learning outcomes', they have a test to sit or an assignment to write and they want a 'good' grade? In the following sections it is suggested that the zombification of a students' educational career begins when they enter primary school and continues throughout secondary school, especially with the mandatory examinations they are required to undertake, for example Standardised Assessment Tests (SATs) or Cognitive Abilities Tests (CATs), GCSEs and A-Levels. In 1988 a group formed to discuss the role of assessment in the National Curriculum, how it would be effectively implemented and to design an assessment framework. The Task Group on Assessment and Testing (TGAT 1988: 4) proposed:

The assessment process itself should not determine what is to be taught and learned. It should be the servant, not the master, of the curriculum. Yet it should not simply be a bolt-on addition at the end. Rather, it should be an integral part of the education process, continually providing both 'feedback' and 'feedforward'. It therefore needs to be incorporated systematically into teaching strategies and practice at all levels. Since the results of assessment can serve a number of different purposes, these purposes have to be kept in mind when the arrangements for assessment are designed.

This statement is often presented in assessment literature and documents focusing on assessment and the role(s) it can play in education. However, it is arguable

that in recent years the importance and meaning of these words has increasingly disappeared. As Governments change and new Education Secretaries come into power, assessment agendas change and educationalists, teachers and academics are often concerned by this and in particular the notion of 'feedforward'. Arguably, in order to 'feedforward' learners need to be active agents in their education careers and it is questionable whether the high volume of high-stakes testing gives teachers the space and enables learners the opportunity to achieve this.

As Alexander (2010: 311) points out, 'children in England, as is well known, are among the most tested in the world' and they frequently encounter a variety of assessments, some with a formative purpose and others with a formal and summative purpose. Referred to within the literature as Assessment for Learning, the purpose of formative assessment as outlined by the Assessment Reform Group (ARG) (2002) is to seek and interpret 'evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there' (Department for Children, Schools and Families 2008). Within the primary school, this type of assessment to help learning has been highlighted as an aspect of effective teaching. Research studies such as those carried out by Professors Paul Black and Dylan William (1998) and later Wiliam et al. (2004) illustrate that through a cyclical process where teachers look at children's work, observe them, ask them questions and gather their views on their work and learning before then setting next-step learning goals pupils can make almost twice as much progress in a year (Wiliam 2011: 37). Crucially, this type of assessment also values the perspective and participation of the learners and children and they are more than just a level (Alexander 2010). In addition to their teachers, children are required to know what their learning goals are so that they can participate in their own learning, and the assessment of this (Black et al. 2003).

Although assessment by teachers as part of teaching and to support learning is encouraged within the early years of a child's schooling as a part of this (DCSF 2008) there is also a more formal purpose for a facet of assessment, testing where tests are also used to report on what has been learned (Alexander 2010). Despite the fact that educationalists researching assessment at the end of the 1990s argued that National Curriculum tests, such as the SATs 'constitute very simplistic judgements purged of any subtlety and complexity about the sort of learners pupils are judged to be' (Reay and Wiliam 1999: 349), the 2008 enquiry into testing and assessment by the House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Committee in 2008 stated that testing is required to 'ascertain and recognise levels of pupil achievement on a standardised basis; hold schools and teachers to account [and] assess the quality of education available to children across the country' (House of Commons, 2008 cited in Alexander 2010: 312). Fifteen years later after Reay and Wiliam (1999) carried out their study, in 2014 educationalists, teachers and researchers are still questioning the purpose of tests, what these test scores actually illustrate and whether they do provide a good measure of the quality of education. Drummond (2012) makes this point in their case study of what we can learn from pupils who have undertaken tests in primary school. Referring to the case study 'Learning from Jason', Drummond (2012: 1) argues that testing is an inadequate way of assessing individual children's

learning and as a result of the standards and performances discourses operating within primary education, children learn how to complete tests rather than new subject knowledge during the first few terms of attending school:

But first, what has Jason learned during his eight terms in school? He has learned how to take a test. His answers are written neatly, with the sharpest of pencils. When he reverses a digit and sees his mistake, he crosses it out tidily. He places his answers on the line or in the box as instructed, though he often adds some more digits in other empty spaces, as if he interpreted a space as an invitation to write...He has learned to copy numbers and letters neatly and accurately, even though this is not what is being asked of him.

In addition to Drummond, educationalists such as Clare Green and her colleagues (Green et al. 2001) and Kathy Hall and her colleagues (Hall et al. 2004) working on research exploring pupils' experiences in the primary school classroom have argued that one problem with tests is that they do not promote knowledge and understanding of subject material. Green et al. (2001) asked children about their experiences of National Tests and found that some children found the Literacy tests disengaging because they were boring and Drummond reported that some children can find it difficult to understand the purpose, meaning and context of the content they are being assessed on. Similarly, drawing on ethnographic research in Primary Schools, Hall et al. (2004: 815) highlight the ways in which the Standard Attainment Tests (SATs) are exclusionary for some teachers and children as there is a push for pedagogy which focuses on 'ability grouping, testing and competition'.

As a consequence of the performance discourses associated with education in a neo-liberal society, test scores from SATs are used to record school positions on league tables and to market the schools. Research suggests that the high profile of test results has put a huge pressure on teachers, children and parents. Reay and Wiliam (1999) reported that the SATs have an impact on children who are 'simultaneously active in the assessment process and profoundly affected by it' (p. 345) as it affects their self-esteem and identity as learners. From their study in 1999 which explored the perceptions of children who were sitting Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests and how these contributed to their understandings of themselves not just as learners, but also as people Reay and Wiliam (1999: 349) argue that 'there are strong currents of fear and anxiety permeating children's relationships to the SATs processes'. More recently in 2007, in addition to affecting children Alexander and Hargreaves (2007) have highlighted that the use of test results in this way constrained the curriculum, turned the final year of primary schooling into one which was about cramming and testing and disadvantaged children whose parents could not afford to pay for private SATs tuition (cited in Alexander 2010: 316–317). Hall et al. (2004: 814) describe this process as 'SATuration' and show how it is decaying teachers' and children's identities. Carless and Lam (2014) make a similar point about assessment in Hong Kong. In their study which illuminates the perspectives of learners in lower primary school Carless and Lam reinforce how learners are controlled by their assessments. As Horning (2014: 20) points out, standardised assessments are standardising students 'robbing all teachers and students of their exceptionality and individuality, thereby killing their brains'.

The zombification of learners' educational careers continue, and possibly strengthen as pupils progress through the school years and different Key Stages into Secondary School before the rot finally takes hold in the form of GCSE examinations at the age of 15 and 16 and possibly beyond if they continue their studies at A-Level. Similarly to assessment at primary school level, assessment in secondary schools can also be divided into assessment for learning, with formative tasks and assessment of learning where the learners are summatively assessed. At this level too, despite the increasing focus on formative assessments (Fautley and Savage 2008; Wiliam 2011) assessment is often synonymous to testing. It is well documented within the literature and professional textbooks about helping Postgraduate students to achieve Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) that trainee and Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) should promote a range of formative assessment tasks and value the pupil role in assessment to help support and encourage secondary school pupils' learning. However, this is increasingly challenged by the high stakes nature of end-of-year tests, standardised tests and public examinations. Whilst it is recognised within the literature that testing and examinations are useful because they provide a public record of achievement in a subject (White 2014) they are also considered as problematic for some learners and the schools providing the education. The Tomlinson report (2004) on education provision for the 14–19 curriculum in England and Wales described assessment as 'overburdening' some learners and highlights this as learners are expected to sit over one hundred exams and this is unequally distributed as approximately 40 of these are in the last three years of compulsory secondary education. As White (2014) writing more recently argues, all of the formative on-going and day-to-day assessments that teachers use to help support young people's learning is undone by 'the distress they [examinations] cause, their perversion of the curriculum and of teaching methods, their epistemological shortcomings, their encouragement of an instrumental attitude towards learning' (White 2014: 50). We can see assessment discourses zombifying the education system as academics such as White (2014: 10) describe; 'the uncertain years of adolescence are currently brought into line through the discipline of public examinations. Energies and enthusiasms that might have been deployed elsewhere are funnelled into hard work for GCSE and A-Level success. For many that is: others become disaffected'. It is also questionable in what ways these end of year and public examinations support young people's learning as the increasing 'teaching-to-the-test' discourses within school are taking up a significant amount of A-Level study time (Daly et al. 2012). In a recent study Jones et al. (2014) tested 594 Bio-Science students at the University of Birmingham, the University of Bristol, Cardiff University, the University of Leicester and the University of East Anglia on their knowledge of cells, genetics, biochemistry and physiology. Although most of the students had achieved an A grade at A-Level, the researchers found that the 'students had forgotten about 60 % of everything they had learned for their A-Levels' (Sellgren 2014). As a result of such studies it is clear fifteen years after assessment in schools started to receive an increased interest of attention from academics, teachers and educationists that the purpose of education and the ways it can influence learners, the construction and shaping of their identities, the ways in which they are taught and the

knowledge that they learn (and retain) is still interesting today. It is also somewhat ironic that assessment practices and examination systems are engendering a population of zombies amongst children and young people in education today when society and media often position the youth as zombies, threatening groups of young people wearing hoodies aimlessly walking around and sniffing out trouble. According to journalists such as Baker (2012) writing for the MailOnline, young people are spending too much time playing computer games and they are ‘in danger of losing empathy and the compassion of ‘genuine relationships’’. Arguably, policy-makers should consider the ways in which a constant focus on Learning Outcomes is resulting in learning outliers within the classroom. It is also important to recognise the role of the assessment systems and consequently schooling practices and the shaping of zombified identities within today’s culture and society as much as the young people themselves.

Is There an Antidote?

Similarly to zombies, assessments and particularly the national standardised tests are mindless and just keep coming and coming. The sheer number of assessments that children and young people encounter in their compulsory education means that they are more threatening to learners as this can also have an impact on their experiences of assessment at university. As I highlighted earlier in the chapter, students at university are neither fully alive nor dead. They often appear fresh-faced at the beginning of the new academic year but behind this exterior is the ‘undead’. The experiences of over-assessment, sometimes answering questions without any real critical thought (Horning 2014) and giving formulaic responses has resulted in students’ creativity decaying away and them wandering aimlessly in search of the next test or assignment. As educators, we need to ensure this does not continue to happen and we need to reconnect with the dead-eyed, slack jawed creatures all drifting about with no purpose in the wonders of education and learning. Nelsen (2012) reminds us that we need to ensure our zombie students can belong. It’s important to give learners the tools to be able to understand learning and assessment processes, to ask questions and importantly to gain a response so that they too have some feeling of belonging (Nelsen 2012).

Reflecting upon my experiences and an analysis of the data, Dialogue+ is one example that could provide some of the antidote to support students with their transition from the ‘walking dead’. Giving the students opportunity to engage in dialogue with their lecturers and to ask questions about their assignments gave them a sense of ownership of the assessment. In particular, the students commented on how they valued the opportunity for dialogue, to get specific feedback about their concerns and to then use this formative feedback in future work as one student commented:

I think it's helpful generally, just helping you to kind of understand and thinking about what you are doing in your assignments...I think I understand the marks as well...kind of sometimes when you get a mark back, it's just a number of a piece of paper, you what, what does it actually mean? But it actually really helps to have that dialogue there, with the marker, so that you can kind of understand, and voice your concerns with it, and then get feedback on it.

The interactive coversheet also enabled the students to learn about assessment at university and the ways in which it is different to assessment in compulsory education:

I have learnt about the process of submitting work, and sort of got to know my lecturers a bit more, I've started to use it less really...I'm just a bit more familiar with things I was uncertain with at the beginning, like I now know how to.

Similarly to Nelsen (2012: 241) the Dialogue+ project gave the students a space to 'experience connection [and] reflection...in order to inspire them to imagine the new and just in the face of the old and oppressive'.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has suggested that assessment systems and discourses regarding performativity in compulsory education are having a detrimental impact on the educational careers of children and young people. Although there are differences between assessment of learning and assessment for learning, research suggests that assessment is often synonymous with testing (Hall et al. 2004). Testing, and therefore as I have suggested in this chapter, teaching and learning cannot be blamed on the teachers, given the amount of pressure they are experiencing to perform and succeed within the prescribed standards-driven education system that is influencing the decisions made in schools throughout the United Kingdom (Syal 2013). From the viewpoint of a university lecturer and utilising the metaphorical figure of the zombie, I have described the 'walking dead' students who wander aimlessly into my lecture theatre and seminar room. As a result of what seems like continual assessment, particularly tests such as the SATs, CATs, GCSEs and A-Levels, students are haunted by the performance pressures that they bring. Neither dead nor alive, students hunt out assignment cues and constantly sniff out information for their next assignment whilst their brains and creative thinking decay and rot away. Within universities assessment has received an increasing amount of attention from researchers and lecturers focusing on Assessment for Learning (AfL) in Higher Education (Sambell et al. 2013; Price et al. 2012) and initiatives such as Dialogue+ are helping to support students to understand assessment processes and to give them some ownership of the assessments they are undertaking. This chapter does not offer detailed solutions, nor does it pretend to know all of the answers and while AfL is also a successful feature of compulsory schooling, more needs to be done to tackle assessment policy and the ways in which current pressures on both teachers and learners contribute to the zombification of education.

References

- Alexander, R., & Hargreaves, L. (2007). *Community Soundings: The primary review regional witness sessions*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge and Faculty of Education.
- Alexander, R. (2010). *Children, their world, their education: Final report and recommendations of the Cambridge Primary Review*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Andrews, J. & Clark, R. (2011) *Peer mentoring works!?: How peer mentoring enhances student success in higher education*. http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/what-works-student-retention/Aston_What_Works_Final_Report.pdf. Accessed 17 Nov 2012.
- Andrews, J., Clark, R. & Thomas, L. (2012) *Compendium of effective research practice in higher education retention and success*. Birmingham/York: Aston University/HEA.
- Assessment Reform Group (ARG). (2002). *Assessment for learning: 10 principles – Research-based principles to guide classroom practice*. Cambridge: Assessment Reform Group.
- Baker, D. (2012). Stoned with tiredness: Generation of children are becoming zombies because of late-night gaming sessions, claims charity. *MailOnline*. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2093413/Generation-children-zombies-late-night-gaming-sessions-claims-charity.html#ixzz3II0cJLo3> Accessed: 05 June 2014.
- Ballinger, G. J. (2003). Bridging the gap between A level and degree: Some observations on managing the transitional stage in the study of English Literature. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 2(1), 99–109.
- Barthes, R. (1967). Death of the author. *Aspen*, no. 5–6.
- Beck, I. (1992). *Risk society: Towards a new modernity*. London: Sage.
- Bishop, K. (2009). Dead man still walking: Explaining the zombie renaissance. *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 37(1), 16–25.
- Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998) *Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment*. London: School of Education, King's College London.
- Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B., & Wiliam, D. (2003). *Assessment for Learning: Putting it into Practice*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Bloxham, S., & Campbell, E. (2010). Generating dialogue in assessment feedback: Exploring the use of interactive cover sheets. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 35(3), 291–300.
- Boud, D. (1995). Assessment and learning: Contradictory or complementary? In P. Knight (Ed.), *Assessment for learning in higher education*. London: Kogan Page Ltd.
- Brown, S. (2013). Preface. In K. Sambell, L. McDowell, & C. Montgomery (Eds.), *Assessment for learning in higher education*. London: Routledge.
- Carless, D., & Lam, R. (2014). The examined life: Perspectives of lower primary school students in Hong Kong. *Education 3–13: International Journal of Primary Elementary and Early Years Education*, 42(3), 313–329.
- Clark, L. (2010). Grammar is back... and spelling will also score marks under exams shake-up. *MailOnline*. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1331443/Michael-Gove-brings-grammar-spelling-exam-marks-shake-up.html#ixzz3F56zKk6c>. Accessed 7 May 2014.
- Daly, A. L., Baird, J., Chamberlain, S., & Meadows, M. (2012). Assessment reform: Students' and teachers' responses to the introduction of stretch and challenge at A-level. *The Curriculum Journal*, 23(2), 139–155.
- Department for Children, Schools and Families. (2008). *The assessment for learning strategy*. Nottingham: DCSF.
- Department for Education and Skills. (2004). *14–19 curriculum and qualifications reform: Final report of the Working Group on 14–19 reform (The Tomlinson Report)*. London: DfES.
- Drummond, M. J. (2012). Learning from Jason. In M. J. Drummond (Ed.), *Assessing children's learning*. London: Routledge.
- Fautley, M., & Savage, J. (2008). *Assessment for learning and teaching in secondary schools*. Exeter: Learning Matters.

- Filer, A., & Pollard, A. (2000). *The social world of pupil assessment in primary school*. London: Continuum.
- Gil, N. (2014). *Sixth form students: Get ready for an education without spoonfeeding*. <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/jan/23/sixth-form-students-university-spoonfeeding>. Accessed 15 Aug 2014.
- Green, C., Hamnett, L., & Green, S. (2001). Children put the national tests to the test. *Education 3–13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education*, 29(3), 39–42.
- Hall, K., Collins, J., Benjamin, S., Nind, M., & Sheehy, K. (2004). SATurated models of pupildom: Assessment and inclusion/exclusion. *British Educational Research Journal*, 30(6), 802–817.
- Hanson, F. A. (1994). *Testing testing: Social consequences of the examined life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hopkins, S. (2014). New GCSEs penalise brightest pupils for giving longer answers in language exams, headmistress claims. *MailOnline*. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2737545/New-GCSEs-penalise-brightest-pupils-longer-answers-language-exams-headmistress-claims.html>. Accessed 3 Sep 2014.
- Horning, M. (2014, Spring). Zombification of education (Part 1). *New Mexico English Journal*, 18–21.
- Jones, H., Black, B., Green, J., Langton, P., Rutherford, S., Scott, J., & Brown, S. (2014). Indications of knowledge retention in the transition to higher education. *Journal of Biological Education*, 49(3), 261–273.
- Kantanis, T. (2000). The role of social transition in students' adjustment to the first year of university. *Journal of Institutional Research*, 9, 100–110.
- Lea, M. (1998). Academic literacies and learning in higher education: Constructing knowledge through texts and experience. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 30(2), 156–171.
- Lillis, T., & Scott, M. (2007). Defining academic literacies research: Issues of epistemology, ideology and strategy. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 4(1), 5–32.
- Lowe, H., & Cook, A. (2003). Mind the gap: Are students prepared for higher education? *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 27(1), 53–76.
- Nelsen, P. (2012). Loving the zombie: Arendtian natality in a time of loneliness. *Philosophy of Education*, 235–242.
- O'Neil, P. (2008) Using peer writing fellows in British universities: Complexities and Possibilities. *Across the Disciplines: A Journal of Language, Learning and Academic Writing*. www.wac.colostate.edu/ATD/fellows/index.cfm. Accessed 4 Nov 2015
- Price, M., Rust, C., O'Donovan, B., Handley, K., & Bryant, R. (2012). *Assessment literacy: The foundation for improving student learning*. Oxford: The Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development.
- Reay, D., & Wiliam, D. (1999). I'll be a nothing: Structure, agency and the construction of identity through assessment. *British Educational Research Journal*, 25(3), 343–354.
- Sambell, K., McDowell, L., & Montgomery, C. (2013). *Assessment for learning in higher education*. London: Routledge.
- Sellgren, K. (2014). *Freshers forget 60 % of their A-level studies* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-28014519>. Accessed 16 July 2014.
- Smith, K. (2004). School to university: An investigation into the experience of first-year students of English at British Universities. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 3(1), 81–93.
- Smith, H. (2008). Spoon-feeding: Or how I learned to stop worrying and love the mess. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 13, 715–718.
- Sommerville, E. M., & Creme, P. (2005). Asking Pompeii questions: A co-operative approach to writing in the disciplines. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 10, 17–28.
- Syal, R. (2013). Rise in number of teachers claiming they are under pressure to inflate grades. *The Guardian*. <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/aug/11/academy-schools-teachers-grade-inflation>. Accessed 03 Oct 2014.
- The Task Group on Assessment and Testing (TGAT). (1988). *National curriculum, report*. London: DES.

- White, J. (2014). *Who needs examinations? A story of climbing ladders and dodging snakes*. London: Institute of Education Press.
- Wiliam, D., Lee, C., Harrison, C., & Black, P. (2004) Teachers developing assessment for learning: impact on student achievement. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice*, 11(1), 49–65.
- Wiliam, D. (2011). *Embedded formative assessment*. Bloomington: Solution Tree Press.