



Using some of the comments and suggestions generated by the initial workshop **'Decolonisation and Art History Pedagogy'** in May 2022 which was chaired by Hannah Williams and Stephanie O'Rourke, a second workshop was set up for March 2023 to assess the specific question of how we might think about Decolonising Assessment. Several participants in the 2022 workshop had commented that the very structures used in both the classroom and in assessment were themselves an impediment to decolonial thinking. Ed Wouk, Hannah Williams and James Boaden framed the event in 2023, titled 'Decolonising Assessment?' in the following way:

Within the assessment of student work in the humanities the ability to write an essay with a clear and compelling argument has often been seen as the gold standard. Yet this is a form of writing with its own history, which privileges the kind of knowledge and frameworks for thinking which initially produced it. This short online workshop will ask: Do the assessment forms we use privilege types of learning with colonial roots? How do we design assessments that consider ways of thinking where the essay is not the best fit? What might these assessments look and feel like? Join us for two short presentations on some current thinking on the topic and, what we hope will be, broad discussion amongst participants.

The event was carried out online with participants from across the sector. Following a brief introduction, the participants were broken up into twelve smaller discussion groups of around four or five participants using 'jam boards' to record their responses to the following set of questions:

1. Why should we decolonise assessment? What would be the benefit?
2. What form might a decolonised assessment take?
3. What are the challenges of decolonising assessment?
4. What do you consider risks to changing assessment?

At the end smaller groups fed back to the main group and there was a broader discussion around the stakes of assessment.

In relation to question one, many respondents discussed issues around equality diversity and inclusion which covered the equity of access to education for those with protected characteristics – this was a wide-ranging discussion which varied widely from group to group. Question two also provoked many different responses – one of the most common was alternatives to essay writing which had been laid out in the initial call for participation, from this the idea of student led production informed by non-academic forms of knowledge production and dissemination (such as zines or blogs) were discussed as was more problem led learning that might take the form of 'authentic' forms of assessment linked to employment. The idea of using zines for assessment – already raised in an earlier workshop – was developed at the 2023 AAH conference workshop at UCL/Birkbeck. The challenges and risks included the scepticism of some colleagues, concerns about academic quality, equity of assessment across modules. The mix of participants working in practice based as well as strictly academic contexts at the event allowed for discussion around how grading criteria could be adapted from that used for assessing academic essays to new ways of

looking for the same qualities in more practical work – these issues were taken up in the HEC event for the Bristol conference in 2024 on authentic assessment.

At the AAH conference in 2023 the HEC held a zine making workshop as part of the conference – this was facilitated by Laura Mosely who is an independent publisher running Common Threads Press. Laura showed participants how to produce a six-page zine from one sheet and they cut up old stock of the Art History journal to produce new images on their pages. While this activity was taking place there was general discussion within the group about the potential for this activity to be used in classroom settings, some had used it successfully as a classroom learning exercise and shared knowledge with about that, others were more sceptical and discussed some of their worries around the potential for deskilling. Overall this was a relaxed session that allowed for general discussion around pedagogy between those working in quite different contexts.