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How student beliefs about knowledge and knowing influence their satisfaction with assessment and feedback / Berry O'Donovan

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**Abstract**

Students' beliefs about the nature of knowledge and knowing frame how they interpret their educational experience and their approaches to, and perspectives on, learning, teaching and assessment. This paper draws on previous research identifying the ways of knowing of undergraduates on entry to a UK post-92 university, findings from which confirm the prevalence of absolute beliefs in which knowledge is viewed as certain, uncontested and students are largely authority-dependent. Student perspectives on assessment and feedback are explored based on thematic analysis of student responses within two main categories of beliefs, absolute/dualist versus contextual/pluralist. The paper teases out the implications of these perspectives for students' satisfaction with their assessment and feedback experience in the context of today's increasingly market-orientated higher education environment. Findings demonstrate that student perspectives on, and satisfaction with, assessment and feedback are strongly intertwined with their beliefs on

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knowledge and teaching. Students holding absolute/dualist beliefs considered ‘good’ assessment and feedback practice to entail clear and unambiguous assessment tasks, criteria and standards along with the receipt of unequivocal and corrective feedback. The paper concludes that faced with assessment tasks that move beyond established facts and demonstrable theories it may only be students who view knowledge as relative and mutable that will likely be satisfied with their assessment and feedback experience. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) O'Donovan, Berry, E-Mail: [bodonovan@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:bodonovan@brookes.ac.uk)