

THE BISCUIT ASSESSMENT GAME

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Exploring the challenges of writing, applying and assessing against assessment criteria. An assessment game for all disciplines.



(There are two similar versions of this 'game' for exploring the challenges of writing and applying assessment criteria and some of the tensions around assessment. This version was devised by Paul Kleiman for the series of PALATINE (the HEA's Subject Centre for Dance, Drama and Music) workshops on Starting Out in Assessment 2003-2011. The other version was devised by Sally Brown, Erica Morris and Margaret Price, and is available on Sally's website <https://sally-brown.net/download/2513/>)

HOW TO PLAY

1. Prepare several plates of a selection of c. 6 biscuits*, enough for one plate per table or group. Group size, ideally, should be between 4 - 7.
2. Conceal the plates either somewhere in the room, or cover them on the table.
3. Ask each group to devise and write down the criteria for assessing the 'perfect biscuit. Remind them to write clearly, as the criteria will need to be read by other people. (Time c. 10 min)
4. When the criteria are completed hand the criteria to the next table. Allow a couple of minutes for clarifications/ explanations if needed.
5. Place or reveal the plate of biscuits on each table.
6. Ask each table to assess the biscuits in front of them using only the criteria they've been given. (Time c. 15 min)
7. They can use any grading system of their choice.
8. When assessment is completed (or after the time is up) share their results.
9. Discuss the issues that arise.

* You can have using different types of biscuits e.g a 'cheap and cheerful' selection, or a high-quality one, or a mix of the two. Whatever you choose, each table should get a similar selection.

Some usual discussion points:

- The challenge of using someone else's criteria. This, of course, is standard practice in higher education!
- Interpreting what terms actually mean e.g. dunkability, crunchiness, sweetness etc.
- Lack of information: e.g. if 'must be vegetarian' is a criterion, how do you tell?
- You are assessing 'product' but if you need to know about process how do you get at that?
- The prejudices & preferences that inform assessment decisions e.g. "I hate ginger biscuits".