The Sydney Teaching Colloquium is over for another year. Our thanks to the university community - the 300 or so staff and students - who turned out in full force for two days for fresh, lively and stimulating discussions about assessment, and assessment standards. In opening the Colloquium, the Vice-Chancellor Michael Spence set the tone declaring that it was now time to lift the heavy burden of assessment from the shoulders of staff. Imagine the collective sigh of relief!

This year’s keynotes – David Boud and Chris Rust – not only filled the room each morning, but also gave the keen tweeters among the Colloquium audience much to reflect on. Boud suggested that we needed to shift focus from the provision of feedback to analysing its effects on students’ learning, while Rust argued that the key to assessment change was in developing students’ assessment literacy. Both keynotes will be available in full on video, shortly (along with their slides).

Some 40 or so staff (plus students) presented their work – a good deal of it offering conceptual shifts, practical tips, tools and resources intended to shake up our assessment practices. There was no end to the apps, videos, frameworks, exemplars and matrices on offer to support staff in the task of translating the research evidence into something workable for a classroom full of students.
A wonderful highlight was this year’s Student Colloquium Ambassadors. Identifiable in their orange t-shirts mingling among the crowd, they carried the responsibility of evaluating this year’s event. And what they had to offer did not disappoint. Gently leading the day 2 audience through their three criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of this year’s STC (attendance, collaboration, and quality of the ideas), their final message to Colloquium attendees about assessment was this: “Use the research to inform assessment design; make it relevant, intriguing and challenging; help us see the rationale for the task; give us feedback that is timely and future-focused; and provide opportunities for us to make sense of our feedback.”

A good way to find out what happened at the Colloquium is to visit the twitter hashtag #sydteach14. Or you can read the storified version here. If you attended the Colloquium and did not have a chance to offer your feedback, there is still time to do so. Visit tinyurl.com/lhbk5d3. We look forward to seeing you at next year’s Colloquium.