Testing Testing – embedding professional accreditation to enhance employability within creative disciplines - Conference Presentation

Monkhouse, J.

CURVE is the Institutional Repository for Coventry University

Testing Testing – embedding professional accreditation to enhance employability within creative disciplines

Joy Monkhouse, Faculty of Arts & Humanities
Coventry University

Inspire Lab #HEAArts16

How would you describe yourself?

ART   - A master   - Very good   - Good   - Don't know   - Kind of OK

I.T.   - Uber user   - Very good   - Good   - Don't know   - Kind of OK

MATHS - A wizard   - Very good   - Good   - Don't know   - Kind of OK

How would you describe yourself?

ART   - A master   - Very good   - Good   - Don't know   - Kind of OK

I.T.   - Uber user   - Very good   - Good   - Don't know   - Kind of OK

MATHS - A wizard   - Very good   - Good   - Don't know   - Kind of OK

The challenge

How to formally recognize the industry standard skills required by creative industries.

Initial research…

Potential employers voiced a need for graduates who could quickly demonstrate the required level of knowledge and proficiency.

Aims

Looking at:
- the use of embedded accreditation
- the use of formal tests …in order to enhance student employability within creative disciplines.

Trust and confidence

Teaching & Learning strategy

To embed an industry recognized accreditation scheme using Adobe Certified Associate (ACA).

Constructive alignment (Biggs, 2003)

Key Tools and Technology

- Industry standard software (Adobe CC)

- A pool of part-time, practicing lecturers

- Moodle and support resources

- Adobe online exam portal (Certiport)

Put it to the test!
A leap of faith...

Traditionally art & design students were most commonly assessed via presentation, portfolio and dissertation.

**Can students deliver what
it says on their C.V.?**

Can they do what it says on the tin?

Deep and Surface learning

(Marton and Saljo, 1976)

Qualitative questioning of students, including the **how** and **why**, as well as the **what?** demonstrate a deeper understanding.
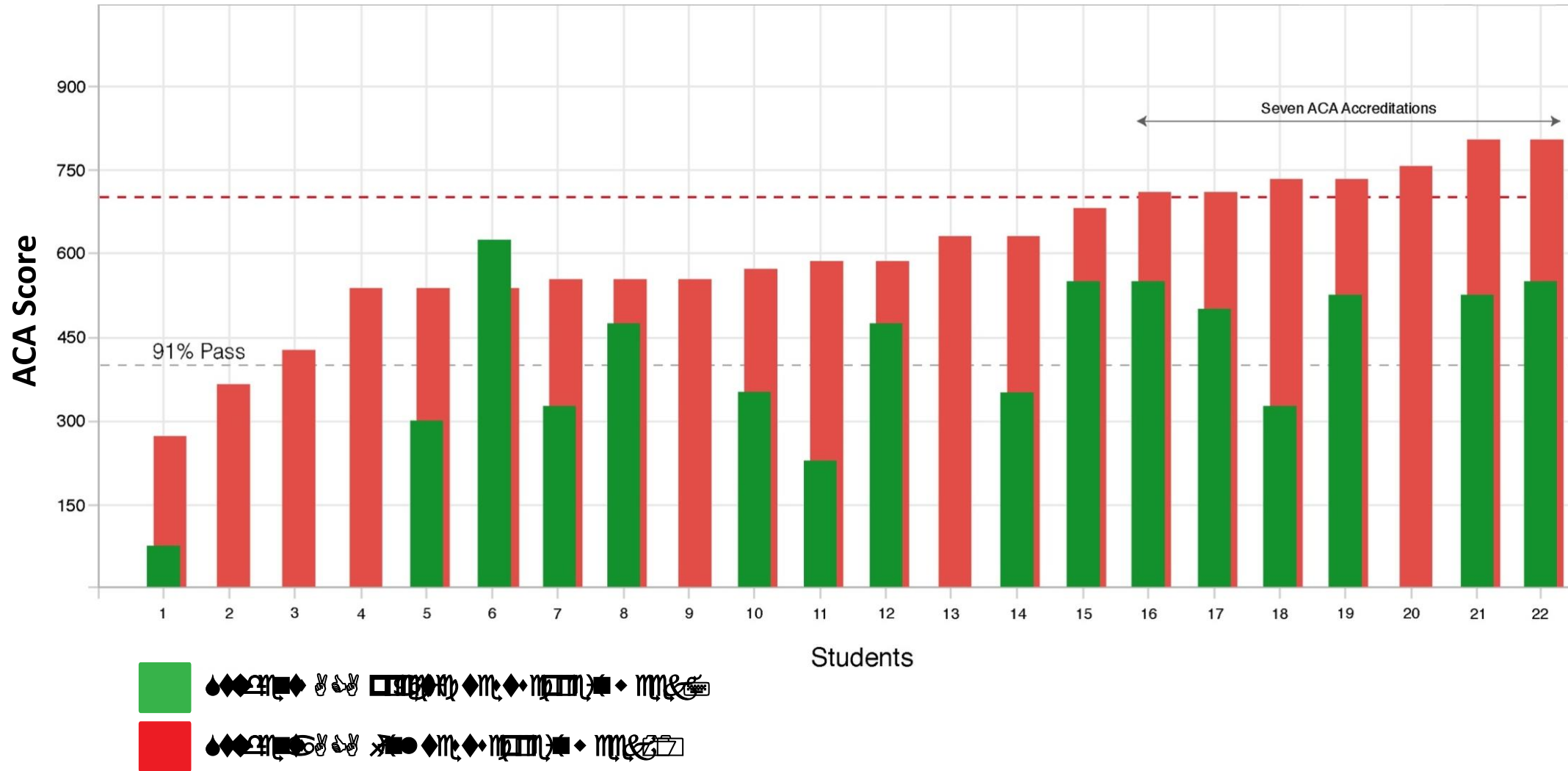
Reflective learning

(Gibbs, 1988)

**Mirror,
Signal,
Manouver…**

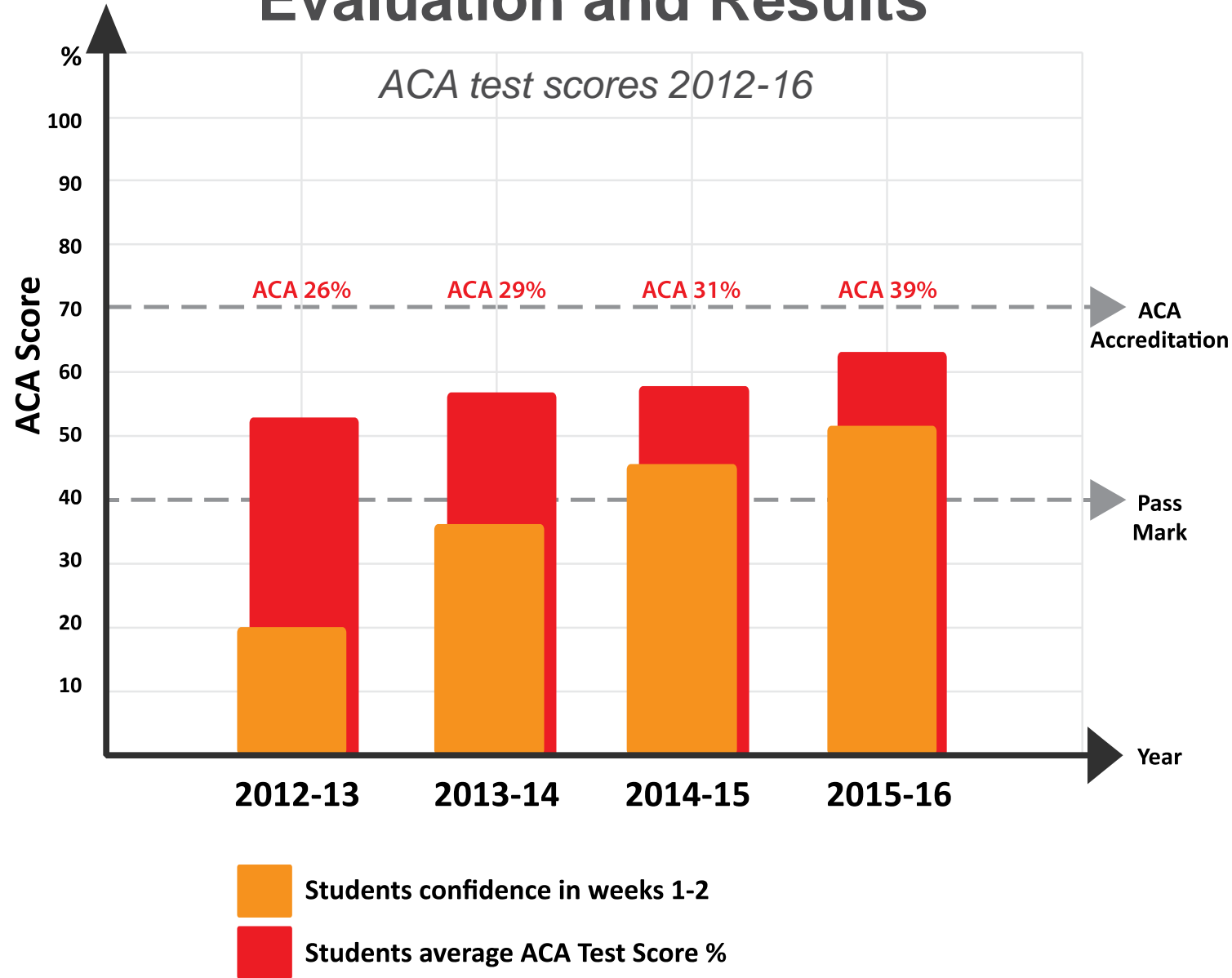By engaging in a cycle of activities students move forward by looking back and reviewing their own performance.

Evaluation and Results

ACA test scores for Photoshop 2013-14 example

Evaluation and Results

ACA test scores 2012-16

A snapshot of surveys and student satisfaction

- 94% positive feedback overall

- 96% overall in 2014
  (DLHE survey 2014)

Feedback from students

- Improved confidence and trust in the assessment tests

- Interviews revealed students gained a wider understanding of creative industry standards

- Boosted confidence in their ability to demonstrate key competencies to potential employers

> "*This will help me get through my degree – I've just got a part-time studio job after telling them about my Adobe certificate.*"
> (1st year Photography student 2014).

Student comments

> " *I had 2 tests to complete and 2 rounds of interviews to get the job, but I had already done Adobe tests so handled it quite well I think.*"
> (Graphic Design graduate 2015).

Review

Students showed strong results and an improved confidence in presenting themselves professionally to secure their chosen career pathway.

The challenge now

- To realise the full potential of industry accredited benchmarking within creative disciplines.

- Continue research and understanding around how this form of assessment is perceived.

- Continue research and understanding of Pedagogy for employability – *share and inspire!*

Thank you