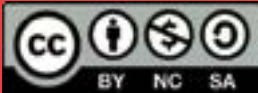




Ideas and inspirations for good practice in assessment

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First published February 2013

Published by
Learning and Teaching Centre,
Australian Catholic University,
North Sydney NSW 2059
www.acu.edu.au/ltc

ISBN 978-1-922097-09-5 (print)
ISBN 978-1-922097-10-1 (electronic)

Acknowledgements to the National Course Directors, Faculty of Arts and Sciences and to Robyn Horner, Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching), Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, Australian Catholic University for the information presented in Table 7.

Photography: Staff of Marketing and External Relations, ACU; Elisabeth Perrin; Pedro Baldoria; David Burke.

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Policy

A new [Assessment Policy](#) is being implemented at Australian Catholic University from the start of 2013 (1 January 2013). This guide provides ideas, direction, support and inspiration for staff to help you work within the new Policy to constantly improve assessment in the units you teach.

This guide also celebrates the winners of the 2013 Good Practice in Assessment Prize. Each of the winning case studies demonstrates the six principles of good assessment which guide the new assessment policy:

1. **Exemplify the Mission of the University through ethical practice**
2. **Encourage, reinforce and be integral to learning**
3. **Measure student achievement at an appropriate standard**
4. **Be fair, inclusive and equitable for all students**
5. **Be developmental and responsive**
6. **Entail reasonable workloads for staff and students**

The case studies were submitted within six categories: **rubrics; moderation and equivalence; large groups; diverse groups; group work; and first year**. The prize-winning entries were chosen from an extraordinarily strong and diverse field of entries.

USING THIS GUIDE

Good practice in assessment is in constant flux due to the demands of keeping pace with students' learning needs. Greater student numbers and diversity in the tertiary sector over recent years have meant that good assessment needs to be responsive, agile and innovative in unprecedented ways. The demands of external stakeholders such as TEQSA and accrediting bodies as well as internal drivers such as the new ACU Assessment Policy and other strategic documents also have an impact upon what can and must be done.

This guide supports the implementation of the Assessment Policy and the Procedures documents. The Assessment Policy provides clear policy direction for ACU in its aims for high quality, rigorous, transparent and ethical assessment. The Procedures provide details on the practical implementation and timing of activities to support the Assessment Policy. All these measures have the ultimate aim of serving the learning needs of ACU students.

In this guide we provide a full explanation of the key principles of assessment and how and where they are embedded in the new Assessment Policy. Next we provide some ideas on using these principles to constantly improve learning and teaching at ACU. Finally, we present the award-winning case studies in good practice in assessment at ACU: how they exemplify the principles of good practice in assessment and how they serve to implement these according to the new Assessment Policy.

[Feedback](#) and suggestions for further development of these guidelines are welcomed.



PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT AT ACU

All of the principles of assessment can apply in multiple cases. This section outlines the principles of assessment that guide the Assessment Policy and provides cross-references to sections in the policy where this principle is actively demonstrated.

1. Assessment must exemplify the Mission of the University through ethical practice.

“Assessment is a transparent process carried out with honesty, integrity and confidentiality.”

Theda Thomas, Chair, Assessment Committee

2. Assessment must encourage, reinforce and be integral to learning.

Areas of the assessment policy where this principle particularly applies are:

- assessment design (4.1 – 4.3)
- number and weighting of assessment tasks (4.6)
- communicating assessment requirements (5) and
- feedback (6).

For example, in providing feedback:

Timely feedback is within 3 weeks of submission or at least 5 calendar days before the next related assessment task is due. (6.2)

3. Assessment must measure student achievement at an appropriate standard.

Key areas of implementation for this principle are assessment design (4.1 – 4.5) and quality assurance and moderation (11). Grades are based on students achieving learning outcomes rather than being linked to their attendance or achievement against a norm (such as a bell curve), for example:

Grades explicitly link to the specified learning outcomes for the unit. (4.3.b)

4. Assessment must be fair, inclusive and equitable for all students.

Assessments are designed to be comparable when offered at more than one location (4.3.g); to be inclusive, and to avoid gender, racial or cultural bias (4.3.i).

Moderation will be undertaken to ensure appropriate assessment design and transparent marking processes (11.2).

See other sections where equity is also significant:

- [assessment design \(4.1 – 4.5\)](#)
- [communication of assessment requirements](#) and schedule to students (5)
- [provision of feedback \(6\)](#)
- [attendance \(7.1 – 7.4\)](#)
- [personal circumstances \(8\)](#). Note the key areas discussed in the policy:
 - 8.1 Permanent disability and/or long-term chronic illness
 - 8.2 Extension of time for submission of an assessment task
 - 8.3 Special examination arrangements
 - 8.4 Deferred examinations
 - 8.5 Other circumstances warranting special consideration
- [supplementary assessment \(9\)](#), and
- [appeals \(10\)](#)

5. Assessment must be developmental and responsive.

Assessment across a course must be designed to offer students opportunities to develop their English language and academic literacy skills in a wide variety of assessment tasks (11.1.2).

See also:

- [assessment design \(4.1 – 4.5\)](#)
- [communicating requirements to students \(5\)](#), and
- [provision of feedback to students \(6\)](#) and
- [course level quality assurance \(11.1\)](#).

6. Assessment must entail reasonable workloads for staff and students.

A recommended assessment schedule for any one unit would include 2 or 3 assessment tasks, none of which is worth more than 65% of the total marks. (4.6.1)

See also other sections on assessment design (4.1 – 4.4; 4.6).



Tools



CRITERION-REFERENCED ASSESSMENT

Assessment grading will be criterion-referenced. (4.2)

In criterion-referenced assessment, standards of achievement (criteria) are set in advance and student performance is evaluated according to those criteria.

Use this checklist (Table 1) to determine whether your unit design aligns with the key principles of criterion-referenced assessment.

Table 1: Checklist for CRA

	Criterion
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Learning outcome statements for the unit clearly identify criteria which will indicate that students have achieved the intended learning outcomes.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Assessment tasks have been chosen that will appropriately assess the learning outcomes.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Qualitative standards or levels of expected performance for the assessment tasks have been described.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Criteria and standards for the assessment tasks have been organised in a marking scheme. Moderation has been planned with markers to develop shared understandings of the expected standards and facilitate consistent application.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The marking scheme will be explained to students prior to the task and it will be used to provide direction and feedback. There is targeted feedback following grading.



ACADEMIC LITERACY

Students do not necessarily come to university knowing how to reference or what academics may call 'academic literacy' or 'academic practice'. Early in first semester of first year they will need support to help them learn the protocols and 'language' of their disciplines.

It is not enough to tell students that they need to adopt academic practices or to direct them to a handbook. Practice and the use of examples are needed so that students can develop competent academic writing and referencing skills.

Suggestions for supporting students' learning of academic literacies:

- Ask the Academic Skills Unit for guidance.
- Use the activities in the ACU booklet *Embedding Academic Literacy in First Year Units of Study* to introduce your students to the meaning of plagiarism and provide some direction for good writing practice.
- Refer students to the guidance in course handbooks for accurate referencing.

- Make referencing an explicit assessment criterion.
- Ask librarians to convene a tutorial on referencing early in semester.
- Refer to 'LEAP into learning' or the [ACU Library Graduate Attribute Toolkit](#), an online referencing module.
- Provide an incorrect reference list containing common errors. Ask students to correct the list and then compare with a peer.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCY

In the new era of greater diversity in the tertiary student body English language competency is a major challenge. The new assessment policy reflects TEQSA requirements that students requiring support and development of their English language as well as academic literacy are identified within the first few weeks of the first year of their degree and that their development is supported across their course of study. Please see the case study on skills assessment for an example of how this can be done (p. 51).



ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Australian Catholic University, through its Mission and all its activities, is committed to principles of ethical behaviour and integrity among its staff and students, and these principles underpin all aspects of learning and teaching, research and service. The University values a culture of honesty and mutual trust, and expects all members of the University to respect and uphold these values at all times and in all their activities. (Academic Honesty Policy).

The Framework for Academic Integrity and the Academic Honesty Policy need to be implemented at all levels of ACU in order to uphold the University's values and to support the development of appropriate academic practices among students.

No one area of the University has sole responsibility for 'enforcing' honesty. The Centre for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE) has several resources dealing with these issues. The four main strategies mentioned in that material are as follows (Centre for the Study of Higher Education, 2009):

1. A collaborative effort to recognise and counter plagiarism at every level from policy, through faculty/division and school/department procedures, to individual staff practices;
 2. Thoroughly educating students about the expected conventions for authorship and the appropriate use and acknowledgment of all forms of intellectual material;
 3. Designing approaches to assessment that minimise the possibility for students to submit plagiarised material, while not reducing the quality and rigour of assessment requirements;
 4. Installing highly visible procedures for monitoring and detecting cheating, including appropriate punishment and re-education measures.
- Observe that the detection of dishonesty is listed last. It is more effective to design assessment tasks that minimise the possibility for students to submit plagiarised material than to attempt to detect such dishonesty after students have submitted their work. It is worthwhile checking the CSHE website, in particular the 36 strategies to minimise plagiarism presentation. TurnItIn can also be used as a powerful tool to support students' learning in academic literacies.



DESIGNING ASSESSMENT TASKS

Carefully designed assessment tasks directly affect the way students approach their study and so contribute to the quality of their learning. Well-designed assessment provides clear expectations, establishes a reasonable workload, and provides opportunities for students to monitor their own progress, practise their skills and receive feedback.

Assessment is **an integral part of the learning process**. Assessment tasks should both measure and develop the learning outcomes and graduate attributes.

Assessment should both help students learn (assessment for learning) and measure their learning (assessment of learning). (Assessment Policy 4.1)

The [criteria for designing assessments \(4.3\)](#) require assessments to be designed to match discipline accreditation requirements and AQF and TEQSA standards (4.3.a); to use a variety of tasks (4.3.d); to challenge students (4.3.e); to enable differentiation of levels of achievement (4.3.f); and to be equitable and ethical (4.3.g – 4.3.k).

The five-part Assessment Checklist (Table 2) has been adapted from the University of Southern Queensland's *Good Practice in Assessment Guide* (also adapted from Boud 2009), and may provide a guide for assessment design, evaluation and review.

Table 2: Five-part assessment checklist

Alignment of assessment with unit and course aims	Yes	Maybe	No
Assessment is the focus of my unit planning			
Unit assessment contributes to overall course goals/aims/objectives			
Assessment enables students to demonstrate forms of learning described in all unit learning outcomes			
Assessment contributes to the development of disciplinary mastery			
Assessment contributes to the development of other course level goals including accreditation standards and graduate attributes			

Assessment OF learning	Yes	Maybe	No
Assessment measures student performance against explicit, relevant criteria and standards			
Assessment task is appropriate given students' prior learning in my discipline			
Examiner expectations about performance standards for specific tasks are made transparent for students through the use of marking guidelines, assessment instructions and/or marking rubrics			
Assessment tasks meet all unit learning outcomes, disciplinary content and relevant graduate attributes			
There is a moderation process for reaching consensus amongst all teaching team members (including sessional staff) about expected standards of student performance in assessment			

Assessment FOR learning	Yes	Maybe	No
The first assessment item occurs early enough in semester to engage students with their unit (Assessment Policy 4.4.1 states this should be within the first six weeks for first years)			
The first assessment item is a manageable task designed to build students' skills, knowledge and confidence			
Assessment tasks contribute to the development of the graduate attribute skills stated in the unit learning outcomes			
Assessment tasks target coherent, integrated forms of learning			
Assessment tasks engage students in active, authentic learning experiences			

Feedback on assessment	Yes	Maybe	No
Feedback on assessment provides specific information about how students can improve their work			
Feedback is timely so students can use it to build their competency for subsequent tasks			
Assessment feedback activities are used to develop students' capacity for judgment and their understanding of assessment norms and standards. For example, students are given opportunities to evaluate each other using a marking rubric			
Assessment feedback provided to students incorporates the type of academic skills and/or support required for students to learn from errors and/or changes required from them for the next assessment			

Fairness	Yes	Maybe	No
Assessment in a given unit presents a reasonable workload for students (<i>Assessment Policy 4.6.2</i>)			
Assessment in a given unit presents a reasonable workload for staff			
Assessment provides a comparable experience for all students regardless of background, access, campus or mode of study			



KINDS OF ASSESSMENT

There are many assessment methods in use and they all have their own pluses and minuses. For this reason, and also because it is not possible to assess all learning outcomes and graduate attributes for a unit with one method, the assessment design of a unit should include diverse assessment methods which take the specific benefits and limitations of each method into account.

Assessment tasks will be designed so that they use a variety of tasks to measure the different learning outcomes of the unit. (4.3.d)

Table 3 presents some of the benefits and limitations of some of the most commonly used types of assessment.

Table 3: Benefits and limitations of assessment types

Type of assessment	Benefits	Limitations
Regular practical work	<p>Keeps students “on task”</p> <p>Encourages students early rather than later</p> <p>Formative in nature as there are opportunities for students and teachers to make adjustments</p> <p>Can encourage application, translation and interpretation of concepts learnt</p>	<p>Can be time-consuming for teachers</p>
Final exams	<p>Assurance that the product belongs to the student</p> <p>Assurance that students have attained the knowledge, skills and dispositions tested in the exam</p> <p>Less time-consuming to mark than extended writing</p>	<p>Merely summative</p> <p>A measure of recall</p> <p>Often reproduction rather than transformation of information because of time limits</p>
Essays and extended writing assignments	<p>Opportunity to develop an extended argument</p> <p>Encourages depth of learning</p> <p>Opportunity to develop capacity to interpret, translate, apply, critique and evaluate</p> <p>Opportunity to pose problems and to conduct inquiry</p> <p>Opportunity to explore beyond the boundaries of what is known</p>	<p>Time-consuming to assess</p>
Field reports	<p>Authentic form of assessment</p> <p>Develops observation and recording skills</p> <p>Requires organisation skill</p>	<p>Could be costly to supervise</p> <p>Difficult to timetable</p> <p>Need to consider additional and site specific ethical and safety issues</p>
Research article review	<p>Requires interpretation and evaluation</p> <p>Opportunity to understand how experts proceed</p>	<p>Not appropriate for introductory level students</p>
Group work	<p>Encourages collaboration, cooperation and communication</p> <p>Encourages independence by students</p> <p>Opportunity for authentic skill development</p>	<p>Difficult to assess individual input</p> <p>Time-consuming for students to organise</p> <p>Time-consuming for staff to prepare students for successful groupwork</p> <p>Can disadvantage students if groupwork is not well supported</p>

Type of assessment	Benefits	Limitations
<p align="center">Portfolios</p>	<p>Can be used to demonstrate progress towards, and achievement of topic or course objectives</p> <p>Encourages understanding of complexity of professional roles</p> <p>Enables synthesis of what students have learnt across a number of topics</p> <p>Capacity to use new understandings in novel ways in unpredictable work contexts</p> <p>Valid and authentic assessment as students can include real world tasks</p> <p>Focus on higher order thinking</p> <p>Students have to accept a high degree of responsibility</p>	<p>Needs careful framing of the requirements to ensure judicious selection and interpretation of material</p> <p>Time-consuming for students to prepare</p> <p>Time-consuming for teachers to assess</p>
<p align="center">Class presentations</p>	<p>Can encourage group cohesion and collaboration</p> <p>Can enable peer feedback</p>	<p>Time-consuming for all students to present individually</p>

Source: adapted from Flinders University 2009



Table 4 provides some methods that might be used to assess each of the ten graduate attributes. In order to develop graduate attributes students need to be provided with opportunities to practice them and should be assessed on their attainment.

Table 4: Assessing graduate attributes

Graduate Attributes	Methods, strategies and examples
1. Demonstrate respect for the dignity of each individual and for human diversity	Case studies Stakeholder analyses Group tasks where students are assigned to diverse teams
2. Recognise their responsibility to the common good, the environment and society	Include aspects of these as criteria in various types of assessments Ask students to reflect on their responsibilities relating to different aspects of social justice or the environment Role plays
3. Apply ethical perspectives in informed decision making	Debates Essays Ethical dilemmas Ethical considerations in statistics or research Application of codes of ethics
4. Think critically and reflectively	Journals Reflection on learning
5. Demonstrate values, knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the discipline and/or profession	Authentic assessment tasks
6. Solve problems in a variety of settings taking local and international perspectives into account	Case studies from international and local contexts

Graduate Attributes	Methods, strategies and examples
7. Work both autonomously and collaboratively	<p>Students can develop a schedule and then evaluate themselves against this.</p> <p>Peer review can be used to help students develop their ability to evaluate</p> <p>Group or team tasks.</p> <p>Group contracts</p>
8. Locate, organise, analyse, synthesise and evaluate information	<p>Annotated bibliography</p> <p>Analysis of article/s</p> <p>Research essay</p> <p>Research presentation</p> <p>Analysis of current topics from newspaper articles</p> <p>Report writing – synthesising, summarising and organizing information – can include use of graphs, tables and figures</p>
9. Demonstrate effective communication in oral and written English language and visual media	<p>Oral communication: debates, discussions, role plays or presentations.</p> <p>Written communication: essays, reports, summaries, case studies, posters, exhibitions, theses or dissertations.</p>
10. Utilise information and communication and other relevant technologies effectively	<p>Online discussions, web resources, blogs or wikis</p>



Online assessment

Good practice in assessment is the same no matter what the medium and all the suggestions and examples listed in this guide apply to online assessment.

Online assessment can take many forms, not just multiple choice quizzes. They can be:

- Written assignments
- Essays
- Interactives e.g. drag-and-drop, labelling, sequencing
- Online quizzes and questions
- Collaborative assignment work
- Portfolios
- Online exams (open-book; structured; timed)
- Practicals
- Simulations
- Case studies
- Participation in online discussions
- Publication of student work /presentations
- Experiential activities, such as role-play
- Debates
- Reviews
- Journals and reflection

Table 5: Advantages and disadvantages of online assessment

Advantages	Disadvantages
Can provide instant feedback	Technical ability needed to develop
Can use databases of detailed feedback	Dependency on reliability of technology
Assessment software	Possible increased risk of academic dishonesty
Assignments can be shared	
Easy distribution to markers	
Marking can be automated	
Assignments can be returned quickly and easily	



Assessing online discussion

It is not uncommon for lecturers to want to link an assessment to online discussion in order to encourage students to contribute to the communication and collaboration activities. Here are some of the questions that need to be considered:

- Should the discussion be compulsory or not?
- At what level? Quality and quantity...
- How useful are the tools for tracking participation?
- Should it be formative or summative assessment?
- Big or small class? Should the students be divided into small groups?
- How do I assess collaborative tasks?
- What is a reasonable timeframe for the task?
- How do I incorporate variety?

NEW GRADE DESCRIPTORS

As part of the review of the ACU Assessment Policy new Grade Descriptors (Table 6) have been developed. Please note that the Conceded Pass Grade (PC) has now been abolished.

Assessment tasks will be designed so that they use valid criteria and standards that discriminate between and enable differentiation of students' levels of achievement. (4.3.f)

Table 6: Grade descriptors

Final Result Grade	Notation	Range Guide (%) ¹	Numerical Equivalent	Descriptor
High Distinction	HD	85-100	7	Consistent evidence of comprehensive understanding of the unit content; demonstration of an extremely high level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative; substantial originality and insight in identifying, creating and developing arguments, perspectives and critical evaluation of problems; and high level of communication and application appropriate to the discipline.
Distinction	DI	75-84	6	Consistent evidence of very high level of understanding of unit content; development of relevant skills to a high level; evidence of creative insight and ability to apply relevant skills and theories as well as interpretive and analytical ability; and demonstration of appropriate and highly effective communication.
Credit	CR	65-74	5	Evidence of a good level of understanding, knowledge and skill development in relation to unit content; and demonstration of high level of interpretive and analytical ability.
Pass	PA	50-64	4	Evidence of satisfactory understanding of basic unit content; development of relevant skills to a competent level; adequate interpretive and analytical ability; and adequate communication of information and concepts in terms of disciplinary requirements or conventions.
Pass Ungraded ²	PS	50-100		Evidence of satisfactory understanding of basic unit content; development of relevant skills to a competent level; adequate interpretive and analytical ability; and adequate communication of information and concepts in terms of disciplinary requirements or conventions.
Fail	NN	0-49	1	Little or no attainment of learning outcomes, with limited understanding of course content or skill development.

¹ The percentage range for final results is a guide and should be interpreted in conjunction with the descriptors.

² Pass (PS) grades in units assessed on a Pass/Fail scale are excluded from the calculation of a grade point average.

Case Studies

In this section we present the prize-winning case studies in the categories of rubrics, moderation and equivalence, large groups, diverse groups, group work and first year. Each of these case studies embed the six principles of good assessment into their design.

RUBRICS

As stated earlier in this guide, at ACU we use criterion-referenced assessment or CRA. CRA is often thought to be fiendishly complicated, and indeed, it is complex until some fundamental concepts are grasped. The key thing to remember is that the most important value for CRA is standards. CRA is 'about' identifying that students have achieved the learning outcomes for an assessment task and measuring how well. The level or standard of how well students achieve the learning outcomes is pre-set according to defined criteria and does not depend on the grades of other students in the cohort. The criteria are often set out in a **RUBRIC** which not only communicates standards but provides vital **feedback** to students regarding their performance.

Possible rubric models for an essay

There are many different types of rubric. A valuable or 'successful' rubric can be judged by how well it serves its purpose.

Below is an example of the ways in which a rubric for an essay can be used.

Say the task is an essay for first year in a theory-based unit of study. In the unit outline for this unit, the essay task will be detailed, and the learning outcomes with the embedded graduate attributes stated. One of the learning outcomes might be:

Learning Outcome: Having successfully completed this unit you should be able to clearly describe and discuss a current theory in written English and apply it to a given scenario. (GA 9)

This learning outcome can be broken up into the following criteria:

Criteria	High Distinction (A)	Distinction (B)	Credit (C)	Pass (D)	Fail (E)
Clarity of description and discussion of theory					
Accuracy of written English					
Appropriateness of application of theory					



Whether or not you fill in the various levels of achievement of this rubric with a written description of what is required depends on how you want to use the rubric. Sometimes a marker is required to fill in the various sections describing the performance of the student, providing personalised feedback. Sometimes markers fill in the various levels with a numerical grade. More often, descriptors are written in the grade levels providing a grading guide or schema for markers and students. Here is an example of how this is often done, using the first row of our demonstration rubric.

Criteria	High Distinction (A)	Distinction (B)	Credit (C)	Pass (D)	Fail (E)
Clarity of description and discussion of theory	A clear and comprehensive description of the theory with a detailed and well supported discussion illuminating key aspects of its history, use, limitations and pitfalls which is linked to a broad range of relevant sources	The main features as well as more obscure characteristics of the theory are clearly described and the discussion illuminates key aspects of its history, use, limitations and pitfalls linked to a range of relevant sources	The main features of the theory are clearly described and the discussion illuminates key aspects of its history, use and limitations using key sources	The main features of the theory are clearly described and the discussion accurately represents key aspects of its use	The description and discussion of the theory is unclear.

In the following case study, Tracey Harris successfully uses another kind of rubric for her Q&A assessment task. It can be seen that its main features are that the criteria are very clearly drawn from the learning outcomes and that the levels of achievement are clearly delineated.



Tracey Harris

**CASE STUDY:
SOCIAL WORK & POLICY Q&A PANEL**

Prize category: Rubrics

Winner: Tracey Harris

Faculty: Social Work

Discipline: Policy

Year of study: Masters

Assessment type: Presentation/video

Academic skill: Analytical, interactional
and policy practice

Location: Brisbane campus

About the author:

Tracey has been with ACU 5 years where she has taught many units including, Introduction to Social Work, Individuals, Families & Children, Group Work and I currently teach Public and Social Policy and Field Education. She is also Manager of the Field Education Program. Her research interests are in field education, social policy, professional practice supervision. She is a member of the Queensland Branch of the AASW and has won 2 National Business Awards in 2011 and 2012 for her consulting business Amovita Consulting.

“ The Q & A rubric was designed to capture both the theoretical and practice components of the unit content as it is mapped to the learning outcomes of the unit and university Graduate Attributes. In all our units we focus on ensuring our matrix encompasses all three key areas. Across our social work team we endeavour also to discuss each of the unit areas at least once in the development phase and how we might weight each of the learning areas of the unit.

In the case of the Q & A the weightings were decided on the key learning areas of the curriculum, how these assessment areas would appellate to the learning outcomes and the key features of the social work program. For example in the Q & A rubric, I was looking to students to demonstrate a critical understanding of the policy context and evidence of how they transferred the learning and knowledge from class and the unit content into the assessment activity.

I then inversed this by looking at the assessment activity and mapping retrospectively to the assessment activity and the rubric to ensure it met this criteria as well. This process and framework was then used throughout the whole rubric. The challenge is always what marks to award to the rubric and then being able to take the matrix and award the appropriate amount of marks in the rubric. In this case the weighting was evenly distributed given the importance of each of the key learning areas.

The students continually provide feedback that they appreciate and value having the rubric at the beginning of the semester as it is included in the unit outline. We discuss the rubric in class as part of the learning process and how they can maximise marks as awarded in the rubric, how to approach this and how to embody the transfer of learning and knowledge process. This also ensures that from a neuroscience perspective that students prepare for the assessment activity more positively minimising stress and therefore maximising the learning process and successful transfer of knowledge to incorporate into practice. ”

Q & A Panel Presentation (LO 1,2,3,5) (GA 1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9,10)	Marks
<p>Demonstration of an in depth understanding of the policy area and related issues, demonstrating evidence of knowledge of the policy topic, ability to critically analyse the policy topic and any key issues, and evidence of research into the policy topic. (5 Marks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (5/4.5) Outstanding ability to understand and critique the policy topic and any related issues. Advanced level of skill and ability to analyse the topic and relevant key issues including breadth and depth of research on the policy topic presented. Clearly provides a knowledge base on the policy topic. Consistently interprets the information accurately. Takes the assessment task beyond the required outcome. • (4) High level of understanding on the topic and associated issues. Is clearly able to analyse the key issues including breadth and depth of research on the policy topic presented. Has a good depth and breadth of knowledge on the policy topic and can articulate multiple mediums in which the policy topic takes places. Demonstrates the ability to interpret the information accurately. • (3.5) Good understanding of the topic and any related issues. Is able to analyse the key issues and how this informs policy or the public arena. Demonstrates sufficient depth and breadth to the policy area. There is some level of interpretation of the information accurately. • (3/2.5) Satisfactory understanding of the topic and any related issues. There are some omissions or misconceptions about the key issues and how they inform policy or strategic directions. Lacks the ability to demonstrate depth or breadth in knowledge of the policy topic. Whilst there is some demonstration of ability to interpret the information accurately there are clear gaps in understanding. • (2) Poor understanding of the topic and any related issues. There are significant omissions or misconceptions evident and a lack of ability to synthesise the key issues and how they inform policy or play out in the public domain. Little ability demonstrated to accurately interpret the information. • (1) Fails to identify with the topic and any related issues. Is unable to provide evidence of an ability to identify the key issues or depth of knowledge of the policy topic. No ability demonstrated in interpreting the information accurately. 	<p>Weight = 1</p> <p style="text-align: right;">/5 x 1</p>
<p>Demonstrate an ability to appropriately respond to questions posed from the audience and other panel members, identify and outline a position in relation to the policy area, use of evidence and reference to research and policy papers to support your position other than just opinion. (5 marks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (5/4.5) Outstanding ability to respond to questions posed from the audience and other panel members. Can clearly and confidently outline a position in relation to the policy area, uses evidence and research to outline a position and can support the position from multiple mediums/policy arenas other than opinion. Takes the policy topic beyond the scope of the assessment task. • (4) High level ability to respond to questions posed from the audience and other panel members. Can clearly and confidently articulate a position on the policy topic. Uses a number of mediums to demonstrate knowledge in the area and to support a position. • (3.5) Sound ability to respond to questions posed from the audience and other panel members. There is some hesitation to clearly and confidently articulate a position on the policy topic, lack of knowledge across the policy area and is unable to support the position through a number of policy mediums. • (3/2.5) Demonstrates a satisfactory ability to respond clearly and confidently to questions posed from the audience and other panel members. There is evidence of research and knowledge in the policy area and an ability to demonstrate a position in a number of policy mediums. 	<p>Weight = 1</p>

Q & A Panel Presentation (LO 1,2,3,5) (GA 1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9,10)	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (2) There is clearly limited ability to respond to questions posed from the audience and other panel members. Is unable to clearly articulate a position on the policy area, including lack of research and knowledge on the policy topic. Does not articulate any mediums to support a policy position other than opinion. • (1) No demonstrated ability to respond to questions posed from the audience and other panel members. Is unable to articulate any position on the policy area nor provide evidence of research or knowledge on the policy topic. Does not understand the policy topic and lacks an opinion on the policy topic. 	/5 x 1
<p>Presentation skills – An ability to clearly and confidently communicate in such a forum, respond to questions from the audience and other panel members, make clear and succinct commentary on the policy area, engagement of the audience persuasive argument and use of policy practice skills as discussed in class including interactional, analytical, influencing credibility and relationship building skills. (5 marks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (5/4.5) Outstanding presentation skills, communicates with confidence, is clear in diction, body language, articulation of the policy area, can synthesise the policy topic in a number of domains and engages the audience with relevant and high level presentation skills. Provides high level commentary on the policy area and can be persuasive in argument of the topic. Demonstrates to a high level the use of policy practice skills as discussed in class. Takes the assignment task beyond the required outcome. • (4) High level presentation skills demonstrated. Communicates with confidence, is relatively clear in diction, body language, can articulate the policy topic and the wider debates in the policy arena. Can synthesise the policy topic well across a number of domains and engages the audience very well with the use of presentation skills. Provides valued commentary on the topic area, invites questions and uses policy practice skills as discussed in class to a high level of skill. • (3.5) Demonstrated sound presentation skills to a sound level. Communicates with some confidence, is somewhat clear at times in diction, body language and can articulate the policy topic well however lacks the knowledge and skill to integrate to the wider policy debates and domains. Engages the audience most of the time through valued commentary and presentation skills. Is considerate in using the policy practice skills discussed in class although does not utilise well to capture the audience at times. • (3/2.5) A sound presentation that demonstrates knowledge and skills across most areas including the policy topic, policy practice skills and presentation skills. Endeavours to articulate the policy topic. Demonstrates an integration of knowledge into the wider policy domain. Engages the audience at different times throughout the presentation however lacks the ability to keep the engagement process continuing throughout. • (2) Little ability demonstrated to present the policy topic and communicate in such a forum or respond to questions from the audience. Is unable to make clear and succinct commentary on the policy topic and unable to be persuasive in argument. Does not consider the policy practice skills as discussed in class or integrates them into the presentation. • (1) No evidence of the ability to present in such an environment, take questions or provide commentary on the policy topic. No research or reading evident in the presentation to inform the policy topic and no evidence of policy practice skills as discussed in class. Information may be inaccurate and opinions not congruent with the policy topic. 	Weight = 1 /5 x 1
FINAL MARK	/15



MODERATION AND EQUIVALENCE

The key process for pre-setting standards to defined criteria is **MODERATION**. Moderation is not only 'about' setting and marking assessment tasks. Good moderation is cyclical and occurs at various times throughout the unit design and implementation process to check that assessment is valid, equitable and rigorous. It is also vital to ensure that equivalence of assessment is implemented and maintained over units which are parts of national courses. Examples of excellent moderation include regular meetings of all teachers (including sessional staff) involved in unit and course delivery to discuss and decide on the precise meaning of learning outcomes, the efficacy of assessment tasks to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes and to agree on the choice and meaning of the grading criteria. Ideally the first teaching team meeting should occur during the development of the unit outline or at least well before the unit outline is released to students.

Good moderation is cyclical and embedded in unit design. To achieve a complete cycle:

- assessments should be designed so that they are clearly linked to the **learning outcomes**;
- pre-marking meetings or other activities should be undertaken to ensure that those engaged in various aspects of grading are able to clarify and agree on their understanding of the assessment criteria;
- assessment criteria must be clearly communicated to students, both in the pre-assessment phase and also when providing feedback
- assessments should be subjected to regular review: their frequency, style and the relative success rate of students need to be appraised as regular part of the improvement cycle.

What does Equivalence mean and how do we achieve it?

TEQSA (2011, p.14), requires that universities design their courses and units “to ensure equivalent student learning outcomes regardless of a student’s place or mode of study”. How do we ensure equivalent learning outcomes and what does that mean?

The first step in designing equitable assessments should be to ensure that all parties understand the learning outcomes in the same way. The achievement of the learning outcomes and graduate attributes should drive the design of the assessment tasks and the standards that the students are expected to achieve. This would require an initial discussion among the team across the campuses.

For assessments to be equivalent they should:

- Be of a similar type
- Have criteria that measure the same learning outcomes – with the same standards specified for pass, credit, distinction, etc
- Develop the same graduate attributes and have similar criteria to measure them
- Be similar in terms of whether it is individual or group
- Be of the same weighting and same workload for students (including meeting word limits)

The easiest way of ensuring equivalence is to have the same assessment with the same weighting, criteria and standards on all campuses. This is not always possible.

Example 1: Oral Assessment

In one class you might have a debate and in another a presentation. The size of the class might be one of the factors that determine what it is possible to undertake. They are both oral and should help the students develop their oral communication skills. If the oral requires the student to develop and defend an argument or a particular point of view, you could argue that they both help students develop similar critical thinking skills. They can be set to measure the same learning outcomes of the unit and be weighted the same.

Debates are generally undertaken as a group so one would expect that the oral presentation would also need to be undertaken as a group to be considered equivalent.

The issue of how much work is involved in each is difficult to determine – the actual presentation or debate is the tip of the iceberg as much of the work is in the research that needs to be undertaken. What do the students have to do to undertake the assignment and how much time and effort will it take in total? (Not just the number of minutes they are talking.)

Example 2: Case Study

There may be a situation where you have different laws that govern a particular case in the different states. You could design a case study for the students but each state would apply their own state laws to the particular case study. The criteria used to evaluate the case study should be the same.

Example 3: 3D Art Object

The different states may have access to different studios, materials or equipment which means that they will need to have a variety of assessments. Assume that you were designing one assignment and giving students a choice of the medium or method that they could use in their design. How would you then ensure that they were meeting the learning outcomes and graduate attributes of the unit – what criteria could you use in your evaluation to ensure the standards are met despite the students’ choice? Apply those same criteria and standards across the campuses in the marking of the objects.



Equivalent Standard

In addition we also need to ensure equivalence of the standard of marking.

Moderation

In addition to designing equivalent assessment it is important for us to ensure that we mark to an equivalent standard.

On the same campus: The teaching team must be brought together at the start of the marking process to ensure that they all mark in the same way. (Or the marking should be split by question and each person marks particular questions.)

Across campus: Moderation will be conducted across campuses for at least two units per semester. These will be rotated so that a particular lecturer will not be asked to moderate two semesters in a row.

Acknowledgements to the National Course Directors, Faculty of Arts and Sciences and to Robyn Horner, Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching), Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, Australian Catholic University who contributed this information.

Table 7: Guide for achieving equivalence

%	Type	Length/Value	Bloomian attributes in learning outcomes (see attached list for examples you might find the learning outcomes of your unit). The tasks listed are useful to test:						Graduate attributes (check which ones are covered in the learning outcomes of your unit)									
			Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation	demonstrate respect for the dignity of each individual and for human diversity	recognise their responsibility to the common good, the environment and society	apply ethical perspectives in informed decision making	think critically and reflectively	demonstrate values, knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the discipline and/or profession	solve problems in a variety of settings taking local and international perspectives into account	work both autonomously and collaboratively	locate, organise, analyse, synthesise and evaluate information	demonstrate effective communication in oral and written English language and visual media utilise information and communication and other relevant technologies effectively.	
60	Research Essay	2400 words			✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓	
50	Annotated bibliography	2000 words				✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓	
	Essay	2000 words				✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓	
	Exegetical analysis	2000 words				✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓	
	Case study	2000 words			✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓				✓	
	Exam	2 hours	✓	✓			✓					✓	✓					
40	Annotated bibliography	1600 words				✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓	
	Essay	1600 words				✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓	
	Exegetical analysis	1600 words				✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓	
	Case study	1600 words			✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓				✓	
	Exam	1.5 hours	✓	✓			✓					✓	✓					
	Joint Wiki	Approx. 1000 words per student	✓	✓	✓										✓			✓
30	Integrative response to journal (identify key insights and changes)	1200 words (journal text separate)			✓	✓		✓				✓	✓					✓
	Peer-reviewed Critical Reflection	300 words plus 2 responses			✓	✓		✓				✓	✓					✓
	Interview	1200 words			✓	✓			✓		✓			✓				✓
	Essay	1200 words			✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓		✓

%	Type	Length/Value	Bloomian attributes in learning outcomes						Graduate attributes (check which ones are covered in the learning outcomes of your unit)										
			Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation	demonstrate respect for the dignity of each individual and for human diversity	recognise their responsibility to the common good, the environment and society	apply ethical perspectives in informed decision making	think critically and reflectively	demonstrate values, knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the discipline and/or profession	solve problems in a variety of settings taking local and international perspectives into account	work both autonomously and collaboratively	locate, organise, analyse, synthesise and evaluate information	demonstrate effective communication in oral and written English language and visual media utilise information and communication and other relevant technologies effectively.		
25	Powerpoint presentation	Individual 20 mins				✓	✓											✓	
	Debate	Individual contribution 10 mins			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓			✓	
	Essay	1000			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	
	Exam	1 hour	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓								
	Blog analysis (identify key insights and changes)	1000 words (blog text separate)			✓	✓	✓												✓
20	Article review	800 words		✓		✓		✓										✓	
	Vodcast presentation	15 minutes		✓		✓		✓										✓	
	Best 4 discussion board posts	800 words (4 x 200)		✓		✓		✓	✓									✓	
	Short answer in class test	50 minutes	✓	✓															
	Minitest	25 mins	✓	✓														✓	
	Online multiple choice quiz	25 mins																	✓
	Summary of a reading	400		✓		✓													✓
	Critical response to a reading	400		✓		✓		✓											✓

This table was developed by Associate Professor Robyn Horner (Associate Dean Learning and Teaching) and Associate Professor David Sim, both from the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy and has been used here with permission.



Part of the team who developed the moderation resource. From left: Natalie Gamble, Assoc. Prof. Duncan Nulty (Griffith University), Paula Williams, Dr Peter Le Rossignol.

CASE STUDY: DEVELOPMENT OF A RESOURCE TO FACILITATE CROSS-CAMPUS MODERATION OF ASSESSMENT

Natalie Gamble, Teaching and Learning Manager, Faculty of Health Sciences, Brisbane Campus. Natalie has worked in the area of teaching and learning in higher education for 10 years, and has experience in project-focused and research-focused roles. Her current role focuses on building learning and teaching expertise in academic staff, and researching good practice learning and teaching.

Prof Sally Borbasi, Associate Dean Learning and Teaching, Faculty of Health Sciences, Brisbane Campus. Sally has a long history in academia. Sally has an interest in ensuring the Faculty of Health Sciences is up to speed with the drivers of change currently sweeping the higher education landscape. As a founding member of C4LTH (Centre for Learning and Teaching in Health), she has a keen focus on the scholarship of teaching and learning on a range of contemporary topics.

Assoc. Prof. Karen Flowers, Associate Dean Academic and International, Faculty of Health Sciences, Brisbane Campus. Karen Flowers has worked at ACU for 18 years. She was previously FHS Associate Dean Learning

and Teaching and Chair of the University Assessment Committee that developed the first moderation guidelines for ACU.

Dr Peter Le Rossignol, Senior Lecturer, School of Exercise Science, Faculty of Health Sciences, Brisbane Campus. Peter is an Exercise Physiologist, and is currently the National Course Coordinator for Exercise Science. He is a member of the Faculty of Health Sciences Academic Board, and the Queensland State Chair for ESSA. His research interests include measuring running performance for both endurance and repeated sprints, and more recently, improving pedagogy for exercise science.

Sue Woods, Head ACU English Language Centres, ACU International, Brisbane Campus. Sue Woods has been at ACU for 8 years and works within ACU International where her main responsibility is the coordination of the three ACU English Language Centres (Melbourne, North Sydney and Brisbane). She has taught in Applied Linguistics and English language both in Australia and overseas (University of East Africa, Dar Es Salaam - now University of Dar Es Salaam). She is particularly interested in how cultural expectations affect learning and how best to equip international students with the English language and academic skills necessary for successful study in an Australian university environment.

Donna Cook, Academic Manager, ACU International, Brisbane Campus. Donna has been the Academic Manager of the English language centre for five years and has been teaching at ACU since 1997. She is a current IELTS examiner. Her professional interests include the development and support of English language proficiency in international students and the professional development of English language teachers.

Jennifer Murphy, Senior Lecturer, School of Physiotherapy, Faculty of Health Sciences, Brisbane Campus. Jenny is a physio with over 30 years clinical experience, and has been involved in clinical education of physiotherapy students for the last 15 years. She joined ACU in 2009 to assist in the implementation of the physiotherapy program, which had its first intake in 2010.

Assoc Prof Duncan Nulty, Griffith Institute for Higher Education, Griffith University. Dr Nulty is an Associate Professor in the Griffith Institute for Higher Education at Griffith University and has been supporting ACU's development of good practice in assessment and consensus moderation strategies for almost a year. He is nationally and internationally recognised for his expertise on institutional policy and practice in the assessment of student learning and academic standards. He also has expertise in curriculum design and the evaluation of educational programs including student evaluation of teaching. Currently he is providing strategic leadership on these matters through three large projects (two national). These

focus on assessment practice and policy, and the development of consensus moderation practices which support comprehensive quality assurance of assessment standards.

Paula Williams, Faculty eLearning Coordinator, North Sydney Campus. Paula has been at ACU for just over three years. In that time she has managed to inspire staff to incorporate innovative and challenging educational strategies for both online and face-to-face student pedagogy. Paula's expertise in elearning design has promoted creative ways of integrating the latest learning technologies in delivering more flexibly to health science students. Particularly preparing academics for blended learning environments. Paula's interests lie in educational psychology and pattern language design and interactive cloud learning by mobile devices.

Assoc. Prof. Karen Nightingale, Deputy Head of School, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, Melbourne Campus. Karen has worked in the higher education field for the past 15 years in a number of universities. She has a vast amount of experience in curriculum development, teaching and learning at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Karen's specialist expertise is in nursing education, curriculum development, student nurses clinical placements and student teaching and learning. Her clinical background encompasses both mental health and general nursing in both the acute care and community sector.



“ This interdisciplinary team of staff from the Faculty of Health Sciences and ACU International has developed a resource entitled “A Quick Guide to Consensus Moderation of Assessment” as a means of facilitating improved comparability of grade allocations between members of a marking team on a single campus, and between campuses where units are offered across multiple sites. With TEQSA in mind, the Faculty recognised it must be in a position to demonstrate that grade allocations across multiple sites (and across multiple markers on the same site) are consistent – that is, if for example a credit is awarded in Brisbane and in Melbourne for a particular piece of assessment in any unit, the standard of work should be equivalent.

Additionally, the team recognised the need to develop moderation processes that demonstrated not just inter-campus and inter-marker comparability, but to demonstrate consistency with grade allocations over time – that is, a credit grade allocated to a student in a second year Nursing unit for an essay (as an example) in 2011 would also be allocated to a similar standard of work in 2012.

In consultation with Associate Professor Duncan Nulty (Griffith University), an expert in consensus moderation, and with the assistance of a Research Assistant, a literature review was developed on assessment moderation. This provided the team with

detailed evidence-based information on current good practice for pre-, peri- and post-assessment moderation. When the literature review was completed, the team extracted information which enabled them to clearly define pre-, peri- and post-assessment moderation, and to provide examples of strategies that might be employed at each of these moderation stages. Additionally, a step-by-step guide was developed for each stage of moderation which would enable cross-campus marking teams to mark collaboratively, and to enhance cross-campus comparability for grade allocations in units.

A consultative process was also undertaken with academic staff from each of the disciplines offered in the Faculty of Health Sciences and ACU International: staff were asked specifically about how they allocated grades (including the use of rubrics and/or marking criteria), and how they worked with other members of their teaching team. Staff feedback was sought regarding the degree (and nature) of communication between members of the marking team during the marking process, and it was revealed that whilst staff felt confident that they were marking comparably with colleagues on the same campus, they felt substantially less confident about comparability between campuses. It was clear there was a need for a resource (or series of resources) to be developed to enhance this process.

Current moderation practices across the Faculty were considered, and examples of good practice moderation practices from across the Faculty were identified, some of which have been included in the resource booklet as examples.

This resource is an example of good practice that will enable marking teams for units offered nationally to ensure grade allocations are fair, inclusive and equitable for all students. It encourages marking teams to work collaboratively, to discuss marking guides and rubrics in detail prior to commencing marking, and to discuss grade allocations both during and after marking. It seeks to ensure all members of the marking team have a sound understanding of how marks and grades should be allocated, and encourages markers to seek feedback and/or a second opinion when a grade allocation is borderline. Marking teams who use the guide should see increased implementation of moderation strategies at each of the stages (pre-, peri- and post assessment), and consequently improvements in inter-campus comparability. Further, the resource encourages staff to consider academic standards in the pre-assessment moderation phase. Staff are explicitly advised that assessment tasks should reflect the year of study being undertaken, and to align assessment tasks with learning outcomes and learning content.

Through the provision of equivalent marking resources (guides and rubrics) to all members of the marking team, and through the facilitation of marking team conversations at a national level, the development of

the resource ensures students can feel confident the marking process is clear and transparent, and that their assessments are marked honestly and with integrity. A national approach goes a long way to ensuring that grade allocations are consistent between campuses.

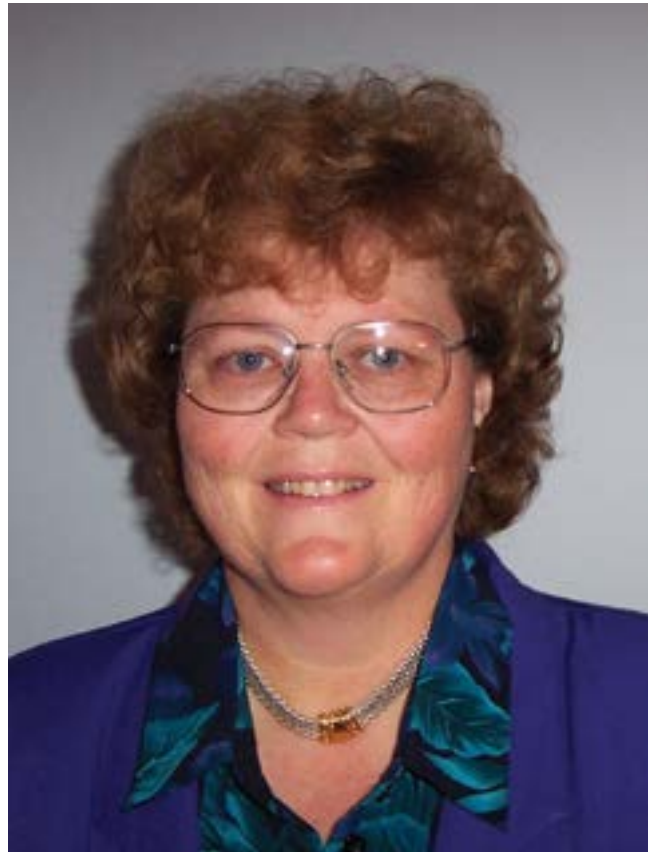
The booklet was developed for all staff with marking responsibilities – both tenured and sessional staff. It is intended to be a resource for marking teams, which will raise awareness of assessment moderation, each of its stages, and current good practice in this space. It will serve to improve the working knowledge of staff regarding pre-, peri- and post-assessment moderation, and will facilitate conversation amongst members of the marking team regarding which moderation strategies at each stage are most appropriate for a given unit.

This is a newly developed resource, and as yet, evaluation data has not been collected, although there are plans in place to collect data from academic staff on the effectiveness of the guide in 2013 (ethics approval has been sought and granted). The booklet will be presented to marking teams from each Health discipline in unit-specific workshops developed to enhance inter-campus moderation of assessment. The resource has been developed from a sound literature base which suggests that inter-campus comparability will improve if the guide is introduced.





Dr Wilhelmina van Rooy



Mrs Vicki Bredin

LARGE GROUPS

CASE STUDY: CONSISTENCY AND CLARITY IN 'THE FAIR TEST'

Prize category: Large groups

Winners: Dr Wilhelmina van Rooy and Mrs Vicki Bredin

Location: Strathfield campus

Faculty: Education

Discipline: Primary science teacher education:

Year of study: First year

Assessment type: Report; portfolio

Academic skill: Scientific writing; experiment design

About the authors

Dr Wilhelmina van Rooy

Commencing at ACU in early 2011, Wilhelmina VanRooy has teaching interests in the professional development of pre-service primary teachers, where she is the lecturer in charge of two units based around the learning and teaching of science concepts, and in that of high school science teachers, where she teaches a unit on the curricula of Earth and Environmental Science and Senior Science. Her strongest expertise is in the learning and teaching of senior high school biology.

In her award for 2012 Faculty Excellence in Teaching – Education, her citation referred to her focus on providing an authentic and engaging experience for her students by embedding activities in real classroom experiences and through the use of authentic experiences such as constructing journal articles, motivating and inspiring students and building their confidence in the traditionally difficult area of science teaching. She received four learning and teaching awards while working at Macquarie University, including an ALTC citation for excellence in the professional development of secondary science teachers and an Australian College of Educators/NSW DET quality teaching award.

Wilhelmina is an advisor for both the F-10 Science Curriculum and the Senior Science Curriculum Biology for the Australian Curriculum Reporting and Assessment Authority (ACARA), and is a chief examiner and examination committee member for the NSW Higher School Certificate Biology, Board of Studies (NSW). Her research interests include the use of ICTs in senior high school biology classrooms for the learning of molecular genetics concepts, and the value of controversial biological issues for learning/teaching of science concepts in high school students.

Vicki McHenry Bredin

Vicki Bredin has been a student teacher supervisor for five years and a Primary Science tutor for four years, working with most science units at ACU, and focussing on the professional development of all primary science trainee teachers. She has spent the last seven years in Primary Science teacher education in three universities, and has been a primary school teacher for 31 years, ten of these as a primary science specialist, with seven years in the United States and twenty-four years in Australia.

Her major science topic throughout this career has been Environmental Education, receiving over fifteen environmental education awards and a NSW Quality Teaching Award. She has also been nominated for the Prime Minister's Prize For Excellence in Primary Science Teaching and been the recipient of an Australia Day Award along with several community service awards. She says that her most exciting award was on her retirement from primary teaching, when her school (Tara Anglican School for Girls) named a star after her!

Her aim for her students is to learn how to teach Primary Science with knowledge, skill, creativity and enthusiasm, so they can "Make Science Sizzle!" She is a specialist in designing and implementing effective marking systems, and has written twelve "Chicks R Us" Teaching Booklets, as well as providing classroom design instruction, advice and room makeovers for trainee teachers, beginning teachers, science faculties and university learning spaces, showing them how to make their classrooms "rock"!

About the unit

EDST107-167 Science and Technology for Primary Teachers 1, the first of three science and technology units for pre-service teachers, integrates a discipline-based study of science and technology which is relevant to the Key Learning Area Science and Technology K-6 in the primary school.

Dr Wilhelmina van Rooy is lecturer in charge and Mrs Vicki Bredin is tutor in this unit.

Learning outcomes addressed in this assessment

Learning outcome	Related aspect of the assessment
Learning outcome 1: Understand science and technology as particular ways of knowing the world that meet people's needs and shape society	LO1: Assessed via the write-up of the fair test using the design criteria.
Learning outcome 3: Know, understand and communicate a range of concepts that related to the broad themes of matter, living things and the environment	LO3: Addressed in the selection of household chemicals, their use in The Fair Test and in the discussion of their disposal.
Learning outcome 4: Use scientific skills and processes to investigate simple questions, record data effectively and provide evidence for making conclusions about investigations	LO4: Students required to select equipment, design a measurement scale, use it for data collection (e.g. intensity of beetroot juice remaining on a cloth after repeated washings with chemical X) and then record data in the correct format for tables and graphs using Excel.



“ **The assessment task:** The aim of the assessment is to provide students with a novel opportunity to work scientifically and further develop their practical skills in what science terms The Fair Test, the attributes of which are detailed in lectures and trialed in tutorials. Students are required to design an original fair test investigation around the use of household chemicals in their home. The design of the test needs to include formulation and testing of a hypothesis, statement of a prediction(s), record of observations, collection of data, interpretation of evidence and drawing of conclusions.

Background: We [Wilhelmina and Vicki] became ACU colleagues when Wilhelmina arrived at ACU in 2011 and became lecturer in charge for EDST107-167. Vicki provided Wilhelmina with valuable advice about previous assessment and identified challenges to be addressed, indicating that the idea of providing students with a novel context was pedagogically sound but that we needed to attend to the quality of the task to ensure high student engagement. After some in-depth discussion, we identified three issues needing resolution.

The cognitive demands of the assessment needed to be increased and the layout and organisation of the assessment, as detailed in the unit outline, needed review. This was resolved by, firstly, identifying which parts of the assessment required higher order thinking skills such as analysis of data and judgment based on evidence; and, secondly, by providing guidance to students as to the construction of the discussion and the conclusion. In essence we developed a suggested sequence of steps to assist students in the write-up

of the assignment, but without ‘telling them what to do’. Students still needed to make their own decisions based on the results of their Fair Test.

The second issue related to marking and the provision of high quality authentic feedback to a large group of first year students within the three-week timeframe set by ACU policy. We solved this challenge by working together to develop a marking rubric aligned to the assignment criteria, learning outcomes and graduate attributes.

The third issue was organisational: namely, the collection, collation and return of assignments, especially given the increase in student numbers from 170 in S1 2011 to over 420 in S2 2012. Together we sought advice from our laboratory technician experts who manage laboratory equipment for all unit tutorial groups. We incorporated their suggestions, which included using LEO announcements and setting a specific date, time and place for the submission and return of assessments. The result – no organisational issues!

Our contention is that assessment is integral to high quality learning and teaching and to this end we ensure that the work students are required to undertake themselves (in this case, The Fair Test assessment) is linked with scientific skills development in tutorials and supported with digital resources on LEO.

Evaluation and feedback: The Fair Test Assessment criteria are clear as to how students will be assessed. The marking rubric keeps the criteria in the same order and allows all students in this large cohort to receive consistent feedback on all sections. Individual feedback is provided within the assignment.

We provide students with advice/examples of how to achieve the learning outcomes and the level of detailed scholarship to gain a high distinction. The use of the marking criteria and rubric make it possible to assess in a more systematic way and to ensure that assignments which had formally taken 60 minutes to mark are now done in 20 minutes without compromise to quality feedback. Clear structure ensures students work in a productive manner.

Student diversity: Our unit engaged over 400 students at Strathfield campus in 2012. Given the nature of The Fair Test, we avoided gender, racial and cultural bias, while encouraging an individual approach: all households make use of chemicals, whether purchased or made themselves.

The assessment design criteria are apparent in the unit outline and supported with a clear, consistent rubric. In addition, all students have the opportunity to borrow lab equipment.

We are aware that for many intending Early Childhood and Primary teachers, teaching science is not a preferred option. We respond by scaffolding examples of high quality science writing and talk and invite students to do the same in tutorials/assignments. We

also provide students with English language skills in their weekly tutorial written and aural work.

Our aims and learning outcomes are transparent, ethical and confidential and manifested in the level of support and clarity we provide students before and after assessment submission. Consistent positive feedback from students provides evidence for this.

Student experience: We took the opportunity to obtain student feedback using the ACU Student Evaluation of Unit (SEU). This provided us with statistical data on students' experience of learning in EDST107-167, their response to ACU and Faculty of Education questions, and an evaluation of our teaching. Based on the ACU SEU, our "overall teaching was of high quality (Faculty)" with a median of 4.17 for EDST 107-167 in semester 1, 2012.

ACU SEU is further supported by ACU Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) for EDST107-167 in 2011 and 2012, where students have the opportunity to comment on our individual teaching and that of us as a team.

This student comment on our team work is typical: *Another big thank you to Wilhelmina and Vicki for getting our assignment results back so quickly ... so many students. So I really appreciated that (the) hard work you both put in during that time. I enjoyed this unit and am looking forward to studying more science in the future and to help me to become a great primary school teacher.* EDST107-167 student feedback S2 2012.



DIVERSE GROUPS

With the strengths and benefits of a diverse student body come challenges for learning and teaching. The case study presented below embodies all of the principles of good practice in assessment and is a good example of universal design for learning.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an approach to teaching that consists of designing course instruction, materials, and content to benefit a broad range of learners, including students with disabilities.

At the core of Universal Design for Learning is the principle of inclusiveness and equity: UDL provides equal access to learning, not simply equal access to information.

UDL operates on the premise that the planning and delivery of courses as well as the assessment of learning can incorporate inclusive attributes that embrace diversity in learners whilst maintaining academic standards. It therefore takes into consideration the diversity of abilities, disabilities, racial/ethnic backgrounds, reading abilities, ages, and other characteristics of the student cohort.

“UDL provides a blueprint for creating flexible goals, methods, materials, and assessments that accommodate learner differences. ‘Universal’ does not imply a single optimal solution for everyone. Instead, it is meant to underscore the need for multiple approaches to meet the needs of diverse learners.” (CAST, www.cast.org)





Ms Mary Gallagher



Mrs Theresa Shellshear

CASE STUDY: AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT ACROSS UNITS OF STUDY

Prize category: Diverse groups

Winners: Ms Mary Gallagher & Mrs Theresa Shellshear

Location: Canberra campus

Faculty: Education

Discipline: Numeracy; Literacy

Year of study: Third

Assessment type: Lesson plans

Academic skill: Skills development; portfolio

About the authors

Mary Gallagher

Mary lectures in pedagogy, sociology and literacy and is also the Assistant Professional Experience Coordinator, guiding and supervising pre-service teachers during their practicum. For the past twenty-five years Mary has been teaching in primary schools. She has also been an early career mentor and curriculum reviewer for the Catholic Education Office.

Mary is an active member of the Australian Literacy Educators Association and her passions are writing and poetry: her paper to the 2012 ALEA Sydney Conference was entitled 'The power and passion of poetry'. She

has also conducted poetry workshops at CEO literacy development days. This year Mary has been working within a cross-sectoral project involving the University of Canberra and the Teacher Quality Institute to embed the National Professional Standards for Teachers within the Professional Experience Program, her current research focus.

For the past eleven years Mary has also been involved in international education and training programs in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and Indonesia. These programs have involved designing and implementing monitoring, assessment and Train the Trainer programs within a human rights context. These intercultural experiences have provided a unique perspective on the teaching and learning process. Mary is currently involved with assisting the largest Islamic university in Indonesia as they attempt to update their curriculum and pedagogy to meet the demands of the 21st century.

Theresa Shellshear

Theresa's teaching focus is the pedagogy of teaching mathematics in Early Childhood and Primary pre-service teaching units. Her great passion is ensuring that the profile of mathematics and numeracy in primary schools is raised and to this end she engages pre-service teachers in challenging discussions and practical tasks.

Theresa has extensive experience in primary education, having taught in a range of situations, from remote communities in the Northern Territory to Canberra primary schools. She has held executive roles and undertaken sectional research during this time. While working as Numeracy Officer for the Catholic Education Office, Canberra/Goulburn, she has actively presented central and on-site mathematics professional development for primary teachers across all jurisdictions.

Theresa is an active member of the Canberra Mathematical Association and presents workshops at their annual conferences.

“About these units

EDLA309/369 Literacy Education 2 focuses on the learning and teaching of speaking, listening, writing, reading and viewing appropriate to the later years of primary school; EDMA 310/360/505 considers content of relevant national and state mathematics curricula and initiatives and its use in planning for teaching and critically discusses a range of issues related to contemporary mathematics teaching.

Learning outcomes addressed by this assessment

- use theories of children's literacy development as they critically evaluate the range of approaches to teaching reading, writing, viewing, speaking and listening
- discuss critically and identify relevance of current research, topical issues and curriculum development in relation to literacy teaching and learning;
- investigate teaching and learning strategies that scaffold literacy learning; incorporating children's

ability to draw on spelling strategies, word processing, and technology as these apply to the later years of primary schooling

- work collaboratively to show ways of using a wide variety of literary, factual, media and multi-modal texts for planning and integrating literacy across their classroom teaching through a focus on critical reading and writing practices and the implementation of 'essential learnings' and 'productive pedagogies'
- use varying approaches to monitor and assess children's composition and comprehension of a variety of texts and language used to construct these texts
- discuss critically the role of social interaction and explain ways to create inclusive literacy classrooms which consider the needs of those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Integration: Innovative approaches to assessment contribute to building learning and assessment skills beyond the course (Boud and Falchikov, 2006). Teachers within schools are expected to adopt an integrated approach and link learning across many Key Learning Areas. In comparison, tertiary-level course structures often create distinct and separate academic units with little connection to real life contexts. Learning is further fragmented through a lack of opportunity for lecturers to collaborate in creating explicit links between different units: by comparison, teachers within schools are expected to work collaboratively and to share responsibility and workload for assessment and evaluation of learning. As lecturers of two separate literacy and numeracy units, we sought to model the reality of schools in our own approach to assessment. This involved working closely with each other in the planning and implementation of each unit; areas of integration were identified, and a common assessment task jointly developed. The assessment task required students to identify explicit links between literacy and mathematics, two areas of inquiry and practice that are traditionally treated as quite distinct.



Diversity: We aimed to cater for students from different courses - Early Childhood/Primary, Primary, Master of Teaching (Primary) - different backgrounds (for example, mature aged/school leaver, urban/ rural), different levels, and different stages, including those completing practicum concurrently. We wanted to better prepare this diverse group of tertiary students for the classroom by creating innovative and connected assessments, ones that demonstrated learning through authentic application of knowledge and skills. By working collaboratively in the development and implementation of across-unit assessment and making connections and identifying explicit links between mathematics and literacy units, we can promote innovative assessment practices to our pre-service teachers.

Why authentic assessment? The assessment dilemmas faced by classroom teachers in relation to accountability, measurement and authenticity are no less evident in higher education. A decade ago it was noted that traditional approaches to undergraduate pre-service teacher assessment do little to prepare

students for their chosen profession (Reeves, 2000). In recent years, there has been a strong movement away from de-contextualised, fragmented tasks such as exams and essays towards innovative, holistic assessment that is focused on the importance of building capacity and enhancing learning.

As lecturers of undergraduate pre-service teachers, we are working to provide innovative and authentic assessment that is perceived by students as relevant and worthwhile. Previous unit evaluations confirmed that many assessment tasks are seen as a 'necessary evil', useful only in facilitating the passing of a course. Maclellan (2004) argues that students' perception of an assessment task affects their level of engagement and depth of learning, creating a clear imperative to examine the nature of assessment, and to measure what is truly important; according to Boud and Associates (2010), best practice assessment "powerfully frames how students learn and what students achieve. It is one of the most significant influences on students' experiences of higher education and all that they gain from it".

We have noted that in the area of teacher education, assessment practices don't always reflect the constructivist approach to knowledge acquisition and pedagogy that we promote in our teaching. In developing assessment tasks, lecturers should seek to move beyond an exclusive focus on the final product and to also focus on the process. This means promoting assessment as and for learning rather than just assessment of learning, an approach that lends itself to authentic assessment. Authentic assessment, according to McMillan (2004, p. 198), "involves the direct examination of a student's ability to use knowledge to perform a task that is like what is encountered in real life or in the real world". To this end, we created a purposeful and productive assessment task that mirrors what is expected of teachers when planning teaching and learning experiences. As lecturers, we believe that assessment should challenge students to actively engage in the learning process while making explicit connections between theory and practice. This not only informs our teaching and approaches to tertiary assessment; it also enhances students' skills and understanding in relation to classroom practice.

Intersecting tasks: The assessment for each unit required students to develop a program that addressed a wide variety of possible criteria relating to a 'real' classroom. This task allowed students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills related to planning of literacy and mathematics programs. The students were not only expected to create authentic programs that could be implemented in the classroom, they were also required to highlight the related contexts in

which literacy and numeracy intersect and take into consideration the educational implications. In order to complete the task, students engaged in scaffolding, modelling and problem-solving activities during tutorials designed to promote active engagement and critical thinking. The students were also provided with detailed and timely feedback for a draft version of the assessment, enabling them to change and improve as appropriate: we predicted that this would mean the quality of their learning would improve while allowing for achievement of student learning outcomes for both units.

Benefits of making connections: There was ample evidence of the success of our initiative. It was clear that the critical dialogue between collaborating lecturers in charge enhanced the delivery of both units. Various research methods were employed in evaluation, including reviewing assessment strategies, obtaining student input, questionnaires and surveys, and the research confirmed the power of deliberate use of common language across both units (e.g. assessment for and assessment as learning), providing explicit connections between the two units and allowing the students to articulate synergies. The students were also able to articulate the benefits of authentic and innovative assessment both in completing the task and in future classroom implementations, due to an assessment focus that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of students to meet their own future learning needs" (Boud, 2000).

When exploring reading and writing skills, students were able to use examples from mathematics as well as from literacy. Quite aside from positive formal student evaluations, it was clear that the draft and subsequent final programs submitted by students demonstrated a high level of engagement and motivation for the task. The assessment task allowed lecturers to modify and enhance the teaching and learning components of the courses to better reflect the needs of pre-service teachers.

The challenge of moving from traditional to innovative assessment creates exciting opportunities for lecturers to provide a more authentic learning experience for their students. The response from pre-service teachers to developing a program that can actually be implemented within a classroom has been very positive. Many were able to identify a number of advantages and most reported that they had committed more time and effort to the assessment task than would have been the case for a less contextualised task. Whilst we are still examining potential opportunities and challenges, the next step is to open a dialogue with faculty members in relation to the benefits of authentic and innovative assessment and the potential impact on assessment practice and policy.





Dr Catherine Bell

Artwork: 'Circle', by Emme Orbach, recipient of the ACU Bachelor of Visual Arts and Design Special Distinction Award 2012

CASE STUDY ON GROUP WORK: NEGOTIATING COLLABORATIVE CREATIVITY

Prize category: Group work

Winner: Dr Catherine Bell

Location: Melbourne campus

Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Discipline: Visual arts

Year of study: Third

Assessment type: Project (exhibition)

Academic skill: Reflective report

About the author

Dr Catherine Bell started as a sessional lecturer in the BVAD at ACU in 2004. Her teaching areas are sculpture, installation, performance art, professional practice, internship and community art.

Her research areas include art on the margins, art and disability, art and health, ephemeral art and performance art. In 2012 she was awarded an ACU Early Career Research Incentive Award to participate in an artist in residency program and facilitate a community art project with palliative care patients at St Vincent's Caritas Christi Hospice.

She was the recipient of the Mollie Holman Doctoral Medal for the best doctoral thesis in the Faculty of Art and Design, Monash University in 2008.

Catherine was awarded an Australia Council Visual Arts Board Studio/Residency in New York (2010), ACU Excellence in Teaching Award (2011), and nominated for an Australian Government Early Career Tertiary Teaching Award (2012).

“ About the unit

ARTS 329 Self-Directed Studies 1. continues the program of monitored studio or theoretical work in the students specialisation commenced in Self-Directed Studies. For the specialisations in graphic design or studio-based art the resolved body of work will be presented for possible inclusion in the Graduating Exhibition.

The learning outcomes for the unit are that students should be able to:

- produce a substantial body of work that is exploratory, speculative and personal to be considered for inclusion in the undergraduate exhibition held at the conclusion of the course
- apply the intellectual, ethical and practical skills required of a contemporary practitioner in the selected specialisation
- demonstrate that they understand the nature of work intended and created, personal working methods and strategies for research.



Dr Catherine Bell standing with Debbie Yarak, recipient of the ACU Acquisition Award for Outstanding Visual Arts Graduate 2012.

This assessment task, using art collectives as a strategy for assessing group studio-led research, was developed in Semester 2, 2011 for ARTS 329 Self-Directed Studies 2. and aims to introduce students to collaborative art practice. Using a team approach, the task encourages students to interrogate their individual artistic concepts, to find the intersections among their different approaches and to develop a collaborative visual work for exhibition. The task prepares students for the Bachelor of Visual Arts and Design graduate show and concurrently forms the basis of an application for a later exhibition at an artist-run space.

Background: In Semester 1, 2011 I arranged an artist talk for the class ARTS 325 Professional Practice at an exhibition by three emerging artists and recent graduates from RMIT who called themselves *eye collective*. One of the interesting concepts about their show was the uniqueness of only running for three days, and this set it apart from Melbourne's art establishment.

This model of best practice inspired me to develop the collaborative assessment task (previously the third year visual arts students had worked solo). This assessment task presented the possibility for

legitimate applications of group creativity that would enliven students' individual art practices, spark alternative conceptual perspectives and nurture new presentation approaches. I also wanted the students to feel confident that they had presented a professional exhibition prior to their graduate exhibition. For students interested in pursuing an art career, this experience would prepare them for their first show in an artist-run space.

Structuring the collectives: Forming the student collectives presented a problem, as it was important that the groups were founded on predominant themes and artistic overlaps present in the work rather than class friendship cliques. I solved this issue through a democratic process. The students wrote down four themes that underpinned the artwork they would be producing for the graduate show. Then, as a class, the students were responsible for selecting the collectives based on commonalities among the listed themes. The lists were anonymous, so students did not know who they would be collaborating with until the card was turned over to reveal the student names. This proved an effective approach to delegate collectives that was inclusive and avoided student biases.

How the group task was staged: First, each student was required to research art collectives and to analyse their methodologies. After collating this research, the students formed their collectives, discussed their findings and developed a group manifesto to encompass the artistic rationale underpinning their exhibition. The artwork had to be created during class and installed in the temporary public exhibition space in the ACU Gallery.

Students developed Facebook networks to communicate outside class and to post their works-in-progress for feedback.

During their assigned week, one collective would set up an exhibition: the students were expected to curate the show, produce a catalogue and labels, and design the exhibition lighting. The opening happened during class on Tuesday, where the students presented their collective manifesto, discussed the process of collaboration, documented the exhibition and de-installed the artwork on Friday so that the next group could set up on Monday.

Every week each student critiqued the collective exhibition, outlining one aspect of the exhibition that was successful and one that was unsuccessful. The collective then documented the student feedback and addressed it in their individual reflective report.

The group critically evaluated the experience of working together and the strategies they developed to achieve a cohesive exhibition and articulated their outcomes in a class presentation at the exhibition opening, summarising how the analytical skills and critical processes of the assessment reflected the respective learning outcomes and graduate attributes.

Individual reflection: Each student was required to write an individual report about their experience of collaborating on this group activity, outline their

research on art collectives and discuss how other collectives influenced their methodology. This reflective report analysed the group manifesto and the rationale behind their “decision-making”.

Evaluation and feedback: I divided the assessment mark into 30% for the collective exhibition and 10% for the reflective report, ensuring feedback was directed to both the group and individual students. With the final mark I supply a page of feedback to the group.

Moderation: The collectives supply their manifestos and exhibition documentation for the student archive on LEO. This online archive is a valuable resource for cross-campus moderation and student benchmarking. This assessment is not replicated on other campuses, but I would like to propose future collaborations with the Strathfield campus for cross-campus collectives that can communicate via Skype; the works could then be sent cross campus for Interstate group exhibitions.

Impact: 2012 was the second time that I implemented this group assessment. As well as highly positive formal student evaluation feedback, the assessment’s success in 2011 is demonstrated by the fact that two students from the 2011 cohort subsequently curated group exhibitions, *influx* and *Monster Mash* in artist-run spaces. One show, *influx*, expanded on the theme from the curating student’s collective – issues affecting the environment, recycling, sustainability and consumerism. *influx* included several artists who investigate these concerns in their art practices relating to the common good, social justice and ethics. ”

FIRST YEAR

It is important to remember that what is considered to be good practice for first year is generally good practice for all years. Having said that, however, the ACU Assessment Policy does have some specific requirements for the design of first year assessment. They are:

- 4.4.1 All units at the first year (100 level) should include feedback within the first six weeks of a standard study period. Such feedback may take a variety of forms including, but not limited to
- feedback on an early low risk, lightly weighted assessment task;
 - feedback on a draft or a portion of an assessment task;
 - a self-assessment task where feedback is provided;
 - feedback on a hurdle task;
 - online activities where students can test their understanding and obtain feedback;
 - group and/or workshop tasks where group members provide feedback to one another; or
 - other means by which students can be provided with feedback on their learning as determined by the Lecturer in Charge.
- 4.4.2 Assessment in the first year should integrate the skills that students need for tertiary level study.
- 4.4.3 The assessment process will facilitate the identification of students who are experiencing difficulties with, for example, English language or academic literacy; students so identified will be directed to appropriate University support.





Coral Bayley

CASE STUDY: SKILLS ASSESSMENT IN AN AUTHENTIC CONTEXT

Prize category: First year assessment

Winner: Coral Bayley

Location: Melbourne campus

Faculty: Health Sciences

Discipline: Multidisciplinary

Year of study: First

Assessment type: Field observation; technical performance; peer review; self review; reflection; portfolio; group work

Academic skill: Reflective writing; research

Technology: Video recording

About the author

Coral Bayley has worked at ACU for 16 years, including five years in the late 80s/early 90s before she left to work in clinical practice, and then 11 years since her return.

Coral has taught all year levels of the Bachelor of Nursing and also first year Bachelor of Midwifery and Bachelor of Paramedicine, teaching areas with a clinical practice focus.

After teaching fundamentals to first year students for the past 4 years, she has realized that the needs of first year students, new to university, are just as important as the content of the unit. First years are more

challenging than other year levels because of their complex needs and, in Coral's situation, because of the large cohorts and mixed disciplines.

She also enjoys teaching in acute care units, in particular her postgraduate areas of speciality, peri-operative nursing and intensive or high dependency nursing.

As the first year course adviser, she sees many students struggling with the study/life balance, and is interested in developing research in this area; her previous research has been in the area of international students and clinical education.

Her teaching philosophy is constructive alignment, where learning fits together and makes sense for students, where learning outcomes are transparent and teacher and student work together to achieve them.

Coral comments: "My biggest influence is the students. They inspire me to care that they learn and in so doing help them become, to quote from the ACU Mission, 'highly competent in their chosen fields, ethical in their behaviour, with a developed critical habit of mind, an appreciation of the sacred in life and a commitment to serving the common good'".



“ HLSC110 Beginning Professional Practice is an inter-professional unit that introduces the contemporary context and concepts relevant to professional health practice.

Learning outcomes addressed in this assessment

- Describe the historical and contemporary contexts related to the organisation of health care in Australia today;
- Compare the roles and responsibilities of the health professions in a typical interdisciplinary health team;
- Explain the theoretical and professional dimensions of therapeutic and inter-professional communication;
- Demonstrate therapeutic and inter-professional communication skills appropriate for interactions with health care consumers, families and colleagues;
- Demonstrate and reflect on person-centred clinical skills to safely assess health status, administer medications, promote comfort and maintain safety in the clinical environment;
- Explain the theoretical bases of clinical decision making frameworks and processes;
- Use clinical decision making frameworks to identify health care priorities and initiate a therapeutic plan

in selected case studies;

- Use information technology effectively to support your learning.

Multi-faceted task: The assessment task has several components: part 1 is an observational field visit and academic reflection (15% of total unit mark) and part 2 is a video to demonstrate taking vital signs and therapeutic communication, a critical reflection of this performance, an academic reflection, and peer evaluation (35%).

Part 1 begins with a university-organised and supervised 4-hour observational visit in a health care setting, commencing in week 3, where the student is partnered one-to-one with a nurse, midwife or paramedic, within groups of 4 to 16 in geographically convenient locations. Students have objectives for the visit based on early classroom learning but are encouraged to look beyond these and take in the whole experience. They speak to clients and families, watch their partner interact and care for clients, and see their partner relating to other staff.

Students have two weeks to submit an academic reflection of 500 words based on this field visit. They are required to select one or two areas on which to reflect, using a reflective model as a supporting structure. Use of supporting literature is also required. I ask all markers for a breakdown of student marks so I can see if there is any particular area where students are performing poorly, allowing me to address this in the second part of the task. I can also use this data when speaking to students and giving them feedback one-to-one. This task is short and can be marked quite quickly, so the students have it back before they start the second academic reflection based on the video task.

This second part requires students to produce a video showing them taking vital signs and demonstrating therapeutic communication. The timing of this task allows for the learning from theory taught in lectures, tutorials and practical classes to be consolidated before students start this task.

Each student offers peer feedback on another student's videoed performance, and students use this feedback to help them critique their own performance.

Students are marked in two areas: first, the actual performance of the vital signs activity and their therapeutic communication; and secondly their academic reflection on their performance. In critiquing their vital signs technique, they are to select one thing they did well, using current journal articles to explain why this is a good technique, or one they did not do well or did not do at all, and discuss what the literature says they should have done and why. The students also select positive and negative aspects relating to their communication techniques and use the literature to allow for deeper reflection.

Early feedback: Early assessment feedback of relatively low value is important for first year university students. Feedback for part 1 (15%) was given by week 5, and students used this feedback to help them with part 2 (35%).

Academic support: Academic support is absolutely essential for first year students. Each time I run this unit I improve the level of academic support provided, in response to increasing numbers (peaking at 650) and larger numbers of ESL students. Because of the many components of this 2-part assessment task, I had to provide scaffolding on several fronts, including what reflection is; models of reflection; the difference between reflection and academic reflection as it relates to unit expectations; and literature search. In addition to providing descriptions of assessment tasks and marking criteria in the unit outline, I distributed detailed guidelines written in plain English, and showed them a sample video of me taking vital signs and demonstrating communication techniques; I read the students samples of good student reflections from previous years and incorporated a library tutorial class where students were shown how to find journal articles related to this unit, and actively included staff from the Office of Student Success to secure their support in all guidelines and support material given to the students. I wanted students to feel supported and in control of the tasks so they could meet the learning outcomes, and so I saw fewer student questions and less student stress.

Technical support: I sought advice from the university AV department on the best format for student video submission and now have over 99% of the student videos opening without any technical hitches. I also keep library staff informed on when students will be borrowing one of the 40 or so flips, school laptops or web cams, and arrange booking signs on laboratory doors so students can book rooms in which to do their filming.

Multidisciplinary group – plus or minus? To understand why this 2-part assessment task is valuable, it is important to consider the multidisciplinary context. The students come into this subject with their own areas of professional interest (midwifery, paramedicine or nursing), and I want to allow them to explore that interest very early in the semester. Respecting and accommodating the interests of students, especially when the subject is generic in nature, leads to greater engagement and to students feeling valued: linking generic principles to students' areas of interest makes sense to me and engages them.

In summary: For students to value learning at university they must see the clinical relevance of it. This assessment task works because it gives students the means to meet the learning outcomes of the unit and work towards the graduate attributes, and because, importantly, the field visit gives them a context for their learning. Linking the visit to an on-campus assessment task where students explore aspects of their experience more deeply is an example of the link between theory and practice. ”



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