



University of Wollongong and
University of Tasmania
Assessment Roundtable



*Assessing student learning:
Using interdisciplinary
synergies to develop
good teaching and
assessment practice*



Support for this activity has been provided by The Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education Ltd, an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training.

Roundtable Agenda:

Time	Session
9:30am	Welcome and housekeeping
9:35am	Keynote: <i>Great designs: What should assessment do?</i> Professor David Boud Professor of Adult Education University of Technology, Sydney
10:00am	Group 1 project presentations
10:45am	Morning Tea; Poster presentations
11:00am	Group 2 project presentations
11:45am	Group 3 project presentations
12:30pm	Lunch; Poster presentations
1:00pm	Identification and synthesis of key challenges for assessment in Century 21 as identified in the presented projects.
1:30pm	Small group discussion of the challenges and questions arising out of the Keynote and project presentations
3:00pm	Afternoon Tea
3:15pm	Sharing the outcomes - Report back by each of the discussion groups
3:45pm	Future directions
4:45pm	Acknowledgements and close of roundtable

Presentation Abstracts

THE ROLE OF THE RUBRIC IN CLARIFYING THEORY AND PRACTICE

Natalie Brown
Centre for Teaching & Learning
University of Tasmania

In a pre-service teaching program, Professional Experience brings together the different disciplines of Education into a real-world setting. Helping pre-service teachers see theory in practice and begin to put theory into practice requires a close and explicit linkage between the coursework and practicum. A shared discourse accessible to pre-service teachers, field-based colleague teachers and university lecturers is an essential element in this process.

This project involved the development and evaluation of a rubric providing indicators that articulate the sequential development expected of pre-service teachers from orientation through to Internship. This was to assist colleague teachers with both formative and summative assessment of pre-service teachers undertaking Professional Experience. Concurrently, it clarified the expectations for each practicum for the pre-service teachers and allowed greater opportunity for self assessment. The rubric was also designed to make explicit the goals for sophisticated practice.

An evaluation of the rubric was conducted during 2007. The data indicated that the rubric has been positively received by all stakeholder groups. It was particularly successful in clarifying expectations of student performance and ascribing appropriate field based learning experiences for each successive practicum. A number of colleague teachers commented on the use of the rubric as a starting point for supportive and focussed feedback. Both colleague teachers and university supervisors found the rubric very useful in highlighting specific areas for further development for students at risk. A further expansion of its role for this purpose was suggested.

HONOURS PROGRAMS: TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED APPROACH?

Greg Hannan
School of Psychology
University of Tasmania

Honours programs in universities are offered in a diverse range of disciplines through an equally diverse range of AOU's. These programs predominantly focus on research training but some have professional training components depending on the discipline. Since Honours grades have a significant bearing on university awards and post-graduate scholarships, the assessment of these programs is of particular importance. During Semester 2; 2007, an audit of assessment approaches for the research components of Honours programs in 13 disciplines within the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology (UTAS) was undertaken as part of a Teaching Fellowship Program. Of particular interest in the investigation was the use of formative assessment through assessment tasks such as written proposals, oral presentations of proposals and results, and the extent to which these contributed to the overall grade for the research project. Another key area of interest was the extent of use of clearly articulated criteria and performance standards in the assessment of these components, particularly the written thesis. A number of key themes emerged from these data that suggest inconsistencies in the use of formative and summative assessment strategies, and an inconsistent use of criteria to arrive at grades. These issues are discussed from both institutional and pedagogical perspectives.

INTEGRATING ASSESSMENT IN A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE:

Adrienne Huber
Knowledge Building Community Mentoring Program
University of Wollongong Shoalhaven Campus

This project explores integration of assessment to facilitate a professional (pre-service teachers) knowledge building community of practice. Attempts have been made to reconcile the bureaucratic need for discrete subject-based assessment grades with integrated assessment while fostering an authentic professional community of practice. Through collegial participation of Education Faculty members in mentoring in the school-based and problem-based curriculum, reflection and dialogue, the purpose, practice and impact of integrating assessment will be refined to better reflect real world practices and processes of teachers in schools. Faculty participants will be mentored to apply what they have learned in their own teaching areas and encouraged to mentor others.

SYNTHESISING GRADUATE QUALITIES WITHIN THE LLB CURRICULUM: ASSESSMENT, OUTCOMES AND THE “ETHICALLY INFORMED” GRADUATE.

John Littrich
Faculty of Law
University of Wollongong

This project involves the translation of the University of Wollongong's (UOW) recently redrafted graduate qualities into specific graduate qualities for the Faculty of Law and facilitating the development of curricula across the LLB program that will project these qualities and support the nexus between outcomes and assessment in LLB subjects. Supporting this nexus poses particular challenges in the areas of skills and ethics.

The UOW graduate qualities refer to developing graduates who are “responsible” and the descriptors relating to this quality refer to students who “Understand how decisions can affect others and make ethically informed choices.” This presentation will focus on the challenges of teaching and assessing ethics. What type of assessment will best help produce graduates that will “make ethically informed

choices"? How can attainment of such a quality be measured? Study in this area, including recent research carried out within the UOW Faculty of Law at UOW in relation to assessment of skills and capabilities suggest that integration of ethics into assessment tasks across the LLB curriculum together with clinical experience and opportunities for reflection on that experience can assist to answer these questions.

BEYOND MAPPING: EMBEDDING GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES AT A FACULTY LEVEL.

Noel Meyers
Faculty of Business
University of Tasmania

Generic graduate attributes embedding goes beyond traditional mapping. Embedding graduate attributes cumulatively develop expertise as learners' progress through their course. Embedding requires the strategic sequencing of learning experiences over a students' entire course to achieve the maximum benefit.

Progress to embed eight graduate attributes will be reported. Across each of the eight attributes, a range of 100+ skills and capabilities have been developed. At the end of their major, learners will exhibit mastery of each graduate attribute. Implementing this strategy requires teachers to progressively teach, have students practice, provide feedback on, and then assess their expertise in each attribute. This presentation describes progress towards embedding eight attributes across five major strands of study.

The benefits of this approach, include: clearly articulated maps that allows learners to chart their progress towards their progressive accumulation of graduate skills; coherent curriculum documents specifying the course goals, outcomes, and contribution of individual units to building graduate attributes; recommendations for the approaches individual teachers can adopt to guide students' development of expertise; a pool of staff with curriculum and assessment design expertise and capabilities they can share with colleagues.

AN INTEGRATED CURRICULUM USING DISTRIBUTED CONTENT

Katina Michael
School of Information Systems and Technology
University of Wollongong

This paper is concerned with practice, specifically, the implementation of a content management system (CMS) for the design of an integrated curriculum. The paper focuses on continuous assessment and how the notion of distributed content can be leveraged to help students become active learners, better integrate their knowledge, and develop critical thinking and professional skills throughout their candidature. Central to the paper is the idea of online resource sharing, reusable content chunks, metatagging, and customised workflows to aid in the coordination of tasks between stakeholders in achieving an integrated curriculum. In developing robust practices in accordance with overarching university and faculty strategic plans, it is hoped that quality in the curriculum can be demonstrated rather than just paid homage. Beyond the use of a 'tool' (i.e. content management) and 'routines' (i.e. workflows), it is hoped that the implementation of distributed content will foster a positive culture of sharing and learning on its immediate stakeholders.

GRADUATE QUALITIES, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT: A FALSE DAWN, ADDING VALUE TO THE UNIVERSITY DEGREE OR THE RE-BRANDING OF TERTIARY EDUCATION?

Glenn Mitchell
History Program
University of Wollongong

This paper sets out to contribute to the growing debate on graduate qualities. It takes an innovative approach to this discussion; it begins with the graduate in the workforce and works backwards to interrogate the relationship between assessment, teaching, learning and graduate qualities. How did the graduate get to the workplace? What did the employer see in her/his tertiary qualifications that led to employment? Through what means did the graduate acquire that which the employer found attractive? And what was 'it'?

The University of Wollongong, like many Australian universities, began its development of graduate qualities through the development of generic skills. It then replaced these with graduate attributes and recently it refined the list of attributes to a smaller list of graduate qualities. Assessment of work is how students see and define their learning of and progress through a subject. Assessment is also how teachers understand how learning may have occurred in a subject. How though do assessment tasks link to students' knowledge of and access to graduate qualities?

This paper uses the lens of an internship subject at the University of Wollongong, ARTS301, to investigate these questions.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF CLASSICAL WOODWIND INSTRUMENTS IN THE AUSTRALIAN TERTIARY SECTOR.

Heather Monkhouse
University of Tasmania

How does current assessment work? Does it provide students with a useful learning experience and effective feedback or can we do better?

The assessment of instrumental performance is most usually done using one of three methods: a teacher's report, a technical exam or a recital performance. Apart from the teacher's report, a panel is formed to assess performance, and it is not always the case that the instructor will sit on the assessment panel. Not all three types of assessment may occur in any one semester; indeed predominantly there is usually one or two only.

When do these assessments occur? What is their purpose? In the weekly one-on-one instrumental lesson the focus is predominantly formative: immediate, personal and directed feedback designed to improve performance. So should we assess learning, or do we evaluate mastery, or should we do both? Does our assessment encourage professionalism? In professional life a performer is judged on the performance on the day, and only on the impression so made.

Finally: panel assessment? The performance is authentic; what about the marking?
How do we teach students to understand it is impossible to control audience
reaction?

JOURNALISM STUDENT AS REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

Marcus O'Donnell
School of Journalism & Creative Writing
University of Wollongong

Philosophy of Teaching Statements have been used widely in both undergraduate teacher education programs and tertiary teaching staff development programs. This paper looks at the adoption of the “philosophy statement” model in a new undergraduate journalism program. The Philosophy of Journalism Statement will be used as an ongoing assessment device each semester as a way of engaging students in a rolling reflective process. It aims to enable students to: (a) map their progress over the course of a degree program; (b) develop their identity as reflective practitioners; (c) make connections between different subjects particularly theory/practice links; (d) develop creative ways of communicating their values and experiences as journalists and (e) develop professional goals and aspirations. It forms one of the key planks in an overall model of curriculum development that will be briefly described. This “creative curriculum” emphasises multimodal communication, interdisciplinary skills development, authentic tasks, the construction of knowledge artefacts, and reflection-in-action.

This paper will describe the initial deployment of the Philosophy of Journalism Statement and address the development of a framework for assessment. Key questions arising from this project include: How do we assess reflective tasks? How do we assist students to integrate the personal, disciplinary and professional domains in reflective tasks? How do we develop and assess creativity in professional disciplines?

EXPLORING ASSESSMENT ISSUES IN 'COMMON LEARNING APPROACHES' DEVELOPED FOR THE FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCE

Jo Osborne
Faculty of Health Science
University of Tasmania

What are the assessment challenges faced in an interdisciplinary learning environment and how can these be best met to benefit the student experience as well as meet institutional and professional requirements?

The UTAS Faculty of Health Science is adopting a flexible approach to sharing curriculum content across its professional courses, initially for the introduction of emerging health issues and demographic trends. This 'common learning approach' can be characterized as different models for providing common curriculum content across the health disciplines to achieve Faculty objectives of: increasing teaching and learning efficiency in a climate of expansion in course offerings; and, where this can logically be included: improving opportunities for inter-disciplinary learning (i.e. teamwork activity and improved understanding across the disciplines modelling inter-professional practice in primary health care).

As the common learning approach is a new focus in the Faculty some implications for assessment are yet to be explored. Questions outstanding include: When a curriculum resource is shared, how will different disciplines interpret and assess a common learning outcome, and could this have application for inter-professional learning? How do different disciplines define and assess concepts such as 'professionalism' and 'inter-professional activity'? If these competencies are assessed in an inter-disciplinary context, should their different professional roles affect assessment expectations?

WORRY LESS. LEARN MORE

Margaret Wallace
School of Nursing, Midwifery & Indigenous Health
University of Wollongong

This presentation describes and reflects on the process working in collaboration with discipline colleagues, faculty librarians, Learning Development, learning designers from the Centre for Educational Development and Interactive Resources in designing, implementing and evaluating a range of resources, learning activities and assessment tasks which have as a key purpose the development in nursing students of the University of Wollongong a range of academic skills.

Ideally, by embedding these resources, learning activities and assessment tasks within particular components of study students obtain discipline specific knowledge at the same time as they are demonstrating the attainment of more generic capabilities. This in turn enhances student motivation as they see the relevance of the various 'academic' capabilities as essential to their acquisition of discipline specific knowledge.