



Distributive Leadership Project

Report of the La Trobe University Faculty Scholars

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Background

The '*Distributive leadership for learning and teaching: Developing the faculty scholars model*' project attracted Carrick funding support through the Leadership for Excellence in Learning and Teaching Program Grants scheme and started late in 2006 led by the University of Wollongong (UOW). In the first project stage a distributive leadership framework for teaching and learning built on a network of faculty-based Leadership Scholars was developed to enhance leadership skills for scholars at UOW and its project partner, the University of Tasmania. La Trobe University and Flinders University joined as contributing partners in the second project stage, late in 2007.

The Distributive Leadership Project aims to support strategic change through leadership activities embedded in authentic learning tasks. Although some variation in implementation exists across the participating institutions, in each case the leadership scholars were mentored by Strategic Leadership Coaches from the senior executive in their institution, ensuring a two-way information flow about change initiatives. At La Trobe each Faculty identified one Scholar who participated in initial leadership training and subsequently led a strategic faculty-based project targeting improvement of assessment practice. These scholars collaborated with other scholars at La Trobe and across the partner institutions, and participated in a Roundtable on assessment.

Outline of Project Activities

| Activity | Timing | Outcomes |
|--------------------|-------------------|---|
| Leadership retreat | Feb, Barwon Heads | Leadership training Faculty project development |
| Teleconferencing | Ongoing | Organization of Assessment roundtable |
| Mid year meeting | June, Glenelg | Preparation for Roundtable Demonstration of World Café Emotional intelligence |
| Roundtable | September, Sydney | National meeting exploring assessment issues in higher education |

Faculty Project Development

Faculty scholars joined the ALTC (Carrick) project to lead a Faculty-based project in the broad area of assessment which was of value to their home Faculty. Scholars were variously invited to apply through either an open invitation or by direct contact from the Faculty and submitted project proposals for consideration. After selection, each scholar met with Dr. Gerry Lefoe (Distributive Project Leader) and Ms Dominique Parrish (Project Officer) at La Trobe University in February 2008 to refine their proposal and to construct an action plan. Plans were further refined after discussion during the first leadership retreat and many have been further developed during implementation. Each scholar will present their findings to their Faculty.

Leadership Training

A three day leadership retreat was held at Barwon Heads from the 17th to 20th of February. Leadership Scholars from three universities took part: University of Wollongong, Flinders University and La Trobe University. The leadership retreat provided a program of activities aimed to explore leadership and to allow Scholars to develop and refine their faculty projects. The following provides a summary of the leadership retreat program at Barwon Heads.

Day One

Following introductions, the thirteen scholars were presented with an overview of the project and considered leadership in learning and teaching in the Higher Education context. For the remainder of the first day there were presentation activities and discussion around the elements, competencies and characteristics of effective leadership, a discussion on emotional intelligence, a reflection on types of leaders and finally, a 'true colours' exercise to explore variations of personality.

Day Two

Day two launched into a review of our faculty-based action learning project strategic plans. The scholars looked at project focus and outcomes, timelines, action resources, obstacles and difficulties and assessment and evaluation. The afternoon was spent collaboratively sharing insights and making suggestions on roundtable planning.

Day Three

Day three involved a discussion on the importance of resilience and personal health and exploring strategies for enhancing and managing and promoting these. The rest of the day was dedicated to project presentations by Scholars to senior leaders of the University of Wollongong and La Trobe University for feedback.

Mid Year Scholar Meeting

In June, the Scholars from La Trobe and Flinders Universities met in Glenelg, Adelaide, to continue and cement their planning of the Roundtable on assessment in higher education to be held in September.

This provided a great opportunity to hear about the progress of each of the Scholars and their projects. The group experienced first-hand the *World Café* that had been proposed as one of the activities for the Roundtable. This was ably led by La Trobe Scholar, Glyn Thomas, and it was agreed that this activity would launch the Roundtable in September.

A number of key objectives were achieved by the end of the meeting including an agreed list of invitees, a possible venue and program for the Roundtable.

Roundtable on Assessment in Higher Education

The Assessment Roundtable was held in Sydney on September 18th. Participants were drawn from centres of teaching and learning in higher education, senior academic staff from the three participating universities and experts in the field of assessment. The overarching aim of the meeting was to generate an informed and productive discussion of topical issues assessment in higher education.

The programme began with a World Café exploration of key issues in assessment in higher education. Participants in self-selected groups discussed the question, "if there was one thing you could change in assessment in higher education what would it be?". After a lively discussion, participants moved to new groupings that discussed "how that change could be made a reality". Faculty scholars from each University presented their work in a poster session with open discussion in the next session.

After lunch, participants at the roundtable divided into three groups to discuss in various ways three broad themes in assessment. They were:

Theme 1: Sustainable assessment: designing assessment that meets the needs of the present and also prepares students to meet their own future learning needs

Theme 2: Assessment and Outcome Alignment: how do we know it when we see it?

Theme 3: Structural and Attitudinal Influences on Assessment

Notes from each session and the key ideas were recorded during the discussion and are being gathered for a meeting summary.

A report on the meeting is included in the Appendix. It was prepared by Prof Gary Davis, Director of the ALTC Discipline-based Initiative in Law who was an independent participant in the meeting. Edited outcomes and recommendations from the afternoon session on structural issues are also supplied in the Appendix as they may be of interest for La Trobe's curriculum reform program.

Suggestions and recommendations for next round of scholars:

The current group of Faculty Scholars make the following recommendations for the next iteration of the project at La Trobe University.

- Provide a clearer idea of the distinction between the leadership development and implementation of a faculty project for prospective scholars
- Clarify of the concept of distributive leadership for prospective scholars including background into leadership models, examples of what is and is not distributive leadership and how such a model can be used in higher education
- Deadlines for faculty scholar projects to be made clear at the outset of project proposal. It is particularly important to include the project completion date in the planning stage of project design. The requirement to complete the project within a year (and actually within eight months) substantially changes the potential scope of projects. Scholars also need to understand that their work may form part of an ongoing process of reform.
- The University needs streamlined procedures for ethics approval for teaching research. At the moment applications for these are referred to Faculty committees which can dramatically delay consideration and approval. This also applies to other teaching research projects.
- Institutional support for scholars could be improved. Advice from mentors and discussion with senior management have been important components of the distributive leadership project at other universities. This part of the project needs some further consideration at La Trobe.

Overview of Faculty Projects

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Faculty Scholar: | Ana Maria Ducasse |
| Faculty: | Humanities and Social Sciences |
| Project name: | Toeing the line: mapping graduate attributes on to speaking and writing assessment in the humanities and social sciences |

The improvement of assessment practices in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science was stimulated by domain experts reflecting on their practice which results in action across the faculty. Academics verbalized connections between assessment and the attainment of graduate attributes to flesh out what Graduate Attributes (GAs) meant to their different programs, whether they taught them and how they were assessed. The major finding was that academics are willing to express how different their disciplines are from others and this is a way into discussing alignment with assessment and Graduate Attributes.

The first practical outcome is eliciting a description of what the 10 GA's from the faculty mean to an academic discipline. Another outcome is the alignment of that description of GAs onto current assessment which identifies gaps and starts the conversation on changes needed to incorporate GA's in the program unit guide. The intended end result is improved Course Exit Questionnaires as a result of this process, whereby domain experts make explicit the alignment of GAs with their course assessment in comprehensive unit guides for students.

Project Outcomes

Across the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Graduate Attributes, specific to disciplines, were developed by various programs representing each of the schools in the faculty.

Action

A workshop schedule was developed for approval by the faculty ethics committee.

A pilot work shop was held within Historical and European studies, then several smaller cross-faculty ones with a total of eleven programs volunteering to take part

The programs received a draft copy of the attributes they worked on, to take back for further discussion within their programs in order to finalize them.

Participants

Archaeology, Asian studies languages (Chinese, Japanese and Indonesian), Cinema studies, European languages (Greek, Italian and Spanish), History, Linguistics and Visual Arts.

Obstacles

One school in the faculty did not feel they were ready to participate during the early stages. When the faculty made the attributes compulsory at the discipline specific level, which was the aim of the project, there was renewed interest in the project and further workshops were run.

The timeline was difficult to manage.

Faculty Projects (cont)

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Faculty Scholar: | Jeffrey Barnes, School of Law |
| Faculty: | Law and Management |
| Project Name: | Progressive Development of Legal Skills: Fostering Staff Cooperation |

If a cooperative approach to setting assessment is taken it is likely to lead to better outcomes for student learning. Without cooperation, staff efforts are likely to be ad hoc and to lack coordination and consistency. A lack of cooperation can be a particular problem with the “development” of a skill which occurs over a number of units. If staff do not cooperate efforts can be duplicated or gaps might not be addressed. At the same time cooperation cannot easily be accomplished. There are few processes to foster a cooperative approach amongst staff who teach different units aside from a formal curriculum review.

This project examines ways to foster a cooperative approach to the setting of assessment tasks involving the progressive development of a disciplinary skill. The literature on fostering cooperation in organisations suggests that cooperation is assisted by the setting of goals for the program in question. But it also makes clear that the setting of goals for an organisation, while important, is not sufficient itself to ensure cooperation. Other crucial ingredients are: creating an open and safe environment for the sharing of ideas; encouraging diversity of opinions; negotiating agreement; and developing and refining protocols in the light of practice.

Further Steps Taken in This Project

- A chart mapping the skills which are (and are not) developed in the undergraduate law degree was developed, and feedback was sought from staff.
- Staff were invited to participate in discussion sessions, each concerning the progressive development of a particular legal skill. Ten staff and the project leader participated.
- Participating staff were trained (where required) in basic skills in setting assessment tasks.
- The participating staff were invited to reflect on the sessions and on the action they have taken, or are considering taking, in relation to the progressive development of legal skills and their assessment.

Outcomes

- A chart mapping legal skills in the undergraduate program was prepared and distributed.
- A group of staff became committed to greater cooperation in assessment.
- A basis for cooperation was established: unit learning guides became available to all; a bank of assessment exemplars was founded; and a decision made to produce a legal writing guide for students.
- Revision of unit learning guides occurred to take better account of the relationships with other units.
- Staff protocols were amended: the need for staff cooperation became embedded in the unit learning guide template and approval process within the School.

Faculty Projects (cont)

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Faculty Scholar: | Elizabeth Johnson, School of Molecular Sciences |
| Faculty: | Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering |
| Project Name: | Assessment Modes in Science: Formal examinations and the assessment of generic skills |

Anecdotal evidence suggests assessment in undergraduate Science courses is focused on content rather than on generic skills despite an increasing emphasis on graduate attributes in Universities. Emphasis on content may be accompanied by a heavy weighting on formal written examinations, which offer limited capacity to assess generic skills. This project defines current practice in the types of assessment used in undergraduate Science teaching at La Trobe University and looks at staff attitudes to assessment to provide a basis for discussion about teaching and assessment of generic skills. A second outcome from the project is the collation of unit outlines across the Faculty. These documents provide far greater detail on assessment methods than the University's Unit Database and will now form a resource database for staff in the Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering.

Faculty Resource Database

Unit outlines from undergraduate units across the Faculty were collected from Departments and Schools to provide information on assessment modes. Faculty has agreed that this database of information will be made available to all staff through the Faculty Web Page and will be updated each year. This resource will provide information and examples of current teaching and will increase transparency in assessment practices.

Assessment Modes in Science at La Trobe

Information on assessment modes has been collated from subject descriptions in the Unit Database and from unit outlines. A preliminary survey shows the average weighting for formal examinations is 60% and that this is largely invested in a single exam. Further documentation on the links between assessment mode and the learning objectives for a unit of work is being collated.

Staff Attitudes to Assessment

Staff across the Faculty of Science at La Trobe are being surveyed to investigate the reasons behind the emphasis on formal examinations. Preliminary conclusions from the surveys suggest staff select examinations because of resource restrictions, fears of cheating and plagiarism and because examinations are thought to be more rigorous. Data from La Trobe staff surveys will be compared with information from staff surveys and interviews in the Faculty of Science and Engineering at Flinders University in a parallel project led by Dr Jamie Quinton.

Faculty Projects (cont)

Faculty Scholar: Glyn Thomas

Faculty: Education

Project Name: Assessment for future learning: Improving students' abilities to monitor quality

Project Outline

In higher education settings, assessment tasks usually get the attention of students, but once their work is submitted students are often disengaged with the assessment process, becoming passive recipients. Future learning oriented assessment engages students in the assessment process to improve both short and long-term outcomes by helping students to make "increasingly sophisticated judgments about their learning" (Boud & Falchikov, 2007, p. 186).

Self- and peer-assessment are useful tools to enhance future learning because they require students to develop an understanding about the quality of a piece of work. The added bonus is a stronger alignment between the teacher's values of learner-centred teaching and his/her assessment practices by shifting the focus off the teacher and onto the subject - as in Palmer's (1998) *Community of Knowing*.

Project Outcomes

Staff from the Faculty of Education were invited to participate in a collaborative process encouraging them to design and trial some future-learning oriented assessment processes. Supported by educational designers, the volunteers have engaged in a half-day workshop, online discussions, and individual consultations. The participants will support each other as they implement their innovations this semester and at the conclusion of the project they will share their findings with Faculty of Education staff.

Some examples of planned innovations include:

- Requiring students to create a Wiki for a group project, using peer assessment of each other's contributions, which can be tracked.
- Peer-reviewed individual presentations
- A mathematical competency test for first year pre-service teachers designed to reduce levels of mathematical anxiety through peer assessment.

Hopefully, staff who have participated will be able to present the findings of their experimentation with their assessment at a Faculty-wide learning and teaching seminar. I will also be writing a paper with two of the staff sharing our findings to be submitted to a higher education journal in early 2009.

Participants

Staff from the Faculty of Education in three of the academic units.

Obstacles

- The 9 month timeframe of the project positioned across two semesters did not allow for experimentation with assessment in either university semester. Semester 1 had started before the project started and semester 2 was not finished when the roundtable was held.
- Getting buy-in from staff was difficult when everyone is so busy,
- Negotiating access and a time to talk to staff in two of the academic units was challenging.

References

- Boud, D., & Falchikov, N. (2007). Developing assessment for informing judgement. In D. Boud & N. Falchikov (Eds.), *Rethinking assessment in higher education: Learning for the longer term* (pp. 181-197). London: Routledge.
- Palmer, P. J. (1998). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Faculty Projects (cont)

Faculty Scholar: Matthew Oates, Senior Lecturer, Division of Health Studies

Faculty: Health Sciences

Project Name: The first year student's experience of peer assessment

The Faculty of Health Sciences is in the process of reviewing and redesigning its curricula for all health professional training programs. As part of this curriculum reform, a new Common First Year will be introduced in 2009. All students across all five campuses of the university in the first year will take the same common seven units. The only exceptions to this are Social Work (who will not take anatomy and physiology units) and Dentistry and Oral Health students at the Bendigo campus (due to course accreditation constraints).

The new common first year will adopt an enquiry-based learning (EBL) approach to curriculum design. Students will work in small interprofessional teams across all units and engage in active and independent enquiry. As a result of the shift to team work, a significant proportion of student assessment will be group tasks prepared by a small team of students. As with all group work, students often express concern about the opportunity this provides for some students to 'freeload' leaving much of the effort to a couple of students in the group. Similarly, there is also the potential for one or two dominant students to control the completion of group tasks, leaving little in the way of opportunity for other team members to contribute. The First Year Unit Coordinators of the Common First Year units have stipulated in their assessment policy that all group work should involve some element of peer assessment of contribution to group assessment tasks. Accordingly, the CFY will use an online peer assessment program (iPeer™) to facilitate this process.

This project trialed two forms of peer assessment using available technology:

- Peer assessment of contribution to group work using the online peer assessment tool (iPeer™); and
- *Calibrated Peer Review (CPR)™* for the peer assessment of an individual report.

The iPeer program provides students with a mechanism for grading each member of their team's contribution to and participation in the completion of a submitted group assessment task. Each student receives a mark based on the marks assigned by their peers. They also receive qualitative comments about their performance. This mark is then used to moderate marks awarded to each individual member of the group for the task.

In CPR, students submit their individual written assessment task (in this case a written assignment) to the online CPR tool. Following submission, students work through the staged CPR process to:

- Calibrate themselves against teacher-prepared sample reports of varying quality.
- Review, assess and comment on the work of three peers.
- Self-assess their own submission.

The student's mark is awarded on the basis of their level of calibration accuracy, the quality of their work as determined by their peers, their consistency with other reviewers of the same piece of written work, and the consistency of their self-assessment with that of their peers.

Students were surveyed about their experience of both forms of peer assessment. Key findings of the project to date can be summarised as follows:

- Students believed the peer assessment of contribution to group work to be a fair process and to accurately reflect the work of members of the team.
- Students believe the CPR process to be a valuable learning experience but question the fairness of this method of peer review given its lack of tutor contribution to the mark achieved for the assessment task.

Appendix: Outcomes from the Roundtable Thematic Sessions

Part A

Report from Professor Gary Davis (Director of the ALTC Discipline-based Initiative in Law)

The Culture of Assessment in Higher Education Roundtable: Distributive Leadership for Learning and Teaching Project (ALTC-sponsored)

Faculty Scholars Presentations

Novotel Brighton Beach, Sydney (18 September 2008)

The *Distributive Leadership* project aims to influence the values; practices; beliefs; cultures; and behaviours of teaching and learning through the distribution of power via collegiality - the sharing of knowledge, practice and experiences. I was invited to attend this roundtable event by Dr Geraldine Lefoe, Senior Lecturer / Project Leader, Centre for Educational Development and Interactive Resources, University of Wollongong. The aim of the roundtable was to stimulate discussion on a range of issues to do with assessment of learning within universities, including:

- alignment between assessment and learning outcomes: definition and recognition;
- alignment in practice: effecting change;
- sustainable assessment: designing assessment that meets the needs of the present and also prepares students to meet their own future learning needs.

The existence and timing of this event was fortuitous for the CALD/ALTC Discipline Based Initiative in Law, both in regard to that project's emphasis upon graduate attributes, learning outcomes and aligned assessment as being crucial to the development of effective legal education and in regard to the "Let's Do Assessment" Workshop that the project is undertaking at Bond University Law School in November 2008.

1. The initial session permitted discussion of what makes for effective assessment. The following key points emerged:

- Emphasis on "authenticity" of assessment is fundamental;
- There needs to be a clear understanding of the meaning of "authenticity" (assessment tasks are "authentic" when they resemble tasks that students would have to do in work or life situations) and other concepts;
- Assessment ought to be coordinated across a whole of course to ensure adequate coverage and avoidance of gaps and repetition;
- Avoid the temptation, especially in tenure and promotion processes, to see student evaluations as the sole or primary evidence of teaching and learning achievements;
- Expectations of and cultures surrounding assessment need to be changed, among academics, students and other stakeholders, including employers;
- Assessment should be seen within the bigger context of teaching and learning, and how it can and ought to support that – one should realise that there are, broadly, dual roles for assessment:
 - assessment of learning; and
 - (more importantly but often unperceived) assessment for learning;
- Good institutional practices are needed to reinforce assessment that is effective for teaching and learning;
- Excellence should be encouraged and rewarded, but there must also be recognition in tangible ways of good, competent practice (ie provide equivalent in teaching area of the "solid", but not outstanding, publication that counts in the research domain)
- Better dissemination mechanisms are required that will allow good practices and exemplars to be showcased;

- The diversity of assessment needs to be protected, so that flexibility and transparency can be maximised;
- One must guard against the pressure of innovation interfering with the fundamentals of good assessment;
- In designing assessment, there should be a balance struck between idealism and pragmatism.

2. The Faculty Scholar projects (see attached) dealing with “sustainable assessment” were outlined and discussed. The focus was on assessment that would assist students to develop capacities to make increasingly sophisticated judgments in the future about the quality of their own and others’ work. The literature suggests this can be accomplished through use of peer- and self-assessment tasks, sometimes (but not necessarily) accompanied by group work tasks. Some of the comments emphasised:

- The need for good grievance processes to be in place;
- The need to convince institutional management; colleagues; and students of the intrinsic value of this type of assessment and alleviate scepticism that it is merely a work-saving device for busy academics;
- It is a benefit for students to become involved in a dialogue about assessment, thereby developing a deeper understanding of how complex the process is and how important it is that they understand more about their own learning;
- The labels “self” and “peer” assessment can be problematic, lead to unwarranted assumptions about their purpose and can interfere with learning – focus should instead be placed on the objective, which is to develop student capacities to reflect, evaluate, make judgments, give effective feedback, etc;
- This type of assessment should be used to achieve the legitimate objectives referred to above and, like all assessment, as part of an overall assessment strategy in a course – in other words, it should be integrated into the broader whole, and this should be made transparent, including making it clear what it adds to the overall objective;
- It is important, when trying to “sell” this (as with many innovations), to find ways to give students useful, tangible and immediate recognition of the things they have learned – eg, if they have learned to make constructive comments on their own work, then credit should be given for that achievement – it is not enough to tell students that what they are learning is intrinsically valuable and will be recognised by them at some point in the future - the use of e-portfolios was suggested as a possible means of demonstrating what has been learned and allowing students to build in their own reflections on the process.

3. The Faculty Scholar projects (see attached) dealing with achieving alignment in practice between assessment and outcomes were outlined and discussed. Key points included:

- Care must be taken to state learning outcomes with clarity, and they must be “outcomes”, not tasks or activities;
- When stating outcomes, there should be clarity in the terminology used, and avoidance of vague language such as “understanding” or “well-presented” – the evidence of achievement is what is fundamental, and it should be made explicit;
- All stated outcomes should be explicitly assessed in some way, and their assessment should be appropriately weighted.

4. The Faculty Scholar projects (see attached) dealing with the structural and attitudinal influences on assessment, in particular how we define and recognise good, aligned assessment, were considered via role-play exercises on how to develop a more positive culture around assessment and how to achieve transparency. Key points included:

- A consistent message must be conveyed through use of key performance indicators;
- Consultation with all stakeholders should feed into that process;
- Incentives to adopt change that represents better practices should be provided;
- Means to develop professionalism and commitment to best practice should be provided;

- Local mechanisms for sharing good practices, informally among individuals and more routinely and generally among colleagues, should be encouraged.

5. One of the Faculty Scholars, Prof Elizabeth Handsley of Flinders University, was charged with the task of summing up the themes that emerged from the day. She brought these together into 5 categories of factors that affect the culture of assessment, providing ideas on how to influence that culture for the better.

(a) University policies and practices

- know how the institution expects its academics to conduct assessment;
- know how academics actually carry out assessment;
- know how the institution checks what academics are doing in relation to assessment;
- work to ensure effective succession planning so that good ideas carry on and institutional memory and knowledge are maintained.

(b) Values and beliefs

- harness the passion of academics like those participating in the roundtable;
- work to ensure that these conversations about assessment are brought into the mainstream rather than left as optional add-ons for those who are interested or care enough;
- ensure there is student-centricity to assessment – communicate openly and effectively, and establish fair standards and criteria;
- avoid developing jaded or cynical attitudes;
- be positive, not complaining, in outlook and expression, and forge relationships outside own discipline or unit. if necessary to obtain the support to do this.

(c) Valuing teaching generally and good teaching practice in particular

- embrace challenge and change, finding ways to work as effectively and imaginatively as possible with what's available;
- provision and use of resources and support in all its manifestations, including academic development units, literature, etc;
- provision of tangible recognition, including awards, citations, commendations (but with care not to debase the currency), promotion.

(d) Integration

- this is especially important in the graduate attributes universe;
- rationalise assessment for specific tasks, and build towards a coherent overall plan for assessment - avoid over-assessing;
- encourage close and effective cooperation among colleagues;
- rely upon practices that have been developed elsewhere and shown to be effective – there is no need to “reinvent the wheel”;
- ensure assessment becomes a part of, not the end stage of, student learning.

(e) What makes for good assessment practice

- assessment is designed and implemented around all those things that students need to learn;
- transparency in what is being assessed, how it is being assessed, and in expectations and standards;

- authenticity underlies the assessment tasks;
- assessment is aligned with intended outcomes, so that we can know whether, and to what extent, students have learned what we intended them to learn.

6. At one point in the roundtable discussions, the notion was raised that there is a fundamental core of a good assessment culture. The challenge is to articulate and internalise that. A “Ten Commandments” metaphor was suggested. In her concluding remarks, Prof Handsley climbed Mount Sinai:

The 10 Commandments of Assessment

1. Thou shalt consult with colleagues.
2. Thou shalt use the resources available to inform thy practice.
3. Thou shalt be transparent.
4. Thou shalt reflect on thy institution’s policies and preferred practices.
5. Thou shalt have authentic assessment aligned with thy expected learning outcomes.
6. Thou shalt innovate, but not for innovation’s sake.
7. Thou shalt not over-assess.
8. Thou shalt have reasonable standards given students’ capacities.
9. Thou shalt encourage junior colleagues and listen to them as well.
10. When discouraged, thou shalt review these commandments and remind thyself thou art on the right track.

PART B

Summary of Discussion on University Structures Affecting Assessment

Theme 3: Structural and Attitudinal Influences on Assessment

This thematic group conducted a hypothetical to elicit ideas about the structural and attitudinal influences on assessment. Participants were divided into two groups of either senior management or teaching staff. Each group was asked to make recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Hart AskMaster to tackle the problem. The recommendations from each group have been gathered at the top of the report and are followed by the scenario and recorded notes from the session which include some valuable insights

From the Management Team

Recommendations (Group 1)

1. signal that assessment is an institutional priority and that staff will be supported to enhance assessment practice → align carrots
2. develop an institutional framework for quality assurance/enhancement /improvement linked to promotion/probation, compliance mechanisms and performance management
3. provide resources and support for staff to make change → variety of mechanisms and a PVC Assessment to drive change.

Recommendations (Group 2)

1. Define indicators of a positive culture: KPI for responsible staff. Includes dialogue with Uni about what is good practice in assessment.
2. Institutional reward strategies: funding (assessment performance based), recognition (showcases/ awards etc)
3. provision of resources to support: change management, distributive leadership
4. review current approaches to enable change in practice of students and staff.

From The Staff Team

Recommendations (Group 1)

1. Staff forums (systematic) to share and develop language, reflect on prior instances and examine wider-context and "fit" into overall course.
2. Prepare a manual/web material/ documentation/ database to provide **exemplars** of student assignments of different types, criteria/instructions provided by staff (feedback) and to provide/allow for further development.
3. Provide rewards/support/incentives to get staff engagement including recognition through promotion/awards which values a staff member's portfolio.

Recommendations (Group 2)

1. Make assessment public (create standards) which will produce propagation of best practice, a consistent framework and peer review. Other strategies include the use of routine(ised) templates, open access to standards website, provision of exemplars. Program could include workshops to develop framework, benchmarking and strategies for moderation of tasks
2. Staff professional development should be supported to ensure consistency and to ensure that assessment is evidence-based rather than intuition-based.
3. Assessment standards should be tested with stakeholders: students, industry, professions

The hypothetical scenario provided to participants was as follows:

Group Activity

This thematic group will operate as a hypothetical.

Each of you is a member of the University of Infinite Enlightenment at either program level or at senior management level – your choice. In response to an AUQA audit, the new Vice-Chancellor, Prof Hart Askmaster, has decided that the University needs clear directions on assessment practice for its staff.

(a) Working party of senior management

The Vice-Chancellor has said he wants a more positive culture around assessment. You have accepted an invitation to join the working party that will recommend how the University can foster positive attitudes and approaches to assessment and develop institutional structures to support effective assessment.

Your working party has been asked to make three key recommendations.

(b) Program-level group

The Vice-Chancellor has specified he wants assessment practices to be more transparent between colleagues and across the university. You are a member of the course management committee for the Bachelor of Everything (B. Ev.). Your committee has been asked for submissions regarding strategies to encourage co-operation and development of best assessment practice amongst staff

The following notes were made during the discussions at each table and culminate in the recommendations in each case. The discussion was repeated with new participants to generate a second round of recommendations from Group 2.

Working Notes (Senior Management: Group 1)

Causes of Negative Culture

For University of Infinite Enlightenment

- Dramatic ↑ workload due to budgeting constraints → imposed from top
- Casualization of teaching staff

What can be Controlled?

- Change priorities → how to signal assessment is a priority
- New methodologies
- Showcase alternatives
- Continuous professional development
- Need carrots for staff - promotion awards: make assessment a priority
Prof AskMaster award for excellence in assessment practice
- Find out where efficiencies can be made → alternative ways of getting admin done.
- Does the workload model skew priorities?
- How do you measure excellence?
- benchmarking with other Unis

Sticks and carrots

- Quality assurance models
- Faculty funding model includes rewards for teaching excellence
student CEQ style surveys
- Continuous professional development
seeing assessment as enabling rather than a barrier
intrinsic to their own professionalism
linked to probation and performance review
moves away from externally applied pressures
demonstrate respect for staff
Combining research with teaching
- incentives for scholarship of teaching: grants, teaching-focussed appointments for teaching scholarship

Policies

- Currently largely procedural → compliance
- Make a statement about the importance and value of assessment
- Make this align with procedures

Working Notes (Senior Management: Group 2)

Key questions: What is a positive culture? How will we know if we are successful?

- When staff don't complain about assessment being hard work
- Evidence that staff are engaged in assessment (promotions/awards, recognition strategies) → core business not an optional extra
- Students: evidence that students see that their assessment supports their learning → surveys/ portfolios
- Assessment is aligned to agreed objectives relevant to students/ stakeholders
- All relevant stakeholders involved in assessment practice
- University support structures are enabling (opportunity) rather than punitive (liability)
- Staff are confident they will be effectively supported in staff development

If have already done an audit of assessment practice

- Identify "poor" practice and inefficiencies

What is good practice in assessment?

- University provides a scaffold
- Adapt an existing list to what is appropriate for our University and its priorities = **working party** (=joy!)
- Core: assessment **as** learning but also need assessment **of** learning
- Allocate performance-based funding to Faculties on the basis of the indicators (1st sheet)
- make Deans personally responsible
- distribute the LTPF to the Faculties

Supports

- Time release for curriculum development
- Grants for transferable initiatives with appropriate time release
- Appointment of supporting expertise → academic development
- Programs for Deans → skills to support change

Key questions: What engenders positive attitudes and enthusiastic engagement?

- Recognition/support from senior staff
- Excellent student performance is intrinsically exciting
- Space and focus for curriculum renewal

Considerations

Assessment is covert

- Researchers do not always make good teachers
- Use distributive leadership model to excite, engage inspire
 - promote leadership and empower staff
 - breakdown hierarchy
 - praise: personal thankyou's, recognition by colleagues, lots of small rewards

Working Notes from the Staff Team

Transparency

- Everything should be on the Web
- Nobody knows what happens
- "Secret academic business"
- Need all assessment explained with the graduate attributes they represent
- Tertiary literacy e.g. rubrik

Need to see Models of Assessment

- “Word” of law vs “spirit” of law
- What makes assessment good or bad?
- Run risk of a competency-based approach – TAFE vs Uni
- Rubrik/weightings
- Not about achieve/not achieve
- Forums for discussion (QA) → course flow developmental
- Staff training
- Establish/ develop best practice
- Challenges: identify common language and terminology
- Gather/express experience from previous cohort
- Get students to write down marking criteria