

Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITP) Sector Case Studies

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1 Analysis of the Case Studies - Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITP) sector

Analysis of the case studies from Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITP) sector, from the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The Institute of Technology and Polytechnic sector

The tertiary teachers

Ten academic staff members from Wintec were interviewed. The majority of these tertiary teachers were Senior Academic Staff Members. There were also three Principal Academic Staff Members and one Academic Staff Member.

Subject/Discipline

The ten staff members work in the following eight of the organisation's 12 schools: Communication, Business and Administration, Media Arts, Information Technology, Sport and Exercise Science, Te Toi a Kiwa (Māori, Pasifika and Indigenous Studies), Trades, Engineering and Construction, and Education and Social Development.

The teachers discussed assessment practices from the following ten subject areas: Interpersonal Communication, Services Management, Fine Arts, Computer Programming, Exercise Programming and Prescription, Te Reo Rangatira, Electrical Engineering, Professional Supervision, Early Childhood Education, and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

Class levels, sizes and student groups

The ITP sector assessment strategies were employed in a range of qualifications including certificates, graduate diplomas, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. The class levels included one Level 2 and one Level 4 module, three Level 5 modules, four Level 7 modules and one strategy spanned Levels 5 to 9.

The class sizes described by the teachers in the ITP sector were mostly smaller than those described by the university teachers. Overall the class sizes ranged from 10 to 60. One teacher said their strategy is suitable for class sizes greater than 50 students; one described the ideal class size as under 50 students, one as under 25 students, and another as under 20 students.

When asked to describe the students who would benefit from the assessment strategies, the majority of the ITP teachers said that all students would benefit. Two teachers mentioned international students and one of these teachers referred specifically to students from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds. One teacher specified students participating in a Māori teaching and learning environment; one mentioned students involved in performance in practical subjects; and another mentioned students who lack confidence.

Assessment background

When asked how they had gained knowledge of assessment practices, all but one of the tertiary teachers said they had completed the Certificate in Adult Learning and Teaching (CALT) or equivalent. CALT is a 12-week full-time tutor training qualification available to Wintec staff. Two of the teachers also had additional teacher education qualifications for teaching in organisations outside the tertiary education sector. The majority of the teachers also mentioned learning about assessment through designing and developing programmes and being an external moderator for other organisations.

Other methods of learning about assessment mentioned by the teachers included:

- Undertaking research into assessment practices
- Being an examiner for NCEA
- Taking professional development leave in the UK
- Completing a Masters degree in the UK
- Drawing on their own individual experiences as students, including negative experiences

The assessment strategies

The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITP) Case studies

Several of the ITP strategies are notable for the way in which the assessment tasks are connected to each other and integrated with the teaching and learning. For example, three of the strategies consist of portfolios of work containing a number of connected tasks; a fourth strategy is an assignment consisting of four case studies; and a fifth involves 'teaching spirals' which develop in complexity over four consecutive years and follow an action research model. Another strategy focuses on pulling together various discrete items and assessing a Unit Standard as a whole.

Some of the strategies include a strong focus on formative feedback to ensure that students understand the task requirements and their own progress towards the requirements. One of these strategies provides formative feedback through progress reports and another consists of a written assignment project brief for practical arts. For this strategy students rewrite the project brief in their own words and the teacher then provides feedback directly related to the performance criteria and also writes a schema defining the standards at each grade level.

Two other strategies involve technology. One of these is a videoed problem-solving simulation exercise and reflective journal while the other is a time delay in online multi-choice tests.

2 Case Study 1: Reflecting the Māori way of learning and teaching

A case study from the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic (ITP) sector. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic Sector

Name: Okeroa Waitai

Organisation: Wintec

Email: Okeroa.Waitai@wintec.ac.nz

Researcher: Jane Stewart

In brief

'Te Reo is a living language and the only way it lives is if you speak it, and the only way you are going to speak it is if you know how to go and approach people; it's about our attitudes and values.'

Motivation for including values and attitudes as part of the formative assessment is based in the Māori way of learning and teaching, the desire to maintain balance and Māori tikanga in a holistic environment.

The purpose of the formative assessment guidelines is to support students so they know how to communicate on a marae, to encourage students to participate fully in the Māori environment.

Values and attitudes are formatively assessed throughout the duration of the Certificate in Te Reo Rangatira. Students were given one-to-one progress reports on all their assessments to date and feedback on their overall attitude and values in relation to a range of criteria.

The strategy encourages students to feel valued and improves self-esteem leading to some really good results. Students have a good deal of knowledge and knowledge on marae. In the past, students were able to cross credit the one year full time course and enter into the third year of the Waikato University degree programme.

Tutors received face-to-face feedback from the community, acknowledging the students had really good language.

2.1 About the tertiary teacher - Case Study 1

Part 2 in **Case Study 1: Reflecting the Māori way of learning and teaching**, a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

About the tertiary teacher

Okeroa Waitai is a Principal Academic Staff member and a programme manager, teaching Te Reo Māori in a wide range of programmes from short courses through to the final year of the Degree in Applied Social Science. As the programme manager, she was involved in the design and development of the Level 4 Certificate in Te Reo Rangatira, which was taught from 1995 to 2000: "As a group we oversaw the changes in the modules, the moderation, new development ... the normal programme management decisions". She currently manages Te Pū o te Toi, a bridging programme for Māori students wanting to study at degree level at Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec).

Views of assessment

Okeroa considers that including values and attitudes makes a difference to students' whole learning and is linked to enhanced self esteem, "It makes people more aware of how valued they are ... you see some really good results". Therefore, it is important to be open and honest about the Māori way of learning and teaching. Students need to get feedback about their attitudes and values so that they are able to take their language learning into a Māori environment.

Okeroa describes the Māori way of learning and teaching in the following way: This is how we work, we don't work alone. I am the tutor but the students are all teachers and we are all learners. It is about sharing knowledge. I have something that the students want [fluency in te Reo Māori] and they have so much to share also. It is important to get that across to students and then the classroom becomes a big learning environment.

2.2 Assessment trends - Case Study 1

Part 3 in **Case Study 1: Reflecting the Māori way of learning and teaching**, a case study from Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment.

Assessment trends

According to Okeroa, the incorporation of national unit standards into the Wintec certificate programme changed the way the learning outcomes were assessed. As a consequence, the language teaching did not flow naturally and maintain its rhythm. Some of the total picture of language learning was lost with a change from a total immersion to a bi-lingual teaching environment, leading to a drop in standards. Okeroa links the above changes to a change in students' attitudes who became "increasingly demanding, in some cases, arrogant 'I want my language and I want it now'".

Description of the assessment strategy

Changes were made to the assessment schedule following the incorporation of national unit standards into the Certificate in Te Reo Rangatira. Values were not included in the learning outcomes; instead students were asked to construct their own tikanga for each tutorial group. The assessment strategy described relates to the Certificate in Te Reo Rangatira prior to the inclusion of national unit standards. The Certificate is no longer offered at Wintec.

Values and attitudes were assessed throughout the duration of the Certificate in Te Reo Rangatira. The values component was included, when students were formatively assessed against "adheres to the guidelines agreed upon". Students were given one-to-one progress reports on all their assessments to date and feedback on their overall attitude and values in relation to the following criteria:

1. Working individually or in groups
2. Adhering to the 6 principles of Te Ataarangi:
 - Speak Māori, try not to speak English
 - Do not belittle
 - Do not prompt others, allow people to learn in their own time
 - Be patient with your questions
 - Be helpful
 - Be humble
3. Attendance
4. Participation
5. Completion of activities and assignments
6. Participation in Kapa haka.

2.3 Motivation for using the strategy - Case Study 1

Part 4 in **Case Study 1: Reflecting the Māori way of learning and teaching**, a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Motivation for using the strategy

The motivation for the strategy is based in the Māori way of learning and teaching. The Māori world is about balance spiritually, physically, mentally and emotionally. Including values and attitudes as an assessment strategy ensures students are aware of the need to respect themselves and all the other students in the class "it makes a difference to their whole learning". Okeroa explains that it was part of a holistic approach, which supported a natural flow and rhythm in teaching the language. "It was trying to teach our students that everything is not physical and mental, that values keep the balance right. That is where Taha Wairua (spirituality) and Taha ngākau (emotional well-being) come in".

Another motivation is so the emphasis is on Te Reo as a living language: "The only way Te Reo Māori lives is if you speak it, and the only way you are going to speak it is if you know how to go and approach people". Okeroa says, "The language and the culture need to go hand in hand - Te Reo me ōna tikanga. You can't learn a language without knowing how the people work".

Overall, the strategy fits in with the philosophy and the kaupapa of the programme; it reflects the Māori way of learning and teaching on a marae and ensures that students had a good deal of knowledge, as well as knowledge on marae. Okeroa would say to students: You're not going to make it if you are on your own on a marae and you are not communicating, and if you do not have this respect. Nobody is going to come and help you.

2.4 The purpose of the strategy - Case Study 1

Part 5 in **Case Study 1: Reflecting the Māori way of learning and teaching**, a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

The purpose of the strategy

The purpose of the guidelines is to support students so they know how to communicate on a marae, to encourage students to participate fully in the Māori environment and to maintain standards: "It is about understanding the philosophy and being brought up in a Māori environment".

Strengths and limitations

The strength of including values and attitudes as part of the assessment is that it holds to Māori tikanga and teachings, and aligns with the philosophy and kaupapa of the programme:

We have to encourage students that this is a Māori environment and that karakia at the beginning and end of our classes are of the utmost [importance]. ...We would discuss tikanga and support each other. ...You could just say one of our students' parents or relations has passed away and koha was just given without even asking ...we would like to go and support this person.

A strength of the strategy was a shared ownership of tikanga, being responsible for the classroom and caring for each other so that the classroom becomes "one big learning environment". It encourages students to feel valued and improves self-esteem, "so you see some really good results". Okeroa comments that the graduating students were able to cross credit two years of the University of Waikato degree and enter directly into the third year of their programme.

According to Okeroa, the main limitation of the inclusion of values in the assessment strategy is deciding whose values will be assessed. Values change with a change in the generations, however Okeroa believes it is important to maintain values from older generations, "if we do not retain the 'real wairua' of the older generation, then their teachings will be lost".

Okeroa feels the inclusion of values can work well in any programme which focuses on people, for example education and social development programmes. Okeroa is currently the Programme Manager for Te Pū o te Toi, a Māori bridging programme, which prepares students mainly for applied health degree programmes. She believes the values assessments could be incorporated into this programme, right from the beginning, not only into the Te Reo Māori elective module.

2.5 Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy - Case Study 1

Part 6 in **Case Study 1: Reflecting the Māori way of learning and teaching**, a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy

The strength of the programme was reflected in the community telling potential students to study at Wintec "because you come out speaking your language". Okeroa believes that it is more difficult to share the strategy outside of a 'Māori' programme and adopt the strategy when you are non-Māori. She says, "It is accepted because it's Māori, and as a Māori it gets done. I think there are a lot of staff members out there that feel passionate about values and attitudes and maybe can't see where to fit them in ...It should be everywhere because it makes us more human".

3 Case Study 2: Developing reflective and analytical skills through collaborative learning

A Case Study from the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic (ITP) sector. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic Sector

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Researcher: Jane Stewart

In brief

The whole programme is less about me sitting up the front telling them what to do and more about them applying and sharing information with each other and reviewing that.

The strategy was initially motivated by frustration at students who just want to 'get through' and not really learn. Other motivating factors are being flexible, by providing options for students to explore. Andrew also wishes to maintain a stimulating teaching environment.

The purpose of the strategy is for students to develop and apply their exercise programming skills in case studies. These provide students with practical experience, which they are able to use in the future. The peer and self reviews encourage reflective and analytical skills, which are also important.

The assessment strategy is a summative assignment comprising four individual exercise programmes, designed for four different contexts. Each case study is worth 10%; together the strategy is worth 40% of the total module assessment. The case studies are presented to the class. The grade for each is totalled from 20% self review, 20% peer review and 60% teacher assessment. The peer review marks are anonymously submitted to the teacher, who averages them in order to calculate the 20% peer review grade.

Students work in a collaborative learning environment developing reflective and analytical skills as well as practical experience for future use. The presentations develop communication skills which are important in the sport and exercise industry.

Some students dislike the peer review aspect of the assessment but afterwards admit that they have enjoyed having input from different areas, learnt more from other people and are better able to defend their programme designs.

3.1 About the tertiary teacher - Case Study 2

Part 2 in **Case Study 2: Developing reflective and analytical skills through collaborative learning** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

About the tertiary teacher

Andrew Shanks is a Senior Academic Staff Member in the School of Sport and Exercise Science. About 60% of his teaching is on Diploma level qualifications, Diploma in Sport and Exercise Science and Diploma in Sport and Recreation. Andrew also teaches on the sport and exercise science degree programme. He has been teaching at Wintec for 11 years and has been a programme manager for seven years, developing and modifying a range of curricula.

Views of assessment

Andrew says he takes a formal approach to assessment. His emphasis is on detailed assessment tasks and descriptions, specific and elaborate marking schedules and model answers to ensure objectivity, particularly when marking examinations and written assessments.

Andrew notes that it is more difficult to measure creativity in thinking when the assessment task relies on critical analysis and review, rather than recall. Ensuring equity of marking is an issue with these types of assessment tasks. Andrew believes, in these instances, more flexibility is required because it is harder to construct a good marking schedule and model answer. Andrew says, "Students may interpret the assessment slightly differently and you end up with a redundant marking schedule that you cannot fully employ".

3.2 Description of the assessment strategy - Case Study 2

Part 3 in **Case Study 2: Developing reflective and analytical skills through collaborative learning** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Description of the assessment strategy

The assessment strategy is used in the Exercise Programming and Prescription module, part of the Diploma in Sport and Recreation, Level 4 & 5. The module is offered in the second year of study, when students are beginning to design programmes for individuals in a range of different contexts. The assessment strategy is summative and achievement based; worth 40% of the total module grade. The assessment task is to design and present four individual exercise programmes, with each individual case study being worth 10%. Each of the case studies is designed for a different key area e.g. aerobics, weights, circuit and a chosen sporting code.

The students present their exercise programmes to the rest of the class. The grade for each case study is weighted with a mark from self review (20%), a mark from peer review (20%) and a mark from the teacher (60%). The mark from peers is arrived at through an averaging strategy. Individual students submit their score anonymously to the teacher. The teacher removes the highest and lowest scores and averages the rest. The averaging strategy is to remove outliers and achieve a reasonable score. Andrew acknowledges that further intervention is sometimes required if the score is completely outside the norm for a presentation:

If a person gave a very, very poor score to their peer students and a very, very high score in their self review I would talk to that student and suggest they re-do the peer and self review or say that I would have to disregard their scores.

3.3 Motivation for using the strategy - Case Study 2

Part 4 in **Case Study 2: Developing reflective and analytical skills through collaborative learning** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Motivation for using the strategy

Andrew's initial motivation for using the strategy was his frustration with students who just want to get through "without being here to really learn and really expand on topics".

Andrew explains:

I want to give students practical experience that they will be using in the future. The aim is for students to employ a reflective process as part of the job so they will think more critically about what they do and about what is presented to them.

Part of Andrew's motivation is to keep himself stimulated in his teaching by trying a few different things and learning from his students. Andrew says, "Students have experience in different areas of sport and in training which I may not have". Finally, Andrew is motivated by his views on learning, which highlight the need for flexibility in subject areas lending themselves to creativity:

I don't want to be totally autocratic ...I want to guide people through their study rather than saying 'this is the way'. I want to give students a variety of options to explore ...so they learn different ways of doing things.

The purpose of the strategy

The purpose of the assessment task is for students to develop and apply exercise programming skills in four individual case studies. Presenting the case studies in class means the students are sharing information with each other, becoming more collaborative rather than competitive, sharing resources and working together. The task gives students practical experience which they will be using in the future. The peer and self review components of the task require reflective and analytical skills which are important, encouraging students to think critically and to be open to constructive advice presented to them.

3.4 Strengths and limitations - Case Study 2

Part 5 in **Case Study 2: Developing reflective and analytical skills through collaborative learning** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Strengths and limitations

The main strength of the strategy is reflected in its purpose of developing reflective and analytical skills. A second strength is in the development of a culture of sharing resources and ideas with peers, through a collaborative approach to learning:

The whole programme is less about me sitting up the front telling them what to do and more about them applying and sharing information with each other and reviewing that. Hopefully it should be a bit more fun and I'm still there to provide feedback on the way.

According to Andrew, the assessment task is authentic and realistic for the industry in which the students will be employed. Students are assessed in their application of knowledge and receive feedback on their ability to do the task effectively to an industry standard:

In the end, employers don't look at grades; they are interested in the person and their experience. Students are here to learn the whole process not just what they can regurgitate in an exam situation. Students need to understand they have more self-responsibility for their own work.

Also students develop communication skills needed in their industry, the ability to effectively discuss with someone how they could improve. For example, students are required to phrase questions and respond to these while they are defending their exercise programme decisions.

Andrew notes that one limitation is the lack of reliability because the assessment task involves a subjective element. However the group assessment, together with averaging the peer scores, attenuates personal preferences including the tutor's own preferences. Another limitation is the amount of time it takes to collate the students' scores from all the student's peer review sheets. This manageability issue means that the strategy works ideally with a small class size e.g. 12-18 students. Apart from the amount of time it takes to collate the peer review scores, another aspect of manageability, which Andrew has to consider, is whether the peer review sheets should be anonymous or not:

Is it best to give the person being reviewed the details from each peer reviewer? Should they fill out the sheets with comments and pass it back to the person? Or am I better to collect the peer review sheets, collate these and give the presenter a purely numerical score? If students are mature, objective and robust, they should be able to give a review to each other, but in this case anonymity will work more effectively.

Andrew admits that the level of maturity of the students has an impact on the effectiveness of the self and peer review components of the strategy. The strategy works best in post-graduate programmes where students are more concerned about the project or the research that they are engaged in, rather than "What grade am I going to get?" Therefore, one of the main limitations is "people being dishonest about their efforts and people trying to get the best grade they can without really doing the review objectively and effectively".

With this in mind, one adaptation to the assessment strategy, which Andrew has considered, is to increase or decrease the relative weightings of the peer and self review scores in relation to the teacher's score depending on how well it works. For example, progressively increasing the relative weightings of the students' scores from the first through to the final case study will increase the manageability of the strategy. Andrew suggests that adapting the assessment for larger classes would rely on being able to split the class into smaller tutorial groups for the presentations and their review.

Andrew comments that it is particularly important to prepare the students for the assessment when they are studying at undergraduate level. There is a need to educate the students on the importance of the case studies and to encourage a mind shift for students away from "What's my grade?" Also it is important to discuss critical review and communication strategies with students in order to prepare them to provide constructive comments in their feedback to their peers. The task requires presentation to the rest of the students and peer review, so Andrew acknowledges that students' confidence needs to be fairly high. He notes that presentations can be difficult for some students "however it's not an industry where you can afford to be overly shy ...the industry wants people who are outgoing, bubbly, extroverted and confident". Taking this into account, Andrew ensures that preparation for presentation skills happens early in the programme through peer teaching and demonstrating coaching skills to the rest of the class.

3.5 Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy - Case Study 2

Part 6 in **Case Study 2: Developing reflective and analytical skills through collaborative learning** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy

Feedback from colleagues is variable. Some believe teachers should be more autocratic in the awarding of grades:

I am a little bit uncomfortable doing that when there is a bit more creativity or more art than science ...as an academic staff member you can't know everything about everything and you can't pretend that you do, so giving some control back to the classroom hopefully they will respect and use it well.

According to Andrew, students are divided about the strategy. Many dislike the strategy because they have to comment on their peers and themselves. In retrospect many students feel they grow and learn, relate better to each other, enjoy more input from different areas and learning from their peers, with the teacher being the guide on the side "rather than dominating the whole set-up".

4 Case Study 3: Building competence through the integration of theory and practice

A Case Study from the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic (ITP) sector. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic Sector

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Email: Janet.May@wintec.ac.nz

Researcher: Jane Stewart

In brief

'It does assess competency to practice, so it's more than skills, it opens the window to all of it, both their practice and the articulation of that practice. It models supervision.'

Feedback from students alerted Janet to what was missing from the programme. Concern arose about the lack of evidence to demonstrate students' capacity to practise the theory. The motivation was a concern about the level of practice at the end.

The purpose of the final assessment is to provide evidence in practice of the integration of theory and practice. Previous assessments build towards the final assessment. All assessments provide evidence of the students' practical skill capacity and the articulation of their practice.

The assessment strategy consists of a series of linked and varied tasks over three modules which build towards a portfolio of evidence for the fourth and final module of the first year of a Graduate Diploma in Supervision. The first module assessment includes videoed and written evidence of students' competence in the first stage of a supervision session, the second module is based on theories and frameworks of supervision linked with practicum experiences, the third module focuses on issues for practice and responsibilities. The fourth and final module is focussed on practical skills of supervision. The assessment comprises a portfolio of evidence gathered throughout the year.

Students develop competent practice and the ability to articulate that practice. This models supervision, which focuses on helping people to articulate their practice.

Students initially queried the workload but later recognised they needed to do it. The feedback from industry is really great; the programme makes a difference. Students are going back to their agencies and changing supervision practice, making in-roads into safe practice.

4.1 About the tertiary teacher - Case Study 3

Part 2 in **Case Study 3: Building competence through the integration of theory and practice** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

About the tertiary teacher

Janet May is an Academic Staff Member in the School of Education and Social Development. She is the Co-ordinator of the Graduate Diploma in Supervision, which she designed and developed with a colleague. As well as coordinating and teaching on the graduate diploma, Janet teaches in the Bachelor of Applied Social Science (Counselling) programme. Her main role in this programme is preparing students for their external audit panel, "a big assessment role".

Views of assessment

The core component of Janet's assessment philosophy is that it should model the programme's overall philosophy, "if your programme is strong on client centredness, then the way you assess must be client centred, where you involve students in their own assessment process in some way". The assessment should model the content of the programme, as well as its core values and philosophy. Janet's philosophy was shaped mainly by her experiences during the Masters in Counselling (Training and Supervision) programme at Bristol University. Part of her programme of study included a research paper, a case study, focusing on a diploma in counselling, "It was an integrative course, drawing on a range of therapeutic models, with an underlying person-centred value base. Their assessment methods reflected this".

Assessment trends

Over time, Janet has noticed a trend to formalising documentation around assessment. She believes that it has become more rigorous. On her return from England, Janet was surprised by the competency based approach to assessment. Assessment is achievement based at Bristol University and the approach to practical skills assessment is more generic. For example, a piece of work provides an overall indication of meeting the criteria. In comparison, the New Zealand documentation of assessment provides a much more itemised account of how a piece of work meets the stated criteria.

4.2 Description of the assessment strategy - Case Study 3

Part 3 in **Case Study 3: Building competence through the integration of theory and practice** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Description of the assessment strategy

In the last module of the first year of the Graduate Diploma in Supervision, the Practicum Module, students complete a portfolio which they have developed throughout the year. It includes a log of their 20 practicum hours, evaluation forms from a supervisee, an evaluation form from their supervisor in relation to their supervision practice, an hour long videotape of a supervisory session and a written critical reflection of the videotape. The critical reflection also relates to their learning goals, which they construct at the beginning of the Practicum Module.

The students are assessed similarly in Module One, Introduction to Supervision. This forms a strong basis for the assessment in the fourth module. The assessment is a ten minute videotape and critical reflection. Students are assessed on their ability to practise the first stage of a supervision session. The assessment provides evidence of the students' capacity to establish a relationship, hear the supervision story that someone brings, and reach an agreement, with the supervisee, about the issues brought to supervision, which is the first stage of a supervision session. Janet explains that the critical reflection provides an account of the videoed session, "for example, their understanding of the issue presented, their reflection on ethical issues, strengths; it's linked to actually seeing the skills".

The videos are used for skills based assessment in both the first and fourth modules. The associated critical reflections assess students' ability to articulate their practice, to review their strengths and weaknesses and to understand the issues arising, "so we are looking at evidence of competency in practice and then the ability to articulate that practice as well".

Students are well prepared for the assessment strategy at the beginning of the course, during the selection process. The characteristics and expectations associated with studying on a graduate diploma and the workload hours per week are described fully. Another strategy for preparing the students is having skills laboratories every afternoon of the teaching programme. Janet says, "we've broken the task down into separate parts during the skills labs so that by the end of the module they have practised the whole task". Finally, the students are prepared for the portfolio assessment in the fourth module by the assessment in the first module.

4.3 Motivation for using the strategy - Case Study 3

Part 4 in **Case Study 3: Building competence through the integration of theory and practice** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Motivation for using the strategy

The main motivation for using the strategy was a concern about students' levels of practice at the end of the course:

Students could get to the end of the course and discuss supervision but their skills didn't show their ability to apply their understandings to practice. It was a reflection of untaught skills, there was a lack of preparation. They would get to the end of the course not knowing how to get to the supervision issue so we were failing them on something that they should have achieved right at the beginning.

Another motivating factor was the literature regarding competency in supervision and descriptions of a competent supervisor. Finally, Janet notes a large motivating influence from her masters programme of study, "I brought quite a bit from that course in Bristol".

Purpose of the assessment

The purpose of the portfolio is to see evidence in practice of the integration of theory to practice. The part of the portfolio which really assesses that is the video. The video assesses more than skills because it includes ethics and the intentional use of theory. Janet says, "We are looking for evidence of competency in practice, to actually facilitate a useful supervision session as well as the ability to articulate that practice".

4.4 Strengths and limitations - Case Study 3

Part 5 in **Case Study 3: Building competence through the integration of theory and practice** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Strengths and limitations

The first strength of the portfolio as a whole, and the video in particular, is that it provides comprehensive evidence that students have met the practical requirements for the course. Janet says, "The hour long video has to be a competent piece of practice, show ethical competency, the capacity to facilitate a useful supervision session, particularly being able to identify the issues presented by the supervisee".

Second, the assessment models supervision:

Supervision is about helping people to articulate their practice and competent practice, so I think that it is modelling both of those things, one doesn't stand alone ... in the counselling course you do want people to be articulate about their practice but it is not as critical as in the supervision course where you're actually learning how to help other people articulate their practice.

Another example of modelling supervision skills is the way the feedback given may reflect the marker's internal thought processes while watching the video:

This is a supervision skill, as a supervisor you reflect on your own process and offer that back to the supervisee as a clue to what might be going on in the relationship to the client. In the same way, the feedback on the student's video by the tutor mirrors this.

The third example of modelling is the process of giving feedback on the written components of the assessment. Janet comments, "A big part is modelling how you give feedback in a written assessment in order to model how they might give feedback to a supervisee when they have to".

Janet discusses the potential limitations of competency based assessment, noting the problem of students failing the fourth module twice, "Do they fail the whole thing or do they walk away with three modules? What do we do with those people who never finish?". Another possible limitation is manageability, "The marking load is enormous". Janet considers that the assessment needs to be marked by the core tutors on the programme; it cannot be handed over to someone else to assess. One strategy used to overcome the marking workload is to co-mark the portfolios, "which seems to decrease the amount of time needed to deliberate on a person's level of competency, particularly if they're problematic". There are also some ethical concerns regarding the use of live clients in the videos, because "this is a small community". Janet notes that the tutors have to manage ethical issues very carefully.

4.5 Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy - Case Study 3

Part 6 in **Case Study 3: Building competence through the integration of theory and practice** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy

Some students have questioned the amount of assessment. Janet notes that there is high anxiety in the beginning; some students are overwhelmed in the first and second modules. On the other hand, students say that they like the fact that the assessment pushes them early because it really sets the groundwork for their understanding. The feedback from the industry advisory board also questioned the workload initially. However students supported the whole assessment strategy, noting it was streamlined and they needed to do it all.

There has been great feedback from agencies such as Child, Youth and Family, whose employees are students on the programme. The agencies note the difference the Graduate Diploma has made, "even after one year they can see that they're making inroads into safe practice, in particular with areas of burnout with staff, they're doing some good supervision".

5 Case Study 4: Time delay in multi-choice test supports student learning

A Case Study from the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic (ITP) sector. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic Sector

Name: Tim Hunt

Organisation: Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec)

Email: Tim.Hunt@wintec.ac.nz

Researcher: Jane Stewart

In brief

'The main strength of the time delayed approach to the multi-choice test is the available evidence to provide useful feedback to students ...students can look at the diagram and work out where they made a mistake.'

The time-delayed strategy was initially motivated by a student who asked for help. The use of a multi-choice test for assessment was prompted by the need to reduce the amount of marking time and to identify students who plagiarise others' work.

The purpose of the strategy is to encourage students to apply their knowledge to the problems that they have been given in the multi-choice test. It also provides useful evidence on which to base feedback to students so that they can improve their learning.

A time delayed approach is applied to an online multi-choice test on computer program development techniques. For the first hour of the test, students are encouraged to draw solution diagrams from scratch before being provided with alternative diagram solutions as part of the online multi-choice test questions.

Students have not commented in a positive or negative way on the time-delayed approach. There are mixed responses from colleagues in relation to the use of multi-choice testing. Some colleagues are very enthusiastic about the time delay strategy.

5.1 About the tertiary teacher - Case Study 4

Part 2 in **Case Study 4: Time delay in multi-choice test supports student learning** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

About the tertiary teacher

Tim is a Senior Academic Staff Member in the School of Information Technology teaching computer programming, both writing and developing various languages, at both diploma and degree levels. The School of Information Technology offers separate degree and diploma programmes. Students who choose the diploma route can move across to the third year of the degree when they have successfully completed the level 6 diploma. Tim did not have a role in the development of the degree programme, but has taught level 5, 6 & 7 computer program development techniques for six years. His main research interest is writing software programs.

General views and trends in assessment

Tim believes that assessments should be fair and yet relatively easy, particularly in a closed, controlled examination situation. This belief is fuelled by a strong dislike of assessment, which he shares with his students. The need for relative ease relates to the conditions in the 'real world' of the information technology where resources are available, including the resource of time. It is important to take account of this in the controlled examination, to avoid students getting stuck on a program, which is too difficult to solve without the available resource of time: "It is not fair to give students a program to develop in one hour in an exam situation when you know you could have got stuck yourself for an hour".

On the other hand, according to Tim, controlled examinations need to be difficult enough to really test students. This is because some students demonstrate their capability in assignment work by copying, which is a major difficulty in this type of assessment task. Therefore in order to be fair to all students, a controlled examination situation needs to identify students who have plagiarised others' work for previous assessment tasks.

Tim also believes that assessment should improve students' learning. This view is inherent in his strategy, outlined below, as well as in the resubmit regulations provided by a competency based assessment approach. With the competency-based assessment for the level 5 Diploma in Information Technology, students are allowed three attempts at the controlled examination. Tim notes that "on their second attempt, they may improve their marks".

5.2 Description of the assessment strategy - Case Study 4

Part 3 in **Case Study 4: Time delay in multi-choice test supports student learning** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Description of the assessment strategy

The assessment is summative and competency-based. It is one of the assessments in the computer programme development techniques module, included in the first year of the level 5 Diploma in Information Technology. Students are allowed three attempts to reach the competency standard required and can be awarded two grade passes, either Pass or Merit. The assessment consists of an online multi-choice question test, held in a controlled computer lab environment with a tutor present. The test is randomised with each computer set up differently, in order to discourage students copying from each other.

The multi-choice test is one and a half hours in duration and has two timed stages. At the start of the test, students are given the questions and one hour to draw/choose the correct structure diagram, which solves the problem that they have been given. They are encouraged to use the time to draw diagrams to help answer the questions. Tim notes that most students do have an attempt at drawing the diagrams beforehand. After one hour, the students are instructed to log on to the online test. It is only at this stage that they are given the alternative answer options, as paper copies of the solution diagrams, and make their choices online. Students have 30 minutes to make their choices. The questions are marked instantaneously by the computer, providing feedback to the students. Students are able to discuss their drawing attempts with the lecturer for further help, if they are required to sit the test again.

Students are told early on in the module about the time-delayed approach in the online multi-choice test. It is made clear to them that they will be expected to draw diagrams first before making their answer choices. Also, the students practise using the online environment, to check that they can log on to the online test site.

5.3 Motivation for adopting the strategy - Case Study 4

Part 4 in **Case Study 4: Time delay in multi-choice test supports student learning** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Motivation for adopting the strategy

Tim developed the strategy over time in response to problems which he identified. Initially the examination asked students to draw a diagram to answer the questions. According to Tim, the marking was very time consuming because the diagrams were "horrendous to mark". Multi-choice questions, with alternative diagrams provided, were used subsequently to reduce the amount of time spent on marking. The multi-choice online test did reduce marking time without changing the overall class pass rate. However it also reduced the amount of information Tim could glean from the test, about the gaps in students' knowledge.

An interaction with one student provided the initial impetus for introducing a time delayed approach to the multi-choice question test. On one occasion when a student came and asked for help, Tim put the multi-choice diagrams to one side and drew the solution diagram from scratch. It was only after the student's understanding had been established that they discussed the multiple answer options. The correct option was more obvious to the student after the solution diagram had been drawn. At the time, the student commented that drawing the diagram first would have helped identify the correct answer. The student's response prompted Tim to introduce the time delay and to encourage students to attempt to draw the solution diagram themselves before considering the alternative diagrams provided.

Purpose of the assessment strategy

The purpose of using a randomised multi-choice test as assessment is to reduce the amount of time spent marking and to control the environment in order to reliably identify "competent and marginal students". Adding the time delay also helps in this identification: We obviously want the competent students to pass ... hopefully this tool will draw out the information that they had in them. ... The marginal students, we are hoping that they will not choose the right answers by using guessing techniques.

Another purpose of introducing the time delay is to encourage students to apply their knowledge to the problem that they have been given, 'making them' think about the problem and draw diagrams to solve it. An added bonus is that their diagram attempts provide useful evidence on which to base feedback to students, "We can now look at their diagrams and see where they went wrong". In this way the multi-choice test helps students to improve their learning rather than just providing them with a merit, pass or fail.

5.4 Strengths and limitations - Case Study 4

Part 5 in **Case Study 4: Time delay in multi-choice test supports student learning** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Strengths and limitations

The main strength of the time delayed approach is the available evidence in the drawing attempts, which provides useful feedback to students when they ask for assistance. Students can look at the diagrams they drew and work out where they made a mistake. The drawing attempts also reduce the tendency for students to guess the answers, which is a criticism of multi-choice testing. The time delay approach 'forces' students to work at the application level, rather than the recall level.

It has been suggested to Tim that the drawing attempts could be used in order to review and redevelop the multi-choice questions. Questions which students have not attempted to answer through a diagram may indicate that the question is too easy. Questions, for which students have completed many different diagrams and still not achieved the right answer, may indicate a problem with the teaching. Finally, some of the attempts provide suggestions for writing good distracters in the multi-choice test.

Another of the strengths of the multi-choice test is the time saved in marking. According to Tim, this time is more usefully employed in looking at individual student's work and providing feedback to those students who require further help. Also, Tim notes that multi-choice tests allow students to receive instant feedback and can cater for large numbers of students, particularly when the testing system is automated as is the case with this online assessment strategy.

An initial limitation of the multi-choice online test was the difficulty associated with providing the diagram solutions online. To overcome the problem, the solutions are now provided as paper copies. Another limitation was the length of time taken to develop the multi-choice questions. Over the years, a large bank of questions has been developed, which are recycled for different groups of students as different versions of the test. This bank of questions is closely guarded.

Finally, an on-going dilemma with the time-delayed approach is working out the optimal ratio of time for drawing the diagrams and choosing the answers. Tim does not want students to be disadvantaged by the technique. With this in mind Tim has kept the duration of the test the same throughout the changes which he has made: From the free-form diagram test, to multi-choice and finally including the time delay.

5.5 Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy - Case Study 4

Part 6 in **Case Study 4: Time delay in multi-choice test supports student learning** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy

Students have not commented in a very positive or negative way on the time delayed approach. However, according to Tim, it is helpful for those students who want to see where they went wrong. They enjoy being able to sit down and receive good feedback from him based on what they had written. Tim notes that students have not said that it was great and made them chose the right answer.

When Tim presented at the national computing conference, NACCO, there was a mixed response from colleagues. Some argued that multi-choice tests only test cognition at the level of recall. Other colleagues were very, very enthusiastic about the time delay strategy. On the basis of the conference presentation, Tim was asked to write a journal article for the *New Zealand Journal of Applied Computing and Information Technology*. Tim also presented the strategy to colleagues at Wintec. He said, "Not many turned up and no one has talked to me about doing any more, so it's gone flat".

Tim has shared the strategy in informal settings. Tim shared his strategy informally with a friend and colleague from the University of Waikato, who used a similar technique. He thought the strategy was worth sharing more widely, encouraging Tim to run a seminar at the university. Tim believes that effective teaching and learning strategies are more likely to be shared more widely in informal settings such as staffrooms or during social activities.

Tim acknowledged if his area of research was educational then he would be pushing the strategy a lot more because it is so easy to implement and has so many advantages, however his research time is limited and focused on writing software. Tim hopes that someone else in the department will "pick it up and run with it. ...I just think it's a fantastic idea, I think it's just so easy to implement, so many advantages and that we should all be doing it".

6 Case Study 5: Rigour and integration in Media Arts

A Case Study from the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic (ITP) sector. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic Sector

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Researcher: Jane Stewart

In brief

'You can put decent rigorous academic frameworks around the subject thought of as slippery, subjective and ambiguous.'

The formative assessment strategies were prompted by some students' confusion on receipt of assignment project briefs. They were motivated by the teacher's determination not to replicate the assessment practices, which he experienced as a fine arts student, as well as the need to 'get it right' for moderation processes and best practices.

The purpose of the strategies is to help students navigate their responses to written project assignment briefs for practical arts. The formative strategies facilitate independent learning with the appropriate support.

Students work from project briefs to complete their independent projects over a nominated time period. The three formative strategies include:

1. Students re-writing the project brief in their own words following in-class discussion
2. Teacher referring directly to the performance criteria of the project brief, when giving formative feedback to students.
3. Teacher writing a schema which describes the standard expected at each grade level

Colleagues have found the strategies very helpful in other practical arts subject areas. Students note the assessment is fair and well reported.

6.1 About the tertiary teacher - Case Study 5

Part 2 in **Case Study 5: Rigour and integration in Media Arts** a case study from Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment.

About the tertiary teacher

Tim Croucher is a Principal Academic Staff Member who has worked in the School of Media Arts for 15 years. He teaches mainly practical subjects in Fine Arts, for example, painting and sculpture. He has coordination responsibilities for the Sculpture and Painting pathways in the Bachelor of Media Arts and also supervises Honours and Masters students in the Fine Arts. He has been involved in the development of programmes including the Bachelor of Media Arts, the Honours and the Masters degree. He has external moderation responsibilities in other institutions as well as being an examiner in secondary school visual art subjects.

General views and trends in assessment

Tim believes that assessment should be an integral part of teaching and learning, "The relationship between the subject itself, the delivery of the education and the assessment we make of it, should be intimately integrated into each other". For this to happen assessment needs to be transparent; all the components of assessment, including values that are being used to assess the work, should be explicit and clear. As well as transparency, students need to be helped to make the connections between the subject, the teaching and learning and the assessment. This means that teachers need to facilitate independent learning and empower students to make formative assessment judgements about their own work. Tim notes the result of a rigorous and integrated assessment structure is a shared confidence in the role of the assessor, "Students feel confident that I have made a sound judgment of their work and understand the reasons for the judgement made".

According to Tim, the biggest change in the ITP sector was in the 1990s when NZQA was charged with the responsibility of managing qualifications in New Zealand. As a consequence, many structures were put in place regarding curriculum development. Submitting curricula for scrutiny by NZQA, was one of the main drivers towards more rigour and integration in the delivery of practical subjects in the area of Media Arts.

6.2 Description of the assessment strategy - Case Study 5

Part 3 in **Case Study 5: Rigour and integration in Media Arts** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Description of the assessment strategy

The three formative assessment strategies described all support a written project brief, which is given to students at the beginning of a phase of time, between eight to fifteen weeks duration. The students use the brief, which has between six and ten performance criteria, to complete an independent project. Tim explains, "Most of my teaching is supporting students as they navigate their individual responses to general project briefs".

The first strategy that Tim uses is to get students to re-write the assignment project brief in their own words following in-class discussion. Sometimes they complete this as a whole class, other times it is completed in groups, and sometimes, students complete this in their own time with discussion during the following class. This strategy provides enormous insight into the students' current understanding, it also identifies the gaps in their understanding and therefore what the teacher needs to spend more time teaching:

I get a lot of feedback from the students, in their own terms, about what it is that they think they're supposed to do, but also what they feel they want to do with the project brief that I've given them.

The second strategy is employed when Tim is formatively assessing the work that students are making in draft or experimentation. When Tim is making responses to their work, he refers directly to the performance criteria of the project brief. He does this to ensure that students recognise the criteria as critical statements of value against which their work will be assessed. The teacher discusses with students what they have to do to demonstrate their performance. For example, one of the performance criteria may read "students are able to demonstrate the experimentation, testing and control of selected materials and techniques". In giving feedback to the student, Tim directly discusses their testing and control of the materials and techniques. He also clearly explains where the students are able to provide evidence which demonstrates their performance. For example, evidence of their performance of each criterion may arise in several places: in the work itself, in the student's written contextual analysis of the work and in what they say about the work.

Third, Tim writes a schema which describes the standards expected at each grade level A, B, C, D. For example, an "A" pass will be demonstrated through the ability to;

- Recognise and correct lapses
- Reflect critically through interpretation, description and evaluation
- Be methodologically sound, so the work provides a sense of independence
- According to Tim, the schema "sets me free from being defensive about my judgements and it also sets the students free to say 'I think that you've made a mistake, I think I have demonstrated evidence of this and you've missed it ...It affords me the luxury of being able to say, 'Yes, you're right'".

The strategies discussed are strategies which prepare students to work independently towards the written project brief. Tim explains that it does require spending time on the assessment requirements and sometimes requires reducing the coverage of content as it was originally mapped out for a subject area, and altering this to account more effectively for the students' learning needs.

6.3 Motivation for using the strategy - Case Study 5

Part 4 in **Case Study 5: Rigour and integration in Media Arts** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Motivation for using the strategy

One motivator was students' confusion on receipt of their project brief. At times the project briefs, which appear to Tim to be "effective lucid accounts of what is expected", are not understood by the students. Another of the main motivations arose from Tim's own experience as a fine arts student, and his determination not to replicate the vague, unspecified, complicit assessment practices to which he was subjected. Finally, being open to scrutiny through internal and external moderation provides motivation for "getting it right".

Putting rigorous, academic frameworks around subjects which have been thought previously to be "slippery, subjective and ambiguous" helps to minimise unhelpful mythologies which surround teaching the arts. One such myth is that art is subjective, therefore explicit or stable or objective judgements about it cannot be reached. Another myth is that teaching practical subjects is less rigorous than teaching theoretical subjects.

Purpose of the assessment

The purpose of the formative strategies is to help students navigate their responses to written project assignment briefs for practical arts, to facilitate independent learning with the appropriate support. Tim says "the ultimate aim is to empower students with the understanding that their work is good, sound, well founded, rigorous and they know why".

6.4 Strengths and limitations - Case Study 5

Part 5 in **Case Study 5: Rigour and integration in Media Arts** a case study from Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment.

Strengths and limitations

The strengths of the strategies are evident in the stated purpose. The strategies enable students to engage in independent learning with a shared understanding of how to assess their own work. The strategies are fair because they expose students to the values which are being used to assess their work. They are reliable because explicit statements are being used by the teacher and the student. Both teacher and student are accountable to these.

The main limitations of the strategies relate to those students who have different prior experiences and expectations of teaching and learning, particularly those students who have come from learning contexts in which independence is not fostered. The strategies are sometimes perceived as very difficult for students who are not self-directed but are very dependent on their teachers for direction. Other students sometimes disenfranchised by the approach are students who are used to teachers being adversaries rather than allies.

6.5 Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy - Case Study 5

Part 6 in **Case Study 5: Rigour and integration in Media Arts** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy

The strategies have been shared with colleagues in the School of Media Arts, during the monthly teaching and learning forum sessions. The response has been positive; with colleagues finding the strategies to be very helpful in other practical areas such as graphic design, photography and film. Student feedback suggests that the assessment is fair and well reported. More generally, the School of Media Arts also receives positive feedback about graduates who become teachers. They are perceived to have confidence, be able to deliver the subject area and make effective assessments of it.

Tim has also discussed his strategies at the Teaching and Learning Matters Forum and is an external moderator for other tertiary institutions. As external moderator Tim has been able to talk to staff about the gaps in their documentation in relation to project briefs and their assessment practices. This may be in cases where the assessment practices were not transparent, when assessors were not making explicit the critical values which underpin their assessments. This feedback has been trusted as robust criticism.

7 Case Study 6: Full immersion in business skills

A Case Study from the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic sector. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic Sector

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Researcher: Jane Stewart

In brief

'The students are doing real things, are engaged in developing real skills which gives them a lot of confidence.'

Bill was motivated by his own model of teaching and learning based on the active participation of students and lecturers in team work throughout the duration of the course. He was influenced by the trades approach to learning; practising new skills and applying them to the workplace. He was cynical about traditional forms of assessment through closed book examinations which just test memory and do not provide a fair understanding of how students have developed their learning through the course.

The purpose of the assessment strategy is to prepare students for work by engaging them in meaningful assessment tasks, which can be included in their CVs.

The strategy is a summative assessment worth 50% of the overall mark, which is completed in a team. The assessment consists of a portfolio of four tasks: completing a customer satisfaction survey, developing a service blueprint, developing service standards and collecting service product expectation shortfall case studies.

Students note increased levels of confidence, particularly in their conversation and presentation skills and success in gaining employment.

7.1 About the tertiary teacher - Case Study 6

Part 2 in **Case Study 6: Full immersion in business skills** a case study from Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment.

About the tertiary teacher

Bill Grant is a Senior Academic Staff Member in Wintec's School of Business and Administration. The majority of his students are in the Graduate Diploma in Business Studies programme; he also teaches students enrolled in the Bachelor of Business. Ninety percent are international students, mostly coming from Asian countries. His areas of expertise are in marketing and management. He is the sole teacher of services management, sales management, global marketing and consumer/buyer behaviour modules in the graduate diploma programme.

Bill has been teaching for 15 years. He designed the services management and global marketing modules. He has modified the consumer/buyer behaviour and sales management modules over the ten years that he has been teaching these, saying, "they probably don't look anything like when I first started out".

As well as lecturing at Wintec, Bill has a consultancy business. His portfolio of commercial work forms the background to his assessment tasks and provides students with an example of an end product. Bill says, "I spend a lot of time out in the industry talking to practitioners about these concepts and generally I try them first as a consultancy project", hence, dovetailing into his teaching role.

Bill attended an assessment course as part of the basic tutor training when he began working at Wintec, which he described as "pretty orthodox". A few years later he took sabbatical leave and went to the UK. During this time he looked at assessment practices in universities, blind marking students' assignments, "I wanted to know that the marks I was giving were within a ball park for what would be expected in a degree environment".

7.2 Views of assessment - Case Study 6

Part 3 in **Case Study 6: Full immersion in business skills** a case study from Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment.

Views of assessment

Bill's general philosophy on assessment is that it has to be student-centred and involve active participation on the part of the students and lecturer. Assessment should also mirror the real world as closely as possible. Therefore, in assessments, even examinations, students should be able "to consult a wider variety of sources, or work in teams, or do a number of things, to gather the information".

Bill develops his philosophy further with reference to five main conditions, which are paramount in terms of setting assessment tasks. The first is it has to have an applied approach. In order to achieve this condition Bill looks through the course content and identifies all the skills that are required in the subject area that would be useful in industry, "the assessments are based on and dovetailed into the skills sets". Second, the assessment has to be meaningful, assessments that students can use in the future, that relate to real situations, that revolve around real companies. Third, the assessments must be able to be incorporated into their CV as work experience, "I do a lot of assessments around developing portfolios which are alluring for potential employers". The fourth condition is that assessment should involve observations and reflections on their daily lives. "Students need to become immersed in their daily lives ... I'm changing the way they think forever in relation to the subject matter". Finally, "the whole thing has got to be fun".

Assessment trends

Bill notes that one of the key trends in assessment within management programmes has been an increase in the popularity of case studies. Bill has an 'abhorrence' of case studies because of their narrow focus and the fact that they are retrospective:

To me they are so far removed ... if the students are doing a project in industry, why not be a part of the case study themselves, why not be a current case study, instead of something that someone else experienced five years prior?

Another noticeable trend is the increase in team assessment. Bill considers a team assessment approach has both strengths and limitations. It does reduce the amount of marking, helps develop interpersonal skills and shapes an individual student's character. However, many students are frustrated by team work, especially when the workload in the team is not evenly shared. They also may find it difficult to meet together outside class time and many "feel robbed when they get their final mark, if they have worked very hard or if they haven't done any work at all they feel over rewarded, so I am conscious of those elements in teams".

7.3 Description of the assessment strategy - Case Study 6

Part 4 in **Case Study 6: Full immersion in business skills** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Description of the assessment strategy

The assessment strategy runs for the duration of the Services Management module, a 300 level module in the Graduate Diploma of Business Studies programme. It is a summative assessment worth 50% of the overall mark. The assessment is an achievement based portfolio assignment consisting of four tasks, which are detailed below. Because of Bill's awareness of the limitations of team assessment he includes three main strategies to avoid the problems noted above. First, Bill is an active member in each of the teams. Bill uses the Socratic method of questioning throughout the team process, while students are leading the team, "to challenge, to try different things, to refine and refine". Second, Bill allocates between 30 - 70% of the marks for how well individuals contribute to the team: "Because I am a team member I'm able to observe that first hand and give a score at the end of the day". Finally, Bill dedicates compulsory in-class time for the assessment tasks. The course outline notes that "Your input will be marked each week. All sessions are part of the assessment process. This approach will certainly enhance your learning".

The portfolio includes four tasks, which are based on wide ranging skills that students should have by the end of the course. The skills are broadly based, for example, "cognitive, attitudinal, social performance skills" are all assessed. The first task is completing a customer satisfaction survey. The skills that the students use for this task are designing the questionnaire, using appropriate computer software to generate findings and then report on these findings, with graphs and tables and comments, "the graphs look spectacular by the time they've finished and so does the final report". According to Bill, the task meets the condition of being meaningful because the students are working with a company. It also meets the condition of being appropriate for inclusion of their CV as work experience.

The second task in the portfolio is developing a service blueprint. The service blueprint documents, through the eyes of a customer, a service process of one company. Students collect photographic evidence and superimpose "clues and cues" detailing the service through physical movement, eye movement and what captures the customer's attention along the way. This is dovetailed with a flow-chart package, which helps them to identify all customer-employee contact points and the processes which support these customer-employee interactions. The exercise enables students "to understand the whole service process of one company". Bill notes that the service blueprint looks quite sophisticated in the end, it provides a large story board for job interviews, which is "state of the art because we don't see companies doing it yet".

The third task is involves students developing service standards for a company and gaining an understanding of quality assurance across marketing, human resources and supervision functions of a company. Students develop a checklist of customer defined standards which they translate into frontline staff behavioural guidelines.

The fourth task is focused on service product expectation shortfalls. Each student records five of their own experiences of service/product complaint. The team hands in twenty case studies, which have been analysed in terms of the service recovery approaches that companies use.

Students are prepared for the strategy from week one of the module. Students are given a timetable for each of the team tasks, what they are expected to achieve by the end of the week and what will be critiqued by the lecturer the following week. "It has to be managed - they get a briefing each week and generally each week a different task or element or skill is specified". Each week, students are briefed about the next stage of the process, with Bill often providing an example of the completed task, from his own commercial work, so that students "can see where they are heading".

Bill says that he has had to find his way around some institutional requirements in order to implement the SLAP (Student-Lecturer Active Participation) model providing the example of having to book multiple computer labs and multiple breakout rooms needed for the active team learning approach.

7.4 Motivation for using the strategy - Case Study 6

Part 5 in **Case Study 6: Full immersion in business skills** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Motivation for using the strategy

The assessment strategy is part of the SLAP (Student-Lecturer Active Participation) model of teaching and learning, which Bill developed. Bill was heavily influenced by the trades training model which is based around practising new skills and then applying these in the workplace, so that the skills become habitual. The trades approach was the main reason for wanting students to immerse their day to day lives into the assessment strategies on the module. Overall, the approach "is really positive in terms of retaining skills for ever and a day".

Boredom was a key motivator for Bill, "seeing bored students and bored lecturers, observing teams talking about social stuff, time wasting". Bill wanted to be actively involved, "immersed as a team member and participating, it's satisfying". Another motivating factor was noticing that many students lacked confidence in their initial job interviews. Bill was motivated to use assessment tasks in order to "prepare students for work". One particular case in point was a student who came to Bill saying that he had sent out 50 CVs but had not been chosen for an interview. Bill worked with the student on the next five job applications who was successful in gaining four interviews. According to Bill, "I clearly understood that the students lacked work experience on their CVs, so they needed to include their assignment work as part of their work experience and put their education at the back".

In terms of developing assessments that would fulfil this purpose, Bill spends a lot of time out in industry talking to practitioners. He generally tries the task first as a consultancy project, "I've convinced a friendly client of mine to allow me to complete the project for the company". The completed project becomes an example to share with students, to challenge their thinking, "they can see that it is actually happening out in the workplace".

Purpose of the assessment

The purpose of the assessment is to provide a safe and challenging environment in which students are actively engaged in meaningful tasks, which prepare them for the workplace. The tasks are based on wide-ranging skills for work which Bill has identified as appropriate in a business setting. According to Bill, this means converting international business models into "something that is going to count for an organisation and which will set up students with some real confidence".

7.5 Strengths and limitations - Case Study 6

Part 6 in **Case Study 6: Full immersion in business skills** a case study from Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment.

Strengths and limitations

The main strength of the strategy is engaging students in real skills which give them confidence and prepare them for the workplace. Another major strength is that students are working in a non-threatening environment. The assessment strategy involves active participation of the lecturer and students in a learning environment which is relaxing and fun, "students are doing meaningful things, and practising. I can see improvements happening. ... It's safe, they can make lots of mistakes until the final hand-in". According to Bill, students usually go back to the organisations, on which they have based their task in order to present what they have completed, "that's good, and the organisations love that".

There are some limitations in team assessment. There is a policy which allows teams to "sack" a team member. The "sacked team member" then has to complete the assessment individually, if it is towards the end of the module's duration. If the sacking happens earlier on, the individual joins another team and is given additional work to complete. Bill notes that this happens about once a year.

Another limitation is class size. Any more than 50 students would require another lecturer to actively participate in each team's preparation. Bill says, "It is difficult to get around everybody" noting that the efficient teams e-mail their progress to him a few days before the relevant in-class session in order to receive feedback.

Bill does not know how easily the strategy would translate into an online environment, which could be seen as another limitation. Bill believes that there are probably some creative techniques which could be used in the online environment in order to achieve his philosophy of teaching and learning.

Transferability

Bill believes the strategy could be transferred to any class level. He sometimes has students from different programmes, such as a degree and diploma level, operating in the same class at the same time, "the only stipulation being that they are in teams in terms of the programme in which they are participating. For example I have consumer behaviour and buyer behaviour students in the same class, some are second year students and others are third year students".

7.6 Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy - Case Study 6

Part 7 in **Case Study 6: Full immersion in business skills** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy

Response from other staff and students

Bill presented the SLAP (Student-Lecturer Active Participation) model to Unitec staff. He gave one general presentation and returned later for a half-day workshop to initiate the development of the model in their own context. He believes they are still using it in their accounting department. Bill noted that the first time he presented the SLAP model at a business studies conference he attracted the biggest audience and was voted second best paper at the conference "so obviously there's a lot of interest out there and back in those days I was quite cynical in terms of traditional methods of assessment so that appealed too". He has also presented the model at Wintec, "but it hasn't really been picked up here".

Many students note in the formal student feedback questionnaires that they have developed their conversational and presentation skills, "Before I came to this course I couldn't speak up front, couldn't present, I couldn't hold a conversation with a Kiwi student". Bill says that has changed by the end of the course "they can't be shut up". Bill receives e-mails from students, sometimes six months to a year later, telling him "they've got a really good job and their CV worked well for them".

Future plans

Bill would like to see an MBA or masters programme offered at Wintec, where the teams set up their own business and the lecturers become directors on the board of the company. The students would be assessed at strategic times throughout an 18 month or two year period: "I would like to see active participation, I'm sure they'd learn more that way than sitting in a boring old marketing lecture".

8 Case Study 7: Making a difference to the students' approach to learning

A Case Study from the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic (ITP) sector. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic Sector

Name: Martin Lockwood

Organisation: Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec)

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Researcher: Jane Stewart

In brief

The pass or incomplete approach becomes quite an issue for some students, particularly those who are less secure about themselves and they're the ones you want to bring on and encourage to participate in assessment.

Assigning marks for a unit standard assessment was motivated by students' negative responses to a Unit Standard result of 'Pass' or 'Incomplete'. Another motivating factor was the difficulty experienced in tracking students' progress against each performance criteria in the Unit Standard.

The purpose of the strategy is to remove the black and white judgment of competency. This helps to increase students' willingness to participate and to make the assessment more of a learning opportunity, by providing formative feedback. Another purpose is to improve the manageability of assessment, by assessing the Unit Standard as a whole and by adopting a time schedule for assessment requirements.

The assessment strategy consists of a written assignment. A mark against each performance criteria is allocated. Students who obtain 60% or more are deemed competent, to have a good understanding of the Unit Standard overall. Those who marked less than 60% are given an opportunity to re-submit those performance criteria which they didn't attain in their first attempt at the assignment.

Student feedback is relatively positive. Before the marking schedule showed an allocation of marks there was a lot of negativity from students; they felt it was very personalized when they received an 'Incomplete' and were told that they hadn't passed.

8.1 About the tertiary teacher - Case Study 7

Part 2 in **Case Study 7: Making a difference to the students' approach to learning** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

About the tertiary teacher

Martin Lockwood is a Senior Academic Staff Member in Wintec's School of Trades, Engineering and Construction. He has been teaching for the past 20 years in a range of subject areas, mostly electrical engineering, electronics and instrumentation, measurement and control (IMC). Martin's students are studying at different levels, from Level 2 to Level 7.

Martin was fully involved in the design and development of the National Certificate in Electricity Supply Level 2, writing the curriculum document and detailed assessment structures. The certificate was first offered at Wintec in 2003.

Martin completed the tutor training needed to apply for Senior Academic Staff Member status. His ongoing professional development is mostly related to industry run courses to maintain currency. Martin says it is difficult to find the time and sufficient money to attend the specialist quality courses, "Basically professional development is something that comes secondary to fronting up to classes".

Views of assessment

The first key principle which guides Martin in his approach to assessment is that it should be based on what students are going to experience in the workplace. A work experience component to the programme motivates students to learn and makes them more enthusiastic about assessment, if the assessment task relates to what they are experiencing during work placement.

Second, Martin believes that assessments are better based around assignments rather than examinations, which "put so much pressure on the students". An assignment approach allows students time to research, locate information and demonstrate their ability to find the knowledge that is required.

8.2 Assessment trends - Case Study 7

Part 3 in **Case Study 7: Making a difference to the students' approach to learning** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Assessment trends

The main trends relate to the change to a unit standards approach. Martin says, "In the previous system there was an annual examination on the whole year's material and we were preparing them for an external examination". This approach to assessment changed with the introduction of unit standards based programmes. The annual examination was replaced with continual assessment throughout the year.

Since the change to a unit standards based approach the assessment trend has been to assess by unit standard rather than by performance criteria within the standard. Martin explains, "One of the reasons is that if we assess by anything less than a unit standard, the administration with keeping records per student per performance criteria becomes quite difficult".

Another trend is pressure to do more assessment in a shorter time, "there's a lot of pressure to do assessment faster and better" in order to complete programmes of study within a tighter timeframe. Martin links this pressure to the industry national standards setting bodies who want "students to learn as much as they can within the shortest amount of time".

Description of the assessment strategy

The assessment strategy is a written assignment which assesses the whole Unit Standard 18038: Apply Health and Safety in Electricity Supply Environment. Many of the questions relate to specific situations that occur in the work place. Students are given the assignment with a due date for completion. They are provided with the necessary resources such as industry safety work place manuals, Health and Safety Acts and other relevant documentation associated with health and safety in the industry. In addition to delivering the unit standard material, class time provides an opportunity for the students to ask the teacher questions as well as to work on the assignment task.

The assignments are returned to the students during class time to allow the teacher to raise any issues and the students to ask questions. Marks against each performance criteria are allocated. These marks provide feedback to the students about their "degree of understanding". The allocation of marks shows students where they have or have not covered the key points. Students who achieve 60% or more of the marks are deemed to be competent in the whole unit standard and receive a 'Pass'. Students who achieve less than 60% of the overall mark receive an 'Incomplete' and are required to re-sit the assignment for the unit standard as a whole. The 60% pass mark was decided on the basis that this result demonstrated students' ability to meet the requirements of the unit standard, without making it too difficult for some students. Martin considers that any lower than 60%

would demonstrate that students did not know enough of the material to deem them competent.

8.3 Motivation for using the strategy - Case Study 7

Part 4 in **Case Study 7: Making a difference to the students' approach to learning** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Motivation for using the strategy

The main motivating factor was students' negative reactions to receiving an 'Incomplete' result. Martin says, "When we started doing unit standards and assessing performance criteria (PCs) it became very personalised for some students who felt that they had been given an 'Incomplete' because the teacher did not like them". To overcome students' resistance to the assessment, and to encourage participation, marks were allocated to indicate where students were competent and where further work was required, "It's certainly made a difference to the students' approach to learning and to their buy-in to assessment". Another factor in allocating marks was to monitor students' performance more effectively.

The move from assessing individual performance criteria within the unit standard to assessing the unit standard as a whole was driven by manageability, "In a perfect world, students would have to get 100% competency in each performance criteria (PC) in each unit standard. But to actually check that each student is competent in each of the PCs within the unit standard is a huge task administratively". Martin noted that the teachers could not cope with the amount of marking and record keeping which was "just hugely difficult".

Purpose of the assessment

The main purpose was to improve the manageability of assessment requirements within a unit standards based programme. From the student perspective, the main purpose was to provide clear feedback to students and encourage a greater level of participation.

8.4 Strengths and limitations - Case Study 7

Part 5 in **Case Study 7: Making a difference to the students' approach to learning** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Strengths and limitations

For the teachers the main strengths of the strategy are its manageability and student 'buy-in' to the assessment task. For the students, the main strength is the feedback received from the allocation of marks. Martin notes that the marks provide very clear feedback for students on each of the performance criteria.

If a student got a mark, for example, three out of five, he can see that he's almost there. You can say to him, 'You've got the majority of the idea but there's this that needs doing'. Whereas if you look at the 'pass/incomplete' approach, they've either got five marks or nothing. That becomes quite an issue for students, particularly those who are less secure about themselves, and they are the ones that you want to encourage to participate.

The marks enable students to determine their degree of understanding. Martin believes although it is an assessment it's almost like a learning opportunity. "There's lots of checks and balances, plenty of opportunity to question and discuss issues relating to the assessment, the students are actually achieving and are motivated to pass the assessment".

One potential limitation of the assignment approach is students copying each other's work. Martin says this is picked up really quickly and both students have to re-submit their assignments. Another potential limitation is how teachers manage the assessment, particularly if they continue to give students extensions to the due date for completion. This leads students to leave 90% of the assessment tasks to the last 10% of course time. To guard against this, an assessment schedule, with dates for first submission and re-sits, is included in the course outline. This increases students' awareness of the guidelines and reduces the tendency to leave assessments right to the end of the course.

Martin acknowledges that allocating percentage marks for a competency based assessment is slightly unconventional, saying that the strategy has "raised a few eyebrows". However, Martin says the main advantage is that "it works and has been quite satisfactory from the students' and the tutors' points of view".

8.5 Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy - Case Study 7

Part 6 in **Case Study 7: Making a difference to the students' approach to learning** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy

Response from students and colleagues

When unit standards were first introduced the response from students was very negative, "Before a marking schedule was introduced there was a lot of negativity around the 'Pass/Incomplete' result". According to Martin, formal evaluation feedback from students seems to be relatively positive.

The strategy is used by all tutors in the Electrical and Electronic Section of the School of Trades, Engineering and Construction. Martin has discussed the strategy with other sections in the School and says that "one or two teachers have picked up some aspects of it, but there's still quite a variation of assessment and to some degree that is determined by the relevant ITO".

The programme is moderated internally, using both pre- and post-moderation procedures, plus it has been through an internal programme review. In the past, various polytechnics would get together for discussions and these may have included a session on assessment. Martin says, "Very often polytechnics are entrenched in their own way and not totally open to new ideas". From an external point of view, the programme has been moderated by the ITO, the national standards setting body, who are "happy with what we're doing".

Future plans

The assessments are being updated continually in response to new versions of the unit standards being included on the NZQA framework. The assessment strategy has been set up so that it can be used in a number of ways. Martin believes that the strategy would translate into an online environment, although providing feedback to students in an online environment is more difficult than face-to-face.

9 Case Study 8: Interesting and meaningful assessments

A Case Study from the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic (ITP) sector. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic Sector

Name: Marie Hutchinson

Organisation: Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec)

Email: Marie.Hutchinson@wintec.ac.nz

Researcher: Jane Stewart

In brief

'I was looking at ways that students can be assessed to make it more interesting for them, more relevant and fun.'

Concern about a high failure rate in a 60% test on interpersonal communication skills, which had little value for students was converted to action. This was prompted by a 'eureka' moment while listening to a conference presentation.

The purpose of the assessment strategy was to make it more interesting, relevant and to encourage deep learning. It was also designed to test a wider range of knowledge as well as analysis and application skills. This aligned the assessment with expected learning outcomes appropriate for a Level 5 qualification.

The theory test (60%), included a simulation exercise, debrief and reflective journal. These experiences assisted students to gather data to support their knowledge of communication theory and application of their skills, which were assessed in the test.

The teachers observed a higher energy, interest, enthusiasm, better attendance and very positive feedback from the students. They witnessed application of theory across several contexts. The pass rate for the test improved from 45% (the previous year) to 63 percent.

The strategy has been shared with Wintec staff at a lunchtime seminar, where interest was shown. It has been presented at two national conferences, and was particularly well received at the national conference of the New Zealand Communication Association (NZCA).

9.1 About the tertiary teacher - Case Study 8

Part 2 in **Case Study 8: Interesting and meaningful assessments** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

About the tertiary teacher

Marie Hutchinson is a Senior Academic Staff Member in Wintec's School of Communication. She is a specialist tutor for interpersonal communication skills in several different programmes, certificate through to degree level qualifications, across the Institute. Specifically, the programmes are the Bachelor of Information Technology, Bachelor of Business, Diploma in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and the Certificate of Media Arts.

Views of assessment

Marie believes that assessment should be interesting, "If you do the same old tests there's really no buy-in from students if they can just learn from rote. I question the learning and the actual interest students have in the class". Consequently, Marie uses real situations rather than artificial ones in assessment tasks. Another indicator of an effective assessment is that it relates closely to the level and difficulty of the programme taught. According to Marie, consistency according to the NZQA levels is important to ensure that students do not experience a sudden jump when moving from one level onto the next. Marie also notes that assessment should be directly relevant to the students' lives and "to their future world". Therefore, assessment tasks need to test students' ability to apply communication theory and skills to the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) environment.

During her Diploma in Adult Learning and Teaching from Wintec, Marie reviewed all her assessments. This raised a whole lot of issues particularly regarding the aligning of assessment tasks with learning outcomes, "For instance there were nice questions on ethics in one test, but no mention of ethics in the course descriptor". Marie is currently reviewing assessments in all the Interpersonal Communication Skills modules and "realising that what is often being assessed in nothing to do with course". These experiences have strengthened Marie's view that assessment should test the learning outcomes noted in the course descriptor and be carefully weighted to reflect the course content.

Assessment trends

Although Marie has not noticed any particular trends in assessment practice since she started tertiary teaching, she is more aware of her own and her colleagues assessment practices through her on-going professional development and involvement in the moderation processes noted above.

9.2 Description of the assessment strategy - Case Study 8

Part 3 in **Case Study 8: Interesting and meaningful assessments** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Description of the assessment strategy

The strategy discussed in depth is part of changes made to the entire interpersonal communications module, part of the Level 5 Diploma in ICT. The learning outcomes were changed to reflect the level of the module and higher cognitive skills. Three assessment tasks were altered to ensure direct alignment with the learning outcomes and fair weighting according to the content. The tasks were designed to relate to the students' real lives and to the ICT environment.

The first assessment task is a presentation (30% of overall mark). This weighting is divided into 20% for the presentation and 10% for a written page outlining how communication theory relates to the ICT industry. The second assessment task (10% of overall mark) requires students to diary the current causes of stress in their lives, identify time management strategies which could alleviate these and review their stress and time management practices over a period of six weeks.

The third assessment task is the focus of this description. For the final test (60% of overall mark) students participate in a videoed problem-solving simulation exercise (Missionaries and Cannibals), debrief and then write a reflective journal of their experiences. The journals are used in the test to assess their theory knowledge and application to the ICT environment.

The students are divided into groups of six for the videoed simulation exercise, which is held the week prior to the test. It generally takes 15-20 minutes for the groups to solve the problem. Then the video is replayed and students are guided in a debriefing session, led by the tutor, using a set of questions which relate to what is in the test. For example, "What role did you play in the group? What barriers were there to communication?" Students take notes and as a group have the video for a week. This allows them to collaboratively review the video again in preparation for the test. Students are told the particular areas that will be covered in the test, which is held the following week. Content areas include leadership, group work, listening skills, assertiveness, and cross-cultural communication. Because students are required to give specific examples from the simulation exercise, they are allowed to bring their reflective notes into the test. Further test questions require students to apply their simulation exercise experiences to a situation in an ICT environment. For example, "In your role as an IT professional, what key lessons have you learnt in terms of working as part of a team?"

Students are prepared for the strategy throughout the module. Marie says, "it involves a lot of preparation because clearly you cannot include simulation exercises in assessments without preparing students for simulated learning". Therefore, problem solving simulation exercises and reflection were used during earlier sessions.

Marie noted that the strategy takes a lot of courage and the ability to "think outside the square". It also requires a back up plan, because she is scared that the simulation could "bomb". As back-up to the strategy, Marie writes a case study relating to the IT environment.

9.3 Motivation for using the strategy - Case Study 8

Part 4 in **Case Study 8: Interesting and meaningful assessments** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Motivation for using the strategy

The assessment strategy was motivated by a real concern about this particular interpersonal communication class. The programme is competency based and the test worth 60%. Marie felt the assessment tested a narrow range of knowledge areas, which had been assessed elsewhere. The test focused on students' ability to recall information from the textbook. Marie noted the test didn't show any application at all, "We felt as though the course work required only shallow learning". Overall, Marie felt that students engaged at a superficial level, "The test didn't seem to have any value or commitment from the students". These concerns were coupled with worries about the really high failure rate, 55% of the students needed to re-submit their test in 2003.

Marie attended the national conference of the New Zealand Communication Association at the end of 2003 and during one of the presentations had an 'eureka' moment. She resolved then that the module needed to include action for the students, "Get them to do it and this was the bright idea I came up with".

Purpose of the assessment

The main purpose of the strategy is to ensure that learning is more than superficial, to try and make the assessment more meaningful for students. Marie believed that better learning is achieved if students can actually apply their skills and receive immediate feedback in terms of the video and self/peer review.

9.4 Strengths and limitations - Case Study 8

Part 5 in **Case Study 8: Interesting and meaningful assessments** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Strengths and limitations

An outstanding result from the strategy is a better pass rate. In the first year the strategy was used, 63% of students passed the test on their first attempt. This was an 18% improvement on the previous year's pass rate. The main strength was an improvement in student engagement in learning. Marie observes more energy and better attendance at class. In addition, most groups work well, which provides opportunities for collaborative learning.

Another strength is students' application of learning. Students are able to reflect on their experiences in the simulation, identify their interpersonal skills (or lack of them) and apply this learning to their future world in the IT industry. According to Marie, the test answers demonstrate "really amazing" learning, "It's not often that you get a holistic example of learning that goes beyond the actual assessment".

Marie believes the biggest limitation is choosing a logic problem solving exercise for the simulation.

For the first two years I had about eight groups and it went absolutely beautifully, and then in the third year it turned to custard because at least one person in each group knew the logic to solve the particular problem, so I could not use the simulation, so I replaced it with the case study.

Another limitation is class size, "technically you could work with a larger class of 50 students, but because you need someone to operate the video camera it's a wee bit time consuming". Another issue relates to students with English as an additional language. Marie noted that often if these students are placed in cross cultural groups they tend to say nothing. Also, in her experience these students tend not to do as well in the tests "because it is different learning [to rote]".

Overall, using the simulation exercise is more difficult to manage than using a case study. For instance, students needed to arrive exactly on time and groups needed to cooperate and collaborate in order to have access to the video during the week prior to the test. Marie currently uses the case study with identical questions in the test. She has been happy with the answers provided and believes the students are still engaged in deep learning through the application of knowledge and skills to the case study provided.

9.5 Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy - Case Study 8

Part 6 in **Case Study 8: Interesting and meaningful assessments** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy

Response from students and colleagues

Marie undertook research on the strategy to explore the experiences of students. Students had the opportunity to provide feedback on the strategy, through completion of a questionnaire. There were no issues from the students' points of view. Seventy-one percent of students (n = 23) gave positive feedback and 47% (n = 17) provided suggestions or further positive feedback. Marie concluded that "the students clearly enjoyed the opportunity to participate while learning far more than they might have, if assessed in a different way".

The strategy has been shared in three different forums. First, Marie, along with her colleague, presented the research during a series of lunchtime seminars for Wintec staff. She noted staff were interested. School of Communication staff are looking at doing more interesting assessments, "but we are all too busy at the moment". Marie has also presented at two national conferences, one for the ITP sector and the other for the New Zealand Communication Association conference, where it was well received.

The external moderator for the module noted her concern that 60% of the overall mark was weighted with one assessment task. Consequently, Marie has shifted the weighting in the first assessment task adding another 10% in order to test the first two learning outcomes in two different assessments.

Future plans

At this stage, Marie has no plans to use a simulation exercise again as part of the summative assessment schedule for the module. She now uses a simulation exercise as part of the course work to summarise all the skills the students have learned, to consolidate their learning throughout the whole course.

10 Case Study 9: Learning the reality of theory in practice through assessment

A Case Study from the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic (ITP) sector. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic Sector

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Researcher: Jane Stewart

In brief

'They're learning to evaluate theory in relation to their own experiences, engage deeply with it personally and pull the theory and practice together in the final written task.'

Catering for students from a range of different cultural, language and professional backgrounds motivated Jill to employ an applied portfolio project. This project provides repeated opportunities for rich experiential learning, formative feedback and scaffolds the students' learning towards the final written task, an essay.

The purpose of the formative feedback is to support students towards a clear understanding of the final written task and to successfully achieve the learning outcomes.

Students work in groups to complete the applied project, which is a portfolio containing documentation for each stage of the development, implementation and evaluation of four assessment tasks for English language learners. Each section of the work in progress is submitted for formative feedback. Towards the end of the module, each group delivers an oral presentation about their project, which helps consolidate and formulate ideas to use in the final written essay. The essay requires students to give a summary evaluation of what they have learned about assessing the language skills of second language learners with examples from their portfolio and appropriate references to relevant theoretical principles.

The assessment strategies are an integral part of the learning process, structured and sequenced to scaffold students' understanding of the final complex written task. The strategies encourage students to engage deeply with theory, to transfer learning into practice.

Students find the learning and assessment challenging but rewarding, they have increased confidence and make changes in their teaching practices.

10.1 About the tertiary teacher - Case Study 9

Part 2 in **Case Study 9: Learning the reality of theory in practice through assessment** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

About the tertiary teacher

Jill Musgrave is a Principal Academic Staff Member in the School of Education and Social Development. She is Programme Manager of the Graduate Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (Grad Dip TESOL). Her specialist subject areas are teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages and teacher education.

Jill has led the design and curriculum development of all the TESOL programmes at Wintec since 1997. The programmes have been through many changes over the years. Initially there was one programme, which was redeveloped into three separate programmes, each with a different focus. In 2006, Jill was responsible for the redevelopment and amalgamation of the three programmes into one programme with two alternative strands, one for teachers and the other for non-teachers. This is the Graduate Diploma in TESOL, with an exit qualification of a Graduate Certificate in TESOL.

Jill is a trained teacher with qualifications in secondary, tertiary and second language teaching. Her expertise in assessment has been further developed through involvement in research projects, which have focused on the use of merit within a competency based programme, constructivist approaches to teaching, learning and assessment; and the value of aligning formative and summative assessment tasks. Recently, Jill presented her research findings at an international conference on assessment.

Views of assessment

The first principle which guides Jill's approach to assessment is ensuring all assessment processes fit the aim of the programme, "All assessments should be designed with the aim in mind". In the case of the Graduate Diploma, the aim is to develop reflective practitioners who can evaluate and synthesise the relevant theory and practice and apply those skills and knowledge within teaching and learning contexts. With this aim in mind, the assessment tasks need to provide rich opportunities for promoting deep learning. Therefore they have to be relevant and motivating for students, involve authentic experiential learning to engage students with both theory and practice.

Together with meeting the overall aim of a programme, assessment tasks have to be an integral part of the learning process, sequenced and structured in such a way to support students to achieve the synthesis and transfer of learning required. This requires a careful alignment of formative and summative assessment tasks, "the formative feedback is designed to move students towards the final assessment task, which pulls together theory and practice". Jill acknowledges that this is a complex process and requires many strategies to support students. Strategies which support students include providing multiple

opportunities for formative feedback, group work for collaborative learning to increase shared understanding, specific skills workshops, providing clear guidelines and exemplars.

Jill acknowledges the importance of ensuring that assessments are robust when measured against the general principles of sound assessment practices; for example, validity, reliability, fairness and manageability. Above all assessment processes must be transparent, with clear and explicit guidelines to support students' understanding of the requirements, "It is my job to explain and clarify, to scaffold their understanding of the assessment task".

Assessment trends

Jill believes that assessment tasks in the past tended to deal with discrete content areas, "they were quite content focused". Over the years the focus has changed to further integration of assessment, "so there are layers of connected tasks and processes that students are repeating".

This links with the second trend of a greater focus on the application of learning in different contexts. In the past, theoretical knowledge was given prominence and often discussed in the "absence of practice". It was hoped that once students had gained the theoretical knowledge that would then transfer to their practice. However, Jill believes transfer of learning does not happen unless it is facilitated and has noted a trend of providing "experiential opportunities to engage with theory and practice".

A third trend is a focus on students' right to transparency around all assessment processes. "Previously, students were expected to know what was in the mind of the marker and the person who set the whole programme, it wasn't the right of the student to have that explained and clarified". As noted above, Jill sees that has changed with an emphasis on making assessment processes transparent and scaffolding students' understanding of assessment tasks.

10.2 Description of the assessment strategy - Case Study 9

Part 3 in **Case Study 9: Learning the reality of theory in practice through assessment** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Description of the assessment strategy

The assessment strategy is employed within the Grad Dip TESOL module called 'Evaluating and Developing Assessment Tasks'. The strategy consists of an applied portfolio project followed by a group oral presentation and a final individual essay. This approach provides "students with the richest possible teaching, learning and assessment environment, to end up with really top notch essays with a real depth of understanding". The essay is an individual competency based assessment in which each student presents what they have learned about developing assessment tasks for second language learners. The essay is illustrated with examples from the portfolio and with appropriate references to a range of relevant theoretical principles. Students receive a merit or pass grade when they achieve the learning outcomes, or can be asked to re-submit the task.

Students receive formative feedback four times as they develop each stage of their portfolios. Jill says, "Because they are doing it in groups, they are supporting each other with their understanding".

The portfolio contains documentation for each stage of the development, implementation and evaluation of assessment tasks for second language learners, relating to four skill areas: speaking, writing, listening and reading. Submitting each section for formative feedback as work in progress gives students the opportunity to repeat the process four times, providing "layers" of experience from which they develop their understanding.

It's the ability to do it four times that allows me to give the feedback they really need. It allows them to come on board with every aspect of it. The first task scaffolds their learning for the next one. So they are learning it bit by bit, not because they looked at it in a book, they're learning the reality of it in their practice.

Students make use of the formative feedback to improve and rework sections of their portfolio in progress, which is submitted in its final state at the end of the module. The submitted work includes some aspects which have been completed by the group and some which have been completed individually. For each section of the portfolio an assessment task for second language learners is designed by the whole group and then piloted by one member. Following modifications, the task is then implemented and evaluated by each member of the group in their own context. Each student provides an analysis of their language learners' responses to the task in relation to specified performance criteria. The whole of the assessment development and implementation process is then evaluated in terms of principles of sound assessment practice. "The portfolio is a vehicle to increase their ability to bring theory and practice together".

Once the applied portfolio project has been completed, each group presents their work to the class as an oral presentation. This is completed towards the end of the module and allows students to share their ideas with each other and pull together the important threads of the learning from the portfolio process. The presentation helps them to consolidate and formulate the ideas that they use in their individual essays.

The final output from the group portfolio is 'publishing' a selection of the second language learner assessment tasks, so that they are ready to use by other teachers in their own contexts.

It's just a pity not to when they have done so much work on designing the tasks for their own classroom contexts, partly it pushes their thinking to get them to that stage, but it also means they can distribute them in schools, so it's got a real kind of industry application.

The formative feedback ensures that students do have the ability to complete the final written task which requires evaluation and synthesis, pulling together theory and practice. Jill says, "it's not just evaluating their practice in the light of theory, it's partly the other way around, they're looking critically at the theory in the light of what they've done".

10.3 Motivation for using the strategy - Case Study 9

Part 4 in **Case Study 9: Learning the reality of theory in practice through assessment** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Motivation for using the strategy

The motivation for using the strategy is tied to the recent curriculum changes, amalgamating three separate programmes into one, with different pathways for different student groups, "teachers, non-teachers can access the qualification with different teaching and learning environments". With the wide group of students involved in the programme it is important to cater for their diverse needs and support a wider range of learners, "it requires a different teaching and learning process". For example, the layering of formative tasks allows for multiple opportunities for formative feedback, "because students don't always come on board at the same time, some people get it right from the beginning, others don't and so we want students to benefit from lots of formative feedback".

Jill discusses the need to support international students in particular, "who are inexperienced in engaging on a personal level with the subject matter and applying theory to their own practice". However, Jill acknowledges the importance of scaffolding tasks so that all students are building progressively towards the complex final written task.

Purpose of the assessment

The purpose of the assessment strategy is to provide multiple rich experiential learning opportunities which are structured and sequenced to support students to achieve the thinking, evaluation, synthesis required in the final essay. Each time students receive formative feedback this builds their understanding and feeds forward into the next task. The tasks are designed to be relevant and motivating, to provide authentic learning experiences which ensure deep engagement with both theory and practice.

Strengths and limitations

The strengths of the strategy are the teaching, learning and assessment are "absolutely combined" and students are receiving formative feedback all the way through. Because the experiential learning is based in the students' own teaching and learning environments they engage deeply with it and learn to evaluate theory in relation to their experiences. According to Jill, the outcome of deep engagement is "an ownership and strength of conviction around some issues". This leads students to make improvements in their workplaces.

Jill acknowledges that the portfolio process can be time consuming for students, many of whom are working full time, "they don't always have the release time in schools, they struggle to fit it in". Potentially another limitation is having a clear cut off point for people, a distinction between the work in progress where they receive support from the teacher and

their group and the final individual essay. "There's a kind of cut off point after the final formative feedback where I say 'this is it, you're on your own, you're really well prepared, go and do the final bit'".

The assessment strategy is manageable with a class size between 10 and 25 students. Jill believes any more than this would require a shift away from individual feedback to more group feedback. So this could also be a limitation of the strategy.

10.4 Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy - Case Study 9

Part 5 in **Case Study 9: Learning the reality of theory in practice through assessment** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy

Response from other staff and students

Jill notes that all the staff involved in the Grad Dip TESOL are happy with the approach to assessment and understand the thinking behind it. The applied nature of the approach makes sense to everyone.

Jill has completed several research projects about the programme. One focused on the use of merit within a competency based programme, another on constructivist approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. A further project explored the value of aligning formative and summative assessments. Jill has been asked to share aspects of her assessment practices within Wintec, and has spoken with staff in the School of Health and Information Technology.

Feedback from students suggests that they find the approach challenging but rewarding, "Every year I get feedback about the difference it's made to their practice". Jill acknowledges that she pushes the students, inspires them to really engage with the theory and practice, but this is balanced by "being very understanding and supportive".

Dissemination

Jill and a colleague wrote a journal article focusing on constructivist approaches to teaching and learning and the assessment within the Grad Dip TESOL programme. They also presented at an international conference on assessment in Hong Kong, focusing on the alignment of formative and summative assessments.

Future plans

The overall assessment approach is entrenched in all the modules, but Jill says, "Inevitably we find new ways of achieving different aspects, changing the assessment tasks in the light of students' feedback".

11 Case Study 10: Constructing themselves as teachers

A Case Study from the Institute of Technology and Polytechnic (ITP) sector. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic Sector

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In brief

'It's not just about received theory, it's about constructed theory, as teachers they are constructing theories as they experiment with teaching.'

A visit to a fourth year student highlighted concerns about a lack of understanding of the overall purpose of the practicum assessment tasks. Working through a simple example with the student provided a model for linking together the practicum assessment tasks, to give students more direction.

The purpose of the strategy is to link together assessment tasks for the practicum component into a meaningful whole for students, to support their construction of themselves as teachers.

The assessment strategy is a series of written tasks for the practicum modules of the teaching diploma in early childhood education. The written tasks, known as teaching spirals, are completed each year. They are a structured worksheet method of working through steps, based on Kolb's experiential learning theory and an action research model. Students complete 3 spirals each year until the fourth year, when they complete one. The spirals are developmental in nature, moving from simple to complex over the duration of the programme.

Students are supported in their efforts to be action researchers, to broaden their knowledge and skills and deeply reflect on themselves as Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers.

Really positive feedback is received retrospectively from students. A whole range of response is received from students during the programme, with some students complaining about the quantity of work. Interest is expressed by other members of the ECE field-based training network

11.1 About the tertiary teacher - Case Study 10

Part 2 in **Case Study 10: Constructing themselves as teachers** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

About the tertiary teacher

Robyn Muriel is a Senior Academic Staff Member in the School of Education and Social Development. She teaches on the Diploma in Teaching (Early Childhood Education). The programme is completed over a three and a half year period. Robyn teaches in various curriculum areas in each year, for example, Play, Science and the Arts, Leadership. She coordinates the Practicum component across the whole diploma, the Year One students and has overall responsibility for the selection of students into the programme.

Views of assessment

Robyn believes that assessment has two main functions. Clearly, students must be assessed in order to establish that they have the requisite knowledge and skills for the qualification. Second, Robyn believes that assessment must be a lot more than just a tool for assessing students, it has to be useful for them as teachers, to have a real function in their lives. Students should be constructing knowledge through assessment tasks, "they're actually developing their understanding and their theories". Therefore, assessment has to be "part of their construction of themselves as teachers".

11.2 Assessment trends - Case Study 10

Part 3 in **Case Study 10: Constructing themselves as teachers** a case study from Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment.

Assessment trends

The biggest shift that Robyn has noted has been a shift towards achievement based assessment, away from competency based assessment, "Over time we came to believe that competency based assessment was actually a disincentive for a lot of our students, almost all our assessment has moved to achievement based". Robyn explains the practicum component of the diploma is still competency based. The rationale for this is based on increasing reliability, "we don't believe that we can develop a reliable measure for grading students in that number of practicum situations, between a number of different tutors".

Another notable shift is towards better integration of written assessment tasks for the practicum components of the programme. There has been a significant change in the way the practicums are assessed, so that students understand how the tasks build on each other.

Robyn also notes that there is a lot more support and guidance now for students in regard to the completion of the practicum assessments, "They're getting more direction, quite intensive time in class in the first year, lots of written instructions, written and verbal feedback from tutors during practicum visits and voluntary additional tutorials for students to receive extra support and guidance".

11.3 Description of the assessment strategy - Case Study 10

Part 4 in **Case Study 10: Constructing themselves as teachers** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Description of the assessment strategy

The assessment strategy is a series of written tasks, known as teaching spirals, in the practicum modules of the field-based Diploma in Teaching (Early Childhood Education). The practicum component consists of four modules, one completed in each year of the qualification, making up almost one third of the 360 credit programme.

The teaching spirals are a structured worksheet method of working through steps based on Kolb's experiential learning theory and an action research model. Students are given an area on which to focus, for example, an area of play. They choose the specific topic within the area of study and research this through observation and reading about that topic. From there they plan their approach and then trial it. The trial is supported with further reading, observation and evaluation. On the basis of their evaluation, students plan again and re-implement an adapted approach. The spiral is completed with a written reflection of the whole process, which includes a section on further development of their approach.

Three teaching spirals are completed each year, for the first three years. Students receive feedback on different parts of the spiral, either "improvement needed", "developing" or "achieved". The students can continue to work on improving the spirals throughout the year. At the end of the first year they must get an "achieve" result for one of the three spirals. In the second and third years, they need to receive an "achieve" result for two out of three spirals.

The teaching spirals in the first year are simplified and called "teaching cycles", continuing the developmental theme noted in the above requirements. The re-implementation within the spiral is not included; instead students research, plan, implement and reflect on the process. In the fourth year, the spirals are developed further and complemented with an action research module. Students choose an area of interest from the previous years' spirals and have the opportunity to really develop this topic in depth. In addition to this development, the teaching spirals are designed to move through Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive skills, starting in the first year with guidelines for description and explanation and finishing in the fourth year with guidelines for critical reflection and articulation of their theoretical perspective.

Students are prepared for the teaching spirals in the first year with intensive class time. The first spiral is completed through in-class and self-directed study time, "the first one they do quite a bit in class, do parts, take it away and work on it, bring it back to class, work on it ...they're getting more direction". A further strategy for supporting the students is to teach the new skills required at each new level.

The teaching spirals have been used for four years and have been reviewed at the end of each year. Modifications have been made, for example, some parts have been removed and

other parts broken down into smaller steps. The change from teaching spirals to teaching cycles in the first year practicum was to provide a simplified task that students could achieve successfully and "move them into the second year with a much stronger grounding".

11.4 Motivation for using the strategy - Case Study 10

Part 5 in **Case Study 10: Constructing themselves as teachers** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Motivation for using the strategy

The motivation for the teaching spirals was prompted by the Early Childhood Education team's realisation that some students could not see the relationship between the seemingly discrete written tasks in the practicum, "They didn't understand that these processes were supposed to be building on each other". This prompted Robyn to lead the redevelopment of the written tasks for the practicum components "to find a way to link this more for the students, to give them more direction".

Purpose of the assessment

The purpose of the teaching spirals is to provide opportunities for students to really experiment with their teaching, to explore, to reflect and think critically. The aim is for the practicum to be a significantly meaningful part of the teaching programme, so that students can answer the question, Who am I as a teacher?:

It's about them formulating their philosophy, being able to articulate that, and justify their philosophy from a theoretical perspective. It is not about us telling them who they are as a teacher; we want them to construct themselves as teachers. They need to become the excellent teacher that they want to be.

11.5 Strengths and limitations - Case Study 10

Part 6 in **Case Study 10: Constructing themselves as teachers** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Strengths and limitations

The strategy mirrors the overall philosophy and strength of the field-based programme. Robyn says that a field-based programme is "very powerful because it links theory and practice". The teaching spirals support students to make links, "to construct theories as they experiment with teaching". The emphasis is on students taking responsibility for developing their knowledge and skills and "growing themselves as teachers".

Robyn notes that when it is going well it changes their practice, "By the end of the spiral they are a different teacher than they were at the beginning". Robyn gives examples of changes which have resulted from the students' teaching spirals. For example, students have made changes to the physical layout of centres, changes to the teaching programmes, and have influenced other teachers, "There's been some real successes, that action research of people actually making it real".

Robyn believes that the spirals have been successful in pulling together the written assessment tasks and making them more meaningful for students. She says that it is working extremely well with reflective thinkers, giving "the depth of thinking that we are looking for".

Robyn is still concerned that a "significant proportion" of students engage in surface rather than deep thinking:

Some of our students are good at describing and justifying, but not good at reflecting. They link it to theory, it's all logical but it doesn't convince me that they are opening themselves up to thinking deeply about what it actually means.

A further concern is the repetition of the teaching spirals, with some students expressing resentment about the amount of academic work attached to the practicum. Robyn argues that the workload is justifiable because of the high credit value of the modules. Also, in the field-based programme, students are required to build a huge amount of knowledge on their own, "The assessments need to ensure that they are reading, and researching while they are not with us to build up the material that we cannot cover during the one day per week they are in class at Wintec".

The biggest concern is ensuring reliability of marking between tutors, "What is considered to be the accepted standard and what isn't". The amount of variation in expectations between the staff team continues to concern Robyn, "It's been an interesting process to try and articulate the questions in a way that is reasonably consistently interpreted by students and the staff team".

A final challenge, according to Robyn, is trying to convince students that it is safe to write about their failures as well as their successes, "We're trying to help them see that teaching is a daily experiment, what you anticipate and what really happens can be so different".

11.6 Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy - Case Study 10

Part 7 in **Case Study 10: Constructing themselves as teachers** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy

Response from students and colleagues

Robyn has received a whole range of feedback from students, from being really supportive to quite frustrated, "The students who manage well look back and say 'that really worked for me', but we get a lot of complaints about the quantity of work that's involved".

Robyn wonders if the staff team should develop a different assessment task for students who think or work differently. She believes that some of the best reflection is prompted by interaction through discussion. Another field-based provider works with clusters of students, to develop a 'communities of learners'. Therefore, Robyn considers that one possible option for future development could be to work with groups of students, so "they are not working in a solo way, but working alongside other people and having chances to talk about it more".

Staff take a consensus approach to reviewing the strategy. They work together to modify and improve the teaching spirals, based on their experiences on the practicum visits. Robyn notes that at the end of 2007 the whole concept will be up for debate, "Do we want to continue to use it right through the programme or should we be using some other strategies as well?"

Dissemination

Robyn discussed the teaching spirals at the ECE field-based network meetings, where interest was shown. She felt that there wasn't enough time to explain the strategy properly. Robyn said that there were many interesting questions and comments, with some concerns voiced by one other provider about the repetitious nature of the spirals. Robyn felt that the developmental nature inherent in the repetition was not fully understood. The external moderator's response was positive, noting that the practicum met the requirements.