

# Māori and Pasifika Case Studies

## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b><u>Case Study: Māori and Pasifika`</u></b>	<b>2</b>
1.1	<u>The tertiary teachers</u>	3
1.2	<u>Class levels, sizes, and student groups</u>	4
1.3	<u>Assessment background</u>	6
1.4	<u>The assessment strategies</u>	7
<b>2</b>	<b><u>Case Study 1 – Interviewing students is by far the most effective way of assessment</u></b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3</b>	<b><u>Case Study 2 – How does a student know what standard to work to?</u></b>	<b>13</b>
<b>4</b>	<b><u>Case Study 3 – Introducing students to the issue then taking them to the issue</u></b>	<b>17</b>
<b>5</b>	<b><u>Case Study 4 – Learning more about life skills is more important</u></b>	<b>21</b>
<b>6</b>	<b><u>Case Study 5 – Cooperation between students promotes greater success and retention</u></b>	<b>25</b>
<b>7</b>	<b><u>Case Study 6 – Assessment is limited only by your imagination</u></b>	<b>29</b>
<b>8</b>	<b><u>Case Study 7 – Teaching teachers – new approaches on assessment practices</u></b>	<b>34</b>

# 1 Case Study: Māori and Pasifika

Part 1: A Māori and Pasifika Case Study. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

## Introduction

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While this section follows the general reporting framework for the Milestone two report for the other three sectors, it should be noted that the Māori and Pasifika teachers reported four main emphasises that may be regarded as points of difference. These emphasises are also four cultural value themes as described through this section. These are:

<b>Main emphasises</b>	<b>Cultural value</b>
The need to rescue Māori and Pasifika students from their previous negative experiences in secondary school	Kaitiaki me manaakitanga
A much greater emphasis on educating the human person	Whanaungatanga
Teacher and learner role reversals	Tuakana/teina
The development of self-respect and responsibility in each student	Tino rangatiratanga

# 1.1 The tertiary teachers - Case Study: Māori and Pasifika

Part 2 in **Case Study: Māori and Pasifika** a case study from Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment.

## The tertiary teachers

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Ten academic staff members from The Bay of Plenty Polytechnic were interviewed. Nine of the staff identified themselves as either Māori or Pasifika and one tutor, being Pākēhā (a European) was keen to take part because he taught a large number of Māori and Pasifika students. However, after an interview was concluded, one teacher asked to withdraw from the study citing a conflict of interest with a new employer (Te Wānanga o Āotearoa).

The majority of these tertiary teachers were experienced Academic Staff Members who each had more than ten years experience in the education sector. Five of the participants had more than twenty years teaching experience in both primary and secondary schools. Only one of the interviewees holds a senior position within the institution.

## Subject/Discipline

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The staff members work in the following subject areas: Sport & Recreation Science, Te Reo me Ngā Tikanga Māori (Māori language and culture), Trades & Engineering, Mathematics, Nursing, and Adult Education.

The teachers discussed assessment practices from the following subject areas: Cultural Safety in Nursing, Certificate in Adult Learning and Teaching, Bicultural awareness across all teaching programmes, Biology in Health Science, Exercise Programming and Prescription, Electrical Engineering, Welding, Māori language and culture programmes.

# 1.2 Class levels, sizes and student groups - Case Study: Māori and Pasifika

Part 3 in **Case Study: Māori and Pasifika** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

## Class levels, sizes and student groups

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The Māori and Pasifika sector assessment strategies are employed in a wide range of qualification types that are mainly at the lower entry level 3 certificates that progress to level 4, with one level 5 certificate course.

The class sizes described by the teachers in this Māori and Pasifika sector were mostly smaller than those described by the university teachers. Overall the sizes ranged from three classes averaging 15 students, another three averaging 20-25, and two more having up to 50 students.

When asked to describe the students who would benefit from the assessment strategies, the majority of the Māori and Pasifika teachers said that all the students in their classes would benefit. One tutor aptly quoted the institutions academic guidelines:

‘...many of the changes we can make to improve the learning environment for Māori will also benefit non-Māori because the ability of all students to have an understanding of Māori language and culture will not only result in our graduates being able to view the world from a different perspective, but will also greatly enhance their employment opportunities.’

Most of these Māori and Pasifika teachers had themselves grown up in families with traditional cultural values and at least half of the group could be considered fluent in their language. The retention of their own language can be taken as an indication of the retention of their own cultural values and aspirations. A common value expressed within all the narratives is that of *te kōtahitanga* and *manaakitanga* (working together and serving each other). It is interesting to note that the one Pākēhā teacher, who no indigenous language, held strongly to these cooperative values that his students seemed to thrive in their learning and behaviour as a preparation for their assessment.

It was made clear by the teachers that the bicultural approach to learning developed multicultural skills and attitudes in their students, all of which would make each student confident of a successful working career. Initially, when they first began teaching many were somewhat *whakamā* (timid or shy) about pushing their own culture in their own classes in fear of student backlash or turn-off. Most did not have the advantage of cultural mentors specific to their subjects. However, the CALT courses gave all the teachers the valuable time and opportunity to reflect and develop their own bicultural skills. The teachers spoke of a movement from thinking predominantly on how subject specific or intellectually different their courses were to realizing that cultural values (e.g. *te kōtahitanga* and *manaakitanga*) transcend all subject areas within the institution.

The point of difference with Māori and Pasifika teachers is that they include the development of their students as persons (*he tangata*), as much as they want to impart skills

and knowledge for workplace applications. The emphasis on developing the person is contained in the well known whakatauhāki (proverb) quoted by an interviewee:

He aha te mea nui o te āo - he tangata, he tangata, he tangata  
(what is the greatest thing in the world - it is people, people, people).

But while these tutors were confident in their cultural approach to learning, their students still had a lot of their own cultural learning ahead. Some tutors remarked on how they thought most of their students had in the main lived rather "sheltered lives" within their own suburbs with fixed friends during their primary and secondary school experiences. As new students at a tertiary environment a whole lot of "growing up" was required, a "re-socialization" mainly by the male students to develop their social skills. Many of the second chance learners (see below) bring their negative experiences from secondary schooling into their tertiary classrooms. Students need to be highly co-operative within the modern competitive world. The Kaupapa Māori models of learning are based on co-operative strategies that were already familiar to some students and definitely helped in making the transition from the secondary to tertiary environment.

# 1.3 Assessment background - Case Study: Māori and Pasifika

Part 4 in **Case Study: Māori and Pasifika** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

## Assessment background

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When asked how they had gained knowledge of assessment practices, five of the tertiary teachers said they had completed the Certificate in Adult Learning and Teaching (CALT) at their own institution as a initial condition of their appointment. CALT is an equivalent 12-week full-time tutor training qualification available to staff. Two of the teachers had completed this qualification at other institutions (WINTEC and Wellington Polytechnic). Another two teachers had a long experience in primary and secondary teaching background, had already gained a Diploma of Teaching, and so were both considered exempt from the formal CALT qualification course. It was these two tutors who were leading the redevelopment (the newly named Poutiri-ako) and teaching on the CALT course at their own institution.

It should be noted that six of the tutors completed their original CALT course requirements more than six years ago. One tutor had completed this course over twenty years ago and decided to do an upgrade recently to make herself current. The same tutor was busy preparing a proposal to begin a PhD.

The majority of the teachers also mentioned that they mostly learnt about assessment by "working on the job" then gaining more confidence and competence when designing and developing programmes and being Programme Coordinators. Each of the Schools within the Polytechnic has an Academic Advisor whose specific role is to act as mentor in developing teaching and assessment. Each school convenes Boards of Studies that meet formally each month to consider progress reports from all courses. These are the two principal methods by which all tutors receive formal feedback on their assessments.

Three tutors used to belong to external review groups that would share and review work on an inter-institutional basis. They regarded this opportunity as the most valuable training they have ever experienced when working with their peers in other institutes. However, all of these external working groups (such as were sponsored by NZQA or ITO's) have ceased to function much to the disappointment of the participants.

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

- Undertaking research into assessment practices (one study had recently been published)
- Professional development leave in the UK (as a Nuffield Scholar)
- Their own individual experiences as students, including negative experiences
- Communicating with industry professionals
- Informal talking to other teachers (the most common method)

# 1.4 The assessment strategies - Case Study: Māori and Pasifika

Part 5 in **Case Study: Māori and Pasifika** a case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

## The assessment strategies

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Many of the students in this institution could be described as second chance learners and perhaps many at high risk of failure. In the opinion of the tutors the risk was not because they lacked the necessary brains or intelligence to pass all the required tests, but because of the previous experiences they received in their former secondary schools. The tutors told of many of the students who were former drop-outs who had re-entered education in their late teens and mid-twenties. The women tended to be older, in their mid-thirties with established families, and their children were now facing the same problems at school as they themselves did. Some of the original interviews were made unintentionally long when the interviewees related story after story concerning the personal difficulties of their students.

A number of the tutors were themselves second chance learners and being Māori or Pasifika could very quickly identify with the struggles of their own Māori or Pasifika students and other Pākēhā students "kicked out" of the system.

One experienced tutor commented: *'Māori students love learning but what they fear is not the learning but the assessment.'* Working as much as possible by formative assessment removed the stress and fear of final examinations that most of the students had negatively experienced in their own secondary schooling.

The most common assessment strategy was in making formative assessment the key to summative assessment. Because most of the qualifications being taught were Unit Standards, the students were required, especially in the technical trades, to continuously practice their art until they reached the required standard. It was considered important that all tutors provide clear examples and exemplars for students to understand and achieve. This was the most important strategy to inspire the best from students.

All the tutors favoured their students working in groups because they claimed:

- Students were better at problem solving when working in groups
- Made the students more literate by taking in other student ideas
- Success improved group and individual behaviour
- Developed more business like social and technical skills
- Improved class attendance

One experienced Māori tutor had the responsibility for tutoring mostly Pakeha social science classes where she felt there were obvious resistance and negativity to the inclusion of any Kaupapa Māori into the curriculum. Rather than remain in the classroom with a traditional chalk and talk delivery the tutor decided to run a "make or break" move to a

rural marae (a traditional place) where the Pākēhā students, being out of their personal comfort and cultural zones, had to adapt and change to a Māori environment. The adaptation proved very difficult for some Pākēhā students but with appropriate teaching the tutor was successful in making the change.

Because many of the students has missed essential knowledge and skills by dropping out of school early the strategies also included an accelerated catching up component by the use of learning assistant tutors. While a Learning Assistance Centre is well staffed and accessible on campus many of the students in most need were too whakamā (shy) to enter the facility to ask for specific help, or even sure of their own specific needs. This difficulty was overcome by initially bringing the Learning Assistance into the teaching classroom to work with all students. In this way the confidence and familiarity grew between tutors and students. The greatest users of the Learning Assistance Centre were those students where Learning Support was active in their own classrooms.

The Learning Assistance Centre has a dedicated Kaupapa Māori group that helps students with all learning but also assists in any other problems students may have. Kaupapa Māori is about assisting the whole life of the student and working to remove the negative factors that intrude into the learning and success.



## 2 Case Study 1 - Interviewing students is by far the most effective way of assessment

A Māori and Pasifika Case Study from the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

### Māori and Pasifika case studies

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**Researcher:** Oneroa Stewart

### In brief

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"Māori students love learning, but quite often what they fear most is not the learning, what they fear most is the assessment ... it's the machinery around assessment which intimidates them..."

By adding on to an assessment statement the words "or by any other means" a very experienced tutor was challenged to design and authentic oral assessment for one his more mature students.

The tutor has been concerned for some time by the difficulty and fears of so many Māori students who face the hurdles of traditional written examinations. When a student asked for an oral assessment as an interview various procedures and protocols were negotiated between the tutor and student. The responsibility of the assessment was shared in partnership between the participants in an environment of trust and respect. The risk factors that initially made the assessor somewhat nervous were able to be abated.

At the end of the assessment interview the student was able to receive instant feedback. Both tutor and student were very happy with the final process outcome.

### About the tertiary teacher

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#### *The position and course responsibility*

Kuku Wawatai holds a senior management position as the Director of Māori and Community Development at Te Kuratini o Poike, the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic in Tauranga. His main academic interest is in programme delivery and effectiveness, and the ability of all programmes to reflect something of the Māori student profile. He has a strong and active interest in monitoring and evaluating the capacity of the Polytechnic's Māori students to participate and complete qualifications.

#### *Training and experience in assessment*

Kuku first began teaching over thirty years ago as a secondary school teacher. Over the last five years he has been working in the tertiary sector at the degree level where he has experienced a strong emphasis on pre-moderation of assessments either through colleagues within the same or other similar institutions. His main source of training has been through

constant workshopping and taking advantage of attending professional development opportunities (such as spending several weeks training on unit standards assessment whilst employed as Manager at the Forestry ITO.)

A Nuffield Scholarship award enabled Kuku to travel to the United Kingdom to study how programmes were being developed for youth at risk and the adult sector. He observed both the formal and more often the informal processes at work.

## Views of assessment

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Traditionally, he considers that assessment has primarily been hinged about how well someone can *"read and recollect what has actually been dumped into their heads."* Assessment is carried out in many forms (such as quizzes, multi-choice, etc) but *"they don't always reveal how students understand concepts but rather what they rote learn."*

A second view of the traditional assessment is that it so often marks an ending point in the student learning experience. Kuku strongly disagrees with this: *"Assessment must be a platform to move somewhere – it is not an end in of of itself – it marks the beginning to a new body of knowledge or experience... For me assessment is the beginning of a new challenge."*

Kuku also wants to move to a non-traditional position on assessment where both tutor and students can use assessments as part of a relationship building process in order to make learning more effective and socially and culturally connected.

## Assessment trends

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Assessment in more recent times has been around the ability of people to commute and analyse concepts in a greater variety of modes, rather than just writing something down. In order to achieve this aim he thinks that an interview process is by far the most effective way of getting a handle on how well a student has understood what the learning has been. There are four main aspects:

- One, it allows the verification;
- two, it allows clarification
- three, it allows reinforcement of any ideas, and
- four, it builds a relationship between tutor and student and ensures the learner is culturally connected to the aforementioned aspects.

A special relationship is built during the formative assessment period. He considers that the singular purpose of the summative assessment is to allow the student to transfer the skill sets required, learnt and assessed to another situation. *"Assessment cannot simply take place for a limited body of work covered during a defined period. It is a clear indication that having done that, they now know how to position that learning to catapult them to another phase."*

So, according to Kuku, *"assessment could be a link in the learning contingent rather than then end of that just learnt."*

Too many people see assessment as the ultimate or ending of the learning process. Thus in many instances this drives a sense of fear within our students, which definitely should not

be within the learning process. Too many Māori fear assessment and become fixated on either success or failure. As if it is to be the end of the world, and for many Maori learners, the knowledge acquired by the learner through the learning process has been generally achieved, but regrettably the assessment modes include parameters which call for skills beyond the skill sets necessary. For example, the fear of saying or writing the response in a prescribed format. Many Maori do not fail learning, it is the assessment that knocks them around. This places interview and conversation mode of assessment as a more real and fairer assessment option.

*"Māori students love learning, but quite often what they fear most is not the learning. What they fear most is the assessment. The Māori student already knows what is necessary, but it's actually the machinery around assessment which intimidates them..."*

## **Description of the assessment strategy**

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What this teacher expected and what a student came up with for an assessment was definitely a surprise. After teaching a kaupapa Māori unit of work within a mainstream class Kuku set an assessment for the students that could be completed in a varied number of modes. The assessment was principally about how well they understood a body of knowledge and how well they might be able to demonstrate and apply it. So the students had the option of writing about it; capturing it on video; or any other method.

The majority (14 out of 15) of students used either Microsoft Word or Power Point demonstrations. However, one woman *"bailed me up in the staffroom"* and asked for a meaning of *"any other method."* From this initial discussion Kuku was able to determine quite quickly that the woman student understood the question, and she in turn requested an appointment to talk to him and be assessed. It was agreed that both Kuku and the student would meet in his office for this purpose, over a coffee and in a relaxed environment.

Initially Kuku was nervous of allowing an assessment interview as he considered a number of possible problems in allowing this method. He did not fear the ability of the student, as her first meeting demonstrated a high level of confidence. Kuku was worried about himself and the robustness of the oral assessment method – such as what if the assessment was appealed, or what evidence would be necessary?

The solutions included tape recording the entire interview and informing the Programme Coordinator that this assessment method was going to be undertaken. But most important was fully informing the student of any anticipated problems *"almost like setting a contract"* of mutually agreed conditions. In this was the assessor was quickly able to establish a relationship of confidence and trust, and along with a cup of coffee began the actual assessment.

During the course of the assessment Kuku took the opportunity of asking questions that he would not have had the opportunity of asking under other options that had been provided. He felt that the assessment was very comprehensive and that she was actually providing and demonstrating more than was deemed necessary:

*"I asked a lot more questions than I would have under other circumstances, I was feeling things through her eyes and her body language, far more comprehensive."*

## **Motivation for adopting the assessment strategy**

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Kuku has taken the philosophical approach by asking himself that if we as teachers are teaching class cohorts of students (and indeed encourage cooperative learning) then what stops us from assessing collectively? Unless we teach individuals then that give us the right to assess all our students as individuals. We need to find ways of being able to believe in each other and to support each other through more appropriate assessment methods.

## **Strengths and limitations**

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The oral assessment, providing it incorporates some feedback to students, allows the assessment to be "virtual." There is no need for any long downtime while marking is being completed

Kuku was delighted that he could prove to himself that such an assessment was indeed possible. *"I considered it to be creative, different, highly responsive and most definitely student appreciated, but I think it's a luxury from my point of view."*

The main limitation is the one hour time length for an individual oral assessment. The tutor did however, reflect on how he might be able to similarly assess two or more students at once. It would be still difficult to shorten the time because of the important inclusion of the warming up phase, negotiations, presentations, questions and responses, summary and final feedback.

If perhaps four people were being simultaneously assessed then the assessor would have to be very astute in making sure that nobody was dominating the assessment and making sure the protocols were all very clear and weighting the assessment integrity.

Kuku thinks that his institution still requires to find a place for this mode of assessment in order to deal with all the risk factors.

## **Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy**

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### **Response from students**

The great advantage enjoyed by this one student is that she was able to receive instant feedback from her assessor. She did request that she be able to keep the tape recording, but this was declined according to the reasons given near the beginning of her interview. The student however, received a full transcript of the assessment and evaluation response as a key part of the feedback.

### **Future Plans**

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*"We have a need for assessment to be almost instantaneous or virtual so to speak. I think that is the way of assessment in the future, so people can actually move on very quickly."*

## 3 Case Study 2 - How does a student know what standard to work to?

A Māori and Pasifika Case Study from the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

### A Māori and Pasifika Case Study

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### In brief

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*"When I did CALT I thought - why don't we put one and one together and make the exemplar part of the assessment."*

Frustrated by his students making the same mistakes this welding tutor needed to design and implement an obvious solution for his students to see and judge for themselves the results of their own practical work. The solution was to construct a large number of welding models as exemplars for each unit standard task by which each individual student could compare their own work.

Thus the students were all provided with a learning tool in order to analyse the level of their own work (as either unsatisfactory, possible or excellent). Students were then able to pick up an immediate assessment. They learned to become self-assessed and self-paced.

As students became more experienced in judging their own work the tutor was able to prioritise the need in helping other students. He felt his management of the classes was made much easier.

### About the tertiary teacher

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Athol is the Programme Coordinator for both the Certificate in Welding and Fabrication Block Courses in the School of Applied Science at the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic. Within these programmes he teaches students from years one to three. The current teaching programme was designed mainly by the previous programme coordinator with some input from Athol.

Three years ago Athol completed his Certificate in Adult Teaching and Learning at the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic. He enjoyed taking this course and says he gained much from it in terms of developing a background and philosophy, plus training in all the written and recording work required. It was actually during this course that he heard a carpentry tutor ask "*how does a student know what standard to work to?*"

When problems arise he has an Academic Advisor available for assistance.

### Views of assessment

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His initial definition of assessment is that it means checking a person's knowledge or skill level. Students are learning a technology that now needs more skill and training. If students do not pass at each level then they simply do not have the knowledge needed to do some more learning with more difficult skills.

## **Assessment trends**

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Athol thinks that over the six years he has been tutoring there has been a trend to make it easier for students to pass. In direct response to my question he thinks there may have been a lowering of standards.

Most of the students who come into the welding courses have very low education levels. They now find theory work component very difficult. Any homework if given is unlikely to be completed so all exercises are now completed in class.

## **Description of the assessment strategy**

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### **How does a student know what standard to work to?**

Life as a welding tutor in a hot, dusty and noisy workshop full of students (usually about 15 maximum) can be chaotic. The differing ages, readiness, abilities and attitudes of the students mean that individual learning, rather than whole class groups, is the norm for teaching and instruction.

Each individual student is initially provided with a task book that contains all the requirements for the unit standards and a description of each and every weld. All students can then work at their own individual pace. The theory is delivered within a normal classroom with a lot of question and answering happening. Students then move into the welding workshop to demonstrate the practical component of the course. This consists of many different types of welding shapes and sizes.

The key to this strategy is that students are trained to assess their own work by comparing it to exemplars provided by the tutor. All the exemplars, for each task, are provided to industry level no faults in the welds or perfect this sets the standard. Students also have weld fault exemplars that have the most common weld faults which they can therefore identify the faults in their own work and make adjustments to their technique or their equipment to meet the standard required.

The tutor is insistent on only passing perfect work in order to protect the reputation of the course with local industry where students are on work experience. Some students continue throughout the course to present work that has obvious faults and are immediately directed to view and compare the exemplars.

The learning of self assessment begins early *"in the second day when they start doing self-assessing straight away."* At the point when any student work is judged as passed the formative becomes summative assessment.

The typical welding student is a male, early twenties, and has worked in a variety of manual labour, such as kiwifruit or builder's labourer. They are considered to be very street-wise and clever with manipulating machinery or modifying their cars. On the present course two students are aged 16 years and the oldest is 29. In the past there have been a variety of cultural and first language backgrounds.

The welding courses last for six months and have a 70% practical component.

## **Motivation for adopting the assessment strategy**

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The strategy is a management tool that keeps the class on task and busy.

"If and when a student completes any weld then instead of standing around waiting for the tutor to come and assess their work to see if it's up to standard, they can compare their work to the exemplar, and if it's the same then they can hold onto their work and carry on to the next pass. So it does not hold any student up, they can keep moving at their own pace, provided their work is up to the exemplar and then when I am free I can assess the student's work, otherwise you get five students all standing around waiting for their work to be assessed and waste half of their time and they end up doing nothing."

From his own point of view Athol was also *"trying to make life a little easier"* on himself.

## **Strengths and limitations**

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When bringing their own work to compare with the exemplar provided the student can see directly the comparison. Students must make a judgement on their own work. If they are still unsure or have tried a number of times they can enter into a dialogue with the tutor as to a possible explanation and improvement of techniques.

This strategy is particularly suited to practical workshop situations when and where the tutor is engaged with individual students for lengthy periods. It prevents other students wasting their down time when waiting for the opinion of their tutor, but perhaps more important this strategy teaches each participating student to self assess their own work. It was originally a carpentry tutor on his CALT course (Module teaching a practical subject) that he heard speak about making sets of exemplars.

A limitation of the strategy is that most students initially over exaggerate their own work thinking it is perfect every time so some time has to be spent at the beginning of the course to make sure students are self assessing properly. In order to prevent the possibility of any student passing off another student's work for inspection by the tutor each piece of work when completed as passed is then destroyed.

It seems that there are still a number of students in the class that just keep on making the same mistakes unless the tutor checks regularly. Right from the very first day the tutor introduces the class to the technical language of welding. Often this new language is difficult for many students to remember.

There is initially an extremely high level of tutor involvement in training and empowering students to take responsibility for their work and learning but as students get used to this process the tutor has more time to focus on the students who are really struggling.

## **Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy**

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### **Response from students**

The older students have the maturity and attitude to focus on the skill of welding and so consequently do well on the course. The much younger students are too impatient to complete and seem to focus on gaining just a qualification.

### **Response from colleagues and the institution**

The course has regularly reported a retention and achievement rate of 80%. The final welding exam is taken by the ITO as the external examiners.

### **Dissemination**

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Athol would like to encourage all teachers of practical subjects to consider training their own students to self assess and would welcome further critique of his strategy.



# Case Study 3 - Introducing students to the issue then taking them to the issue

A Māori and Pasifika Case Study from the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

## Māori and Pasifika Case Study

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**Researcher:** Oneroa Stewart

## In brief

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A Māori perspective tutor adopted the following strategy in response to her perceived need to bring class discussions out into the real world of modern Māori life of local iwi and hapu. Rather than just reading and discussing Māori issues within the classroom this tutor takes whole classes out for a whole week onto remote marae where students, mainly of white middle class origins and initially well out of their comfort zones are forced to experience another side of life and adapt to a different culture and attitude.

The strategy consists of preparing and taking all students onto a marae as manuhiri (visitors) then further preparing the same students to adopt the role of tangata whenua so they can understand the role of kaitiaki. Learning in the new environment is then much more than simple knowledge or vocabulary (that is prepared in the classrooms beforehand). It is learning the essentials of cooperation and management of resources.

Marae elders are actively engaged along with the tutor in assessing the transition of the students.

Initially there is some resistance, from the students (and even some tutors) but with improved preparation, proven technique and kaupapa the students make a change to build real relationships and improved attitudes.

About the tertiary teacher

Te Karehana Wicks is a “Māori perspectives” tutor and academic staff member of the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic. As a Group Leader within Tutara Wananga, the Centre for Maori Education and development, she assists other tutors in a wide range of subject disciplines from foundation levels, certificates, diplomas and degrees.

She receives and coordinates all teaching requests, course designs and developments, and is the main tutor delivering a Maori perspective off campus on marae based activities within the Tauranga Moana region.

When time and opportunity permits she also encourages outside organisations (such as local government offices or commercial business) to seek her assistance (as a commercial activity) to deliver similar perspectives as she does to academic courses.

She describes her work as frequently “full-on” in terms of her workload of long hours of intense commitment when staying on marae as she takes her responsibility very seriously.

Although her main role is that of a teacher much of her experience and advice is sought community wide as a mentor for course content and delivery, as well as many socio-economic issues within her tribal region. Frequently this can build to a high stress load.

Te Karehana has taken the two modules on teaching and assessment included in the Certificate in Adult Teaching and Learning, CALT, attendance at one day seminars on campus, and working with Tutara Wananga staff on planning and assessment. These opportunities have allowed her to become more “savvy” on the process required for pre and post moderation requirements.

Te Karehana has the advantage of her former fifteen years’ industry experience and so she often puts her focus on aligning assessments with industry standards. *“Professional development is really important because you can see ways you can actually add your uniqueness to it ... to be more relevant, more significant, more authentic, if you like, for want of a better word – more true.”*

## **Views of assessment**

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Much of what she sees in planning documents is outdated and needs to be made more relevant to both traditional and modern needs of Māori as iwi and hapu.

In particular, Te Karehana is insistent that all assessment *“needs to be fair, be valid and to be flexible.”* But if and when required she is quite capable of thinking more than *“a little outside the box to reach the end result.”*

## **Assessment trends**

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Assessment in such a Māori context and environment are rare. It is such a specialist area and those qualified and experienced are difficult to find.

## **Description of the assessment strategy**

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As a typical example of her work, Te Karehana is responsible for the planning, delivery and assessment of Māori resource management units within a diploma of environmental management or marine studies course. In order to combine theory with practice she would design a scenario that progresses from a formative to summative assessment.

The scenario described was if any of her students, when “graduated experts” might be seconded on to a local marae committee and are required to write to the iwi or hapu to advise them of a best course of action for a certain issue. The students are then taken to the marae, introduced to the issue, so they then become more involved in it rather than having to just read about it.

The reading part is contained within a course workbook that contains all necessary written information for the students. It is a guide only to all the tasks required during their stay on the marae that usually lasts up to one week. Te Karehana prefers to take all her students to

a marae that is fairly distant, fairly basic in terms of amenities (such as an off-shore island) where the participants are deliberately put out of their normal comfort zone.

She is not trying to set up a Survivor type programme because on the noho marae there are no competitive groups but the formation of a cooperative whole. As part of her assessment Te Karehana is constantly observing the interrelationships of the students and the local kaumatua.

She frequently invites the elders to sign off tasks in student workbooks. This co-assessing of student work gives *mana* to the expectation of *tino rangatiratanga*.

When, after a few days on the marae, the students are required to change roles from being initial *manuhiri* to that of being *kaitiaki*. This is the important lift in status to the same as level of responsibility as the *tangata whenua* who have the guardian role of local resources. The students make the change from being simple observers to being the guardians.

Te Karehana is insistent that the key to the success of the programme is good preparation so there is no doubt of the student requirements, and picking a good support team.

## **Motivation for adopting the assessment strategy**

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Most of the students on the noho marae courses have a Pakeha middle class background with very little or no previous marae experience. She believes that being immersed in a reality situation such as on a noho marae the students learn over and above the course content – and that is more beneficial than being in a classroom and being expected to understand everything Maori from a book. But more than learning knowledge, the participating students learn to expand their thinking into new situations and form more tolerant attitudes. Such an experience will make them more suited to their future employment.

## **Strengths and limitations**

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Noho marae requires a personal involvement from the students to be seen and mix with *tangata whenua*. If students are going to end up working in policy and planning areas then they will gain valuable experience in how to work within a Māori environment, one that may be totally a million miles away from their office culture.

After the noho marae experience the students are at a level of confidence and have absorbed the sense and being of *aroha* and *wairua*. The students respond by wearing the appropriate clothing and “*there’s a happy step in their lives when they come out.*”

Frequently Te Karehana experiences some negativity from the students on her initial visit to the class. Resistance is often displayed by students laughing or having heads down. Often this is the result of the lead tutor for the course, who is usually not Māori, not having prepared the students for her arrival, or even the tutor not being fully committed to the course module, seeing the marae experience as lesser importance.

The very first task of the Māori tutor is to change that resistance and that negativity by explaining to all the participants (students and tutors) what they are going to do on the Marae, why and how. The kaupapa is then aligned to the learning outcomes. Students then

become more calm and confident, especially when they lose their fear of being embarrassed or giving offence.

The use of all te reo Māori with no English during the powhiri welcome is difficult for most students to sit and look as if they are politely paying attention. However, careful preparation to explain the process beforehand can help make students more appreciative.

Te Karehana mentioned that classroom learning was something similar to laboratory learning, but that noho marae was like field testing. The suitability for such an applied experience really depends on a case by case basis, how the preparation is completed, being very clear with students on the expected outcomes and the assessment methods.

## **Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy**

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### **Response from students**

Students have always given positive evaluations from the noho marae because they know that even if the assessments are going to happen on the marae there are no surprises. It is very similar to an open book, but instead the participants have to be more observant by opening their ears and eyes to the Māori world around them. "Some students come from absolute nothing to just loving it. You know, by the time we get to that they're ready to take on the world."

### **Response from colleagues and the institution**

Kaumātua who in part or whole, observe or assist in the course are frequently making suggestions for improvement to the students, congratulating them for their efforts. In te ao Māori this is the highest and most accepted form of criticism because the words come from those who are the acknowledged experts of tangata whenua.

Often over lunch at the marae her assistants and marae helpers are discussing informally the progress of the days activities. Te Karehana stated that she has never actually had a teaching evaluation within an institution completed by a colleague, but she would welcome the opportunity. She has in the past had complements from her peers in various institutions who ask "*how did you manage to get them to do that?*" Such lead-ins result in interesting discussions that she enjoys.

## **Dissemination**

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Te Karehana has recently completed both her degree in Environmental Management and Graduate Diploma in Maori Leadership. She has made frequent references in her assignments to her noho marae experiences.

When the opportunities arise she attends conferences as a speaker and has represented her iwi and hapu in various issues. She recently presented at a conference with the Department of Corrections on assessing programmes to cut the rate of re-offending. She used the same technique of taking some of the participants out of the conference into the bush, out of their known comfort zones and into an alien environment, to demonstrate how to achieve change in attitudes.

As a wahine toa with her own tribal organisation, Te Karehana will continue to teach noho marae experiences and to train up future leaders.

# Case Study 4 - Learning more about life skills is more important

A Māori and Pasifika Case Study from the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

## A Māori and Pasifika Case Study

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**Researcher:** Oneroa Stewart

## In brief

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"This course is leading itself more towards life skills rather than just learning the content – it's that motivation, aspiration to finish the skills."

Many of the students in the National Certificate in Sport and Recreation have a pre conceived idea that the course is focused on playing sports. However, an essential part of the course for all students is to plan and document all activities within a workbook. Initially there is some resistance to the reading and writing course work requirement from students who mostly think they are primarily attending to complete a practical course and enjoy their playing abilities.

Not wanting to detract from his students' enthusiasm, this tutor has been busy refining a course workbook developed specifically for the types and needs of his students. What he expects from his students is that they all learn and experience a strong focus on life skills and attitudes.

The right balance between workbook theory and the practical component of the programme is indicated by high success and retention rates, all of which encourages most of the students towards higher qualifications at the institution.

## About the tertiary teacher

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Clark Tuagalu is a sports and recreation tutor at Te Kuratini o Poike, the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic, in Tauranga. He is Samoan and maintains close contact with his island home. His main role is that of being the Programme Coordinator for the National Certificate in Sport (level 3) and the delivery of the National Pool Life Guard Award. Clark also co-ordinates the Sport and Leadership Programme run in local high schools (a unit standard based programme - developing self confidence and leadership skills in young people in years 12 to 13). He is also required to teach a small section of the advanced sport diploma and degree programme in sport management and sport sociology.

In 2006 Clark completed the Certificate in Adult Teaching and Learning (CALT). During the interview he found it difficult to state how this formal qualification actually helped his development in assessment. He did acknowledge that his Academic Advisor had been

useful in guiding him with how to write and report results and write and moderate assessments. But for the most part, according to Clark, he functions "independently with little guidance and supervision."

## **Views of assessment**

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Unless there have been notified programme changes then little pre and post moderation takes place. Clark feels that more moderation should be taking place as he is always keen to pick up new ideas and share his work with others. Most information he receives during informal discussions with colleagues.

For Clark, experience on the job has been the best teacher when and where he has "picked up on mistakes on areas that probably need improvement, and the evaluations that we conduct here as well."

## **Assessment trends**

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Clark acknowledged that because accountability and reporting requirements "had tightened up" then he has to pay much more attention to his assessment practices. The sports and recreation industry was the main influence of promoting change in assessment practices.

## **Description of the assessment strategy**

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Clark has complete nine and a half years' experience at running the Sport and Recreation programme at the Polytechnic. For the first three years of his teaching on this programme, the National Certificate in Sport was originally run for a full year. It was restructured to run just for a half year in order to make the unit standards (at level 3) and the qualification more achievable and responsive to market trends.

The programme now offers a pathway for the successful students to gain entry into a higher level 5 course. The older second chance learners tend to take this pre-entry course while the younger students tend to come straight from high school directly into the level 3 programme.

The main assessment strategy centres around the use of a course workbook. It is how this workbook is presented and used by the students that determines the success of the course and includes a mixture of both written and practical assignments.

Most of Clark's students first arrive at the beginning of the course expecting they are attending to play games all day. Thus when first being presented with their workbooks, the tutor finds some initial resistance to the required amount of reading and writing (which is actually very little). How then does this tutor convert and convince his students to the discipline of reflecting on and recording their own progress?

Clark guides his students page by page, section by section through the workbook for all the assessment tasks. Initially, there is some resistance from some students at seeing all the work required, from those who think they are only enrolled to play sport all day and everyday. But this tutor carefully explains that this workbook is a written record or diary of all their course achievements. All the set tasks are formatively assessed until completed. Students may repeat any assessment activity until mastered.

Clark suggests that one of the main reasons for the workbook success is that he has provided a large number of clear examples of problems that his students can model. He has built these up from his own teaching experience and he continually revises his work.

Then when finally mastered, the activity is signed off to then become a summative record of achievement. Formative assessment takes place frequently as all the students train to attempt various skills as the unit standards require. It may appear to an outsider that the course looks rather unstructured. This is due to the variation in timeframes caused by students being at varied levels of competence and performance. Students seem to enjoy the open timeframe (of approximately 20 hours) to complete all their workbook documentation. Continual encouragement to improve personal performances and succeed is very important in building the self-esteem of the participating students.

The best part of the workbook, according to Clark, is that it is designed and constructed on a spiral learning approach. Each section is a development of the proceeding section and progresses learning. To most students the connections between skills and content is obvious. But where not, then Clark maintains "an open door policy" to help and assist all his students.

With over nine years' experience, Clark has been continually making refinements to the workbook by providing clear and relevant examples, free of jargon, so that his students quickly respond to the set tasks.

## **Motivation for adopting the assessment strategy**

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From the very beginning of the course, Clark sets the standards for his students by explaining to them all that this workbook, in terms of the important record it contains, will determine their pass or failure in the course. He expects it to be neat and tidy (from students who may not have a neat and tidy attitude from their previous schooling experience).

The same approach and attitudes have to carry over when students are directed to visit a facility, talk to any staff, carry out surveys, demonstrate skills, meet visitors, etc. All students are required both to perform and document their entire course.

## **Strengths and limitations**

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The workbook contains all the information the students need to complete the unit and so pass the course. As one document it is easy to refer to when needed. It remains as a check list of all things required and no student can ever claim s/he was never told because it is all written and explained in class.

Clark regards the use of the workbook as sufficiently challenging but definitely not overwhelming. To him this is its success. It does also have the added bonus of preparing these students for the literacy requirements and expectations as students move towards higher qualifications.

These students, who mostly come from an educational background of not particularly liking or being successful with lots of reading and writing, are carefully nurtured to move up from simply filling out pages with a pen to more advanced on-line learning.

He has also added value to the course by the use of the e-learning programme, Moodle. This allows all students to take their own responsibility to submit and track their own learning on the Polytechnic intranet. However, one student who has a computer phobia is allowed to complete the workbook manually for submission and assessment.

## **Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy**

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### **Response from students**

While the actual number of enrolled students for this course has steadily dropped over the last few years, the success and retention rates have remained constant. Most of the students opt to move up into the Polytechnic's diploma programme and advance into the full degree.

### **Response from colleagues and the institution**

While there are frequent discussions on general aspects of assessment, Clark feels there is little, if any, talk about particular assessments because the pre and post moderation process happens so infrequently.

### **External reviews**

Industry advisor groups are encouraged to comment on the sports programmes, especially the content and desired outcomes. There is always a focus on the skills required to make successful graduates for the industry.

Clark considers the valuable feedback he receives from his industry colleagues by reflecting on how he can incorporate new information into his own course. Although he usually meets with the ITO only once a year the reflection is ongoing by many informal meetings and discussions held at other times and places.

## **Dissemination**

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Clark is currently engaged in research to determine health and physical activity needs with people of his home country of Samoa. His findings will be important in determining the future shapes of his course structures and teaching methodologies.



# Case Study 5 - Cooperation between students promotes greater success and retention

A Māori and Pasifika Case Study from the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

## A Māori and Pasifika Case Study

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**Name:** Ivan Wanhill

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**Researcher:** Oneroa Stewart

## In brief

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"The one that's helping the other is actually reinforcing his own learning."

The electronics course at the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic makes strong knowledge demands on its students for both safety and technical considerations. The course must strictly follow the syllabus of the Industry Training Organisation (ITO). The methods of assessment however, are left to the tutors, but are carefully and regularly monitored by the ITO. The tutors use a variety of assessment methods.

Mathematics is considered a foundation component of the course that is knowledge based and is assessed in closed book tests. However, the practical components are very successfully run in workshops where all the pupils learn to thrive in a cooperative classroom environment where better work ethics and commitments are developed and observed.

The high retention and success of the course makes its own statement for student satisfaction.

## About the tertiary teacher

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Ivan is an Academic Staff Member at the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic teaching mainly electronics and mathematics for the last seven years. Over this time he has shared the responsibility with other senior tutors in fine tuning and adapting to the course requirements.

His initial assessment training was completed at the Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec) in a CALT (Certificate in Adult Learning and Teaching) course. He described this module as "excellent and broadened my horizon on assessment – it was great."

## Views of assessment

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He is adamant that assessment should be in as many forms as possible and suitable, such as open or closed book, demonstration, research, practical tasks and problem solving.

Quite often his students like to express their own preferences and it surprises him that so many "prefer closed book rigid exams." The compromise reached is that there are some areas of study where each individual student needs to be able to demonstrate their skills without any external prompt. Level 2 mathematics was given as an example. In contrast, Ivan encourages a "more community environment" within the workshop where students are "bouncing off each other" and demonstrating their practical skills and problem solving.

## **Assessment trends**

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As part of the modern apprenticeship Ivan works with on the job assessment with senior students at level 3 and is currently working with the ITO to possibly assess at level four in the work place.

Over the last few years there have been some major changes in the courses taught and some of the qualifications have complete new unit standards, resulting in his electronics course being completely revamped.

The ITO did not want any assistance for his input into the revamp (perhaps because of the distance to Auckland) but when new qualifications were finalised the tutors sat down together to decide themselves on the best form of assessments. Hence they decided on a large variety.

## **Description of the assessment strategy**

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This level 4 course has a very wide range of student ages: from 17 to 52 years old. Of the 49 that began the course this year only three are females. But what is pleasing to Ivan is that nearly a quarter of the class is Maori. Overall the course has enjoyed an excellent success and retention rate. However, many students are actively enticed out of the course to go to work for the industry. While a student gaining employment may be considered a "success" from the Polytechnic point of view, the way course data is reported through management, leaving for work is not considered positive. The course follows a very strict unit standards base as directed by the ITO.

In order to become qualified as electricians the students must sit external trade examinations at level 4, held on campus as set by the electrical Registration Board. There are two examinations – one on regulations and the other on electrical theory. In order to successfully pass these exams the students must have a good grounding in mathematics. In order to prepare all the students as sufficiently competent to pass, the tutor has set a high benchmark of 70% in a closed book test at level 2.

While he regards it as unrealistic for everyone to gain 100%, Ivan has set such a high required pass mark as an indication to the whole class of the higher standard required when they reach level 4. In order to assist an students who are struggling, Ivan holds catch up classes on Fridays.

Percentages are still favoured within the unit standard as the best way of indicating student progress. The next year when at level 3, the students are expected to improve their pass rates in mathematics to at least an 80% minimum. At this point the students are simply described as competent or not competent.

In contrast to the individualised and closed book assessment described above, the assessment in the workshops is very open and co-operative. If and when a student is doing a more difficult technical task and gets stuck he or she can talk to the person next to them. Ivan has observed that they begin to learn off their peers who do not take over their work but simply give them a suggestion. When a more competent student is helping another one that is struggling then he is actually reinforcing his own learning.

"Generally, it's the student that is struggling, you know, he's stuck, he's looking for help, and I may be busy with somebody else, so he would normally lean over to his mate to ask for help or try to figure out what he is doing – it normally works very well actually."

## **Motivation for adopting the assessment strategy**

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Students benefit a lot from learning off each other when they bring theory and practice together. Working with each other is what they have to do in the workplace so it is something that is actively encouraged in the course workshops.

Those students with already some experience in the workplace and who come into the Polytechnic for block courses often already exhibit a better work ethic and commitment, and consequently their workshops go much more smoothly.

## **Strengths and limitations**

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The cooperation and commitment developed within the workshop pays dividends back in the mathematics classes. Both methods of assessment enhance each other because both demand such a high standard. There is an expectation of trust, competence and confidence within the whole class, between tutor and his students. This is what moderates the apparent contrast between the assessments. The transfer of expectations between the classes and assessments means that students do well in both.

The workshop classes are limited to 16 students which means it is unlikely any struggling student would be lost in a large crowd. Cooperation between learning peers obviously saves the tutor a large amount of time that is able to be diverted to more struggling students.

The tutor has the advantage for the students by teaching both the mathematics and practical workshops. It requires a professional dedication of time by the tutor to put in extra hours (such as the extra Friday Maths classes).

He is of the strong opinion that the cooperative assessment in the workshops should be more encouraged in the latter parts and higher levels of the course. When students first enter, often not long out of school, they often have large knowledge gaps. These are best detected and remedied by individualised assessment and intervention.

In any courses where practical classes are required to reinforce theory work this contrasting yet essentially complementary assessment could be achieved.

## **Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy**

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### **Response from students**

The Bay of Plenty Polytechnic regulations require student surveys to be completed twice during the course. One survey seeks the opinion of students on the course content and Polytechnic facilities and the other on the abilities of the tutor.

### **Response from colleagues and the institution**

The work of the Academic Advisor within the School of Applied Technology in assisting the tutors is very much appreciated. She assists Ivan to solve problems and seek further opinions on course regulations.

### **External reviews**

Both the ITO and Electrical Registration Board regularly moderate the assessments and progress of the course. Ivan appreciates their helpful input and enjoys their feedback. When suggestions are made for changes these are usually taken on board without difficulty. A cross section of mathematics papers are sent in for moderation. All returned comments have been positive to such an extent that the actual amount of moderation has been cut back due to the continual success of the external moderation.

### **Future plans**

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When this tutor first began to develop this course, he went to other similar teaching institutions to seek their advice and support but soon found he hit the proverbial brick wall. He was very disappointed that others would not share any information.

He remains open to any opportunities where he can work cooperatively to improve course development and assessment. Ivan describes the current competitive environment where so many are so busy writing similar assessments all over the country as "absolutely crazy."

He feels that the ITO's should be taking a greater leadership role but realises that they too are under resourced.

# Case Study 6 - Assessment is limited only by your imagination

A Māori and Pasifika Case Study from the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

## A Māori and Pasifika Case Study

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**Name:** Tania Mullane

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**Researcher:** Oneroa Stewart

### In brief

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“Assessment is not a concrete piece of work, it should evolve and move as time moves on and as your students change .. so it’s sort of a living document that is really up to your imagination.”

In the Health Care Assistants programme there are a total of 20 units with 20 formative assessments to pass the course. Given the lack of formal schooling, academic background and experience of the students such a number of workload requirements seems impossible.

This experienced tutor does not regard her students as less intelligent or capable than any other taught in any other programmes, but writing essay type answers for formative assessments provides the biggest challenge for her students. Many have worked in health care for many years but still find it very difficult to write things down on paper.

The solutions are threefold, as Tania Mullane sees it, to provide continual motivation and skill sets to her students, with no specific due dates for assessments.

A course of learning and assessment has been designed to fit a particular cultural, gender and industry specific needs that has resulted in high success and retention rates.

### About the tertiary teacher

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#### *The position and course responsibility*

Tania Mullane is the Group Leader for Humanities in the School of Education and Humanities at the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic. She has supervisory responsibility for seven programmes and is the Programme Coordinator and tutor for two of these programmes: the Certificate in Health Care Assistant and Certificate in Home Support.

The Health Care Assistant is an 18 week programme during which the students spend two days a week on campus and three days working in their industry. About half of the graduates from this programme (typically mature women) are accepted into the Bachelor of Nursing programme (see interview with Gloria Ryan). There are many applicants, including recent school leavers and those in employment situations that have nothing to do with health, but who have always wanted to be a nurse so they see this as a foundation course for higher qualifications.

The Home Support programme requires students to attend lectures for a half day each fortnight over a whole year. These students are typically Māori women already working for various iwi organisations in a home support role.

It is important to note that both programmes allow their students to continue working and be paid for their work experience requirements. Both programmes share a common syllabus that includes communication, team work, advocacy cultural safety, manual handling, terminally ill, safe practice, regulatory requirements, anatomy and physiology..

### ***Training and experience in assessment***

Tania has completed her Certificate in Adult Learning and Teaching, CALT, at the Polytechnic. During the course she was taught the fundamentals of assessment and she especially appreciates the time spent actually learning to write units and assessments. In her opinion and experience she has always found it difficult to teach someone else's units and assessments because so often the two do not appear to match each other or the students.

By writing her own teaching units Tania feels she comes to *"intimately know the assessments."* Thus she feels much more confident and competent to do her job.

She frequently seeks the advice of her Academic Advisor within the School of Education. While the advice received is regarded by Tania as very useful, especially in the process of constructing units and assessments, the advisor is still not an expert in her teaching area. Having no mentor specific to her subject can be frustrating but she has learnt to develop her own skills by seeking out other tutors with good practice and attempts to assimilate their ideas.

As a member of the Board of Studies for her School she pays particular attention to moderation reports where she can *"be nosy and ask questions"* on good practice in terms of retention and success rates. Quite often small ideas can be quite useful. She sees too much *"reinventing the wheel"* so *"you should be the sort of tutor actively going out there searching for new ideas and sharing your ideas with others."*

## **Views of assessment**

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Tania stated two important aspects. First, it is vital for success that the teaching units and the assessments match the learning needs of the students. This can be done without compromise to the validity of the learning outcomes. Second, that *"we need as tutors to keep ourselves excited about it as well as the students, otherwise it can get a bit dull and boring."*

*"Assessment is not a concrete piece of work and it should evolve and move as time moves on and as your students change, and as your programme evolves, so it's sort of a living document that you need to look at and change and think as long as it still meets the unit standard requirement. You need to look at different ways that your students are learning to meet those needs because it's no good having what you consider a fantastic assessment, and your students can't do it. So I think assessment is really up to your imagination, and as a tutor you should be using lots of other people's good practice to assimilate into your own assessments."*

## **Assessment trends**

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When Tania first took the teaching responsibility for the Health Care it was a full time 18 week on campus course. She quickly realised that this was an unrealistic requirement for the particular lifestyle her students so the course was changed to part time on campus. Students are just as capable of learning inside the classroom as well as on the job in work experience and they can do so without loss or compromise to the learning outcomes. Over the last six years of her responsibility Tania has recorded a very high success and retention rate for her students. She has gained much confidence in her unique approach to learning and assessment.

## Description of the assessment strategy

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As there are a total of 20 taught units there are also 20 formative assessments to pass the courses. Given the lack of formal schooling and traditional academic background and experience of the students such a number of requirements seems impossible. The solutions, as Tania sees it, are to provide continual **motivation** and **skill sets** to her students. A third solution is to have **no specific due dates** for assessments. This experienced tutor does not regard her students as less intelligent or capable than any other taught in any other programmes, but writing essay type answers for formative assessments provides the biggest challenge for her students. Many have worked in health care for many years but still find it very difficult to write things down on paper.

In any class of mature Māori women there exists a traditional culture of oral tradition in learning. Their preference in demonstrating their knowledge is not always in writing things down (but report writing will be an important future requirement if they want to progress in the nursing profession). This tutor begins the process of change by first providing the necessary motivation by the use of frequent visiting speakers from industry and health care providers, managers of homes and institutions.

Motivation is a really important first step in her assessment strategy. When her students see and hear someone from the health industry coming to speak in class and saying *“this is how it really works out there, and this is what we are doing, and this is how to make a success of it”* then straight away the students get the link between her own class taught theory and what is actually happening in their wider workplace. Keeping the learning real and relevant boosts student confidence.

The second step is to carry over student confidence into their research, essay and report writing work. Again Tania enlists help from outside her classroom from the Learning Assistance Centre on her campus and close to her classroom. She uses a lot of short time teachers to come into her classroom and to assist within the Centre to give lots of practice and opportunities for skill building. It is important to note that the tutors within the Centre are all *wāhine Māori ki ngā wāhine Māori*. Hence the importance of role modeling when planning for assistance.

The traditional *tuakana / teina* relationship is also encouraged, especially when and where old women recount their own life and work experiences to the younger women

There are also aspects of just being Māori. The cultural value of *tiaki me te manaaki*, caring and sharing, what the students are encouraged to excel at in their own workplace, has to be exemplified and demonstrated by their own tutor. This places an extra burden on the tutor to make sure that all students are succeeding and go more than the expected distance to

intervene for those at risk. Thus a close *whanau* relationship builds between the tutor and her classes. This does not mean that the tutor ends up either spoiling or mothering her students, for she instills and puts the pressure on for the important need to gain *tino rangatiratanga* – taking responsibility for their own learning.

*“I put the pressure on the students that if they are not achieving, well there’s is really no reason why they shouldn’t be with the support and help that we’ve got here.”*

The third step for her assessment strategy is to have no specific due dates for assessments. Assessment dates are planned but if any student misses the day then there is no prescribed penalty. Any pressures need to be positive and encouraging, not negative and demoralizing. *“I’m all about being flexible around their family life because family life goes on outside of this place and that they have to have that right before they can get things happening here.”*

### **Motivation for adopting the assessment strategy**

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The majority of the students are already working within the health care industry as ordinary assistants for many years. While they enjoy the work the pay is poor and hope that by completing their qualifications they may improve their opportunities. As they also enter the course with low confidence about their own abilities (as evidenced from their selection interview) most of them have family and social pressures. In particular most of these women students are the main bread winners for their families. The challenge of the tutor therefore is to adapt her teaching methods to those most likely to be successful to her students. She has a do-what-you-have-to-do approach to solutions, even going around to student homes to talk face to face on issues – *“the hard graft you put into the classes and programmes pays off.”*

### **Strengths and limitations**

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Although these courses are set within particular gender, cultural and industrial contexts there still remain general teaching principles applicable to most other tertiary courses. However, the extra time and effort required by the tutor will be the deciding factor by any other observer considering copying the methodology.

### **Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy**

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#### **Response from students**

For each course independent surveys are required and completed by the academic Managers office. These are reported back to students and the School of Education’s Board of Studies. It is common for these reports to mention the heavy workload as a concern to students. Knowing this, regular monitoring of the class performance take place by the tutor with input from the teaching assistants at the Education Development Centre. Initially, some students begin the course by thinking all they have to do is regularly attend classes and let the required self-directed learning time of 10-15 hours per week slip by. Younger students have the advantage of recent school experience and know all about homework routines. However, older students may have panic attacks / family crisis, etc, but they are more likely not to be *whakamā* in asking for help.



## **Response from colleagues and the institution**

Over the last few years a strong working relationship has been carefully build up with local industry providers. Having local providers as visiting speakers had allowed the same providers to frequent the classrooms and view all of the students. As a result the tutor receives many industry requests for the placement of her students. The requests come from the public hospital, PHO's, rest homes and iwi organisations.

A local Māori PHO that has also been providing pre-nursing training over the last four years (and that has not be very successful) has asked for assistance to provide the essential academic assistance.

WINZ are now beginning to send and sponsor women on these courses due to the continuing reputation for success. Their sponsorship includes the cost of fees and child care necessities.

Wednesdays are going to be designated Kaupapa Māori days when there will be an increased use of *te reo me ngā tikanga Māori* in classes. It is hoped that designation will increase the participation of more Māori women into this pre-nursing course.

## **Dissemination**

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Last year Tania completed a research project investigating the preparedness of her Health Care Assistants programme for entering the Bachelor of Nursing degree. The results were published last year in the Polytechnic's *Forum* magazine.

# Case Study 7 - Teaching teachers – new approaches on assessment practices

A Māori and Pasifika Case Study from the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

## A Māori and Pasifika Case Study

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**Researcher:** Oneroa Stewart

### In brief

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“I’m absolutely committed to formative assessment, although I really didn’t believe in it when I first began assessing. But now I know that it is hugely important in making summative assessment to be successful.”

Making the big move from primary school to teaching teachers within a large Polytechnic community was quite a culture shock for this tutor. He initially found that most of his colleagues were teaching and assessing in a very fragmented style. He then made the assumption his adult students probably first learnt and were conditioned from their own secondary school experiences.

In order to encourage his classes of teachers make some sense out of what they were doing with assessment (and so improve their success and retention rates) this tutor developed a new adult learning course with a focus on student centered learning and assessment. The teachers as students were all required to develop teaching and assessment units to use within their own courses in the institution. They were observed working in their own classrooms and had opportunities to come together to discuss their own performances.

The main aim was to coach experienced tutors, somewhat set in their own “golden age” ways, to use formative assessment as the best preparation for achieving better results in summative assessments.

The reflective journals kept by the participants contained a wide variety of positive comments as the participants came to terms with improving their own teaching and assessment practices.

### About the tertiary teacher

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#### *The position and course responsibility*

Greg Hendren is the Programme Coordinator for Poutiri-Ako Certificate in Tertiary Teaching at the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic in Tauranga Moana. This certificate is a new programme that is replacing a former qualification, CALT, the Certificate in Adult Teaching and Learning. Greg also teaches communication unit standards in early childhood, beautician, pharmacy assistant and foundation skills.

Poutiri-Ako is about teaching the teachers how to assess their course syllabi. At the BoP Polytechnic it is a requirement that all teaching staff complete this qualification within the first two years of commencing employment. Many other tutors come to this course as students from being tutors, managers or supervisors in other local private or public training establishments (such as the local public hospital, fire department, etc). The course best suits and is designed for anyone who is responsible for training adults in the wider community.

At the time of the interview it was planned to run five Module One courses during the current year, each course having approximately 15 students (5 X 15 = 75 students). Module one would be progressively followed by another three modules to complete a four module qualification.

#### *Training and experience in assessment*

Greg was a primary school teacher for many years. Through his long experience with young children he was able to refine his techniques of teaching and assessing with a student centered approach. Because he found that adult learning theory utilized the same approach Greg found the transition from primary school to tertiary institution quite easy. However, he faced two major challenges. The first was to convince his classes of experienced adult tutors to make the theoretical and practical moves from being exam-centred-teachers back to being student centered. The second was a refocus on the need for assessments in the adult world to be open to more scrutiny (because students were becoming more assertive and critical of their own tutors) and units that were going to be registered nationally reflected the reputation of the institution for quality teaching and outcomes.

When he first made the move from primary schooling to the Polytechnic Greg had no experience in teaching any unit standards. So he joined a moderation committee doing regular moderations in order to see how assessments were being written. Soon he found himself elected to an inter-polytechnic moderation committee that met once or twice a year on a number of different campuses. Being thrown in at the deep end proved to be a valuable time for Greg. He recounts:

*"I learnt a huge amount there. I learnt what evidence and judgement statements were. I got to see what assessments experienced people were putting together.. hugely beneficial – you can't even begin to describe how beneficial that inter-polytechnic moderation committee was in developing networks, collegiality, raising standards, and in the main, maintaining and providing consistency in standards."*

It is interesting to note that the NZQA always provided the committee with an assessment activity in order to moderate the moderating group. The committee began eight years ago but ceased to function four years ago. However, Greg continues to share resources and ideas within his own informal network in the TEA, Tertiary Education Alliance (the collective of five mid-central polytechnics and Waikato University). Earlier this year he visited Tairāwhiti Polytechnic for a hui on assessment and had shared his Poutiri-Ako assessments with Waiāriki Polytechnic (who are currently redeveloping their own adult education course) in Rotorua.

Greg has also attended formal training opportunities at AUT, Auckland University of Technology, and other workshops on his own campus. He led the development and implementation team for the Poutiri-Ako course, thus gaining a wide insight into adult teaching practices within the Tauranga post-secondary community.

## Views of assessment

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*“I believe that assessment should only be conducted if it is necessary, and I believe strongly that it should not disadvantage people.”*

In order for this to happen Greg insists that due attention and care should be paid to the construction of any assessment, to the use of assessment language in order to remove possible ambiguities. He was adamant that:

*“It should be quite clear what it sets out to assess, so I like assessments clear and transparent, and that don’t mislead the students.”*

What upsets Greg is that too often he sees a lot of fragmented assessment where tutors just assess “bit and pieces” of unit standards. He described this as being a very linear process that often lacked creativity or any real purpose.

## Assessment trends

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Greg tries hard in his classes to make his tutors work more towards producing more meaningful assessments that can be integrated into student learning, rather than fragmented assessment. To him this type of approach is not new as it has been the basis of primary school assessment for many years, however, he thinks his tutors replicate their most recent assessment practices from their own secondary schooling or tertiary experience. It is hard to convince such groups of “golden age” teachers to actually begin to think that other alternatives are indeed possible.

## Description of the assessment strategy

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*““These people you have employed as subject experts, they’re trades people, now they have to learn how to become educators, and you don’t simply do that by providing a toolbox of tricks, that’s not what its all about.”*

This former primary school teacher was given the task to produce a new course in order to make expert tutors from these expert trades people. He knew that he had to get his class to look outside the toolbox of tricks and begin to think and understand the theory that underpins their teaching practices in order to maximise their performance in their own classrooms.

Within the first module of Poutiri-ako all the tutors as students are required to plan, prepare, teach and have observed four classroom lessons. The first three lessons (each of approximately 20 minutes each) are all formative in preparation for the final summative lesson (of about 30 minutes). It is expected that the planned lessons be progressive in complexity, beginning simple and adding more complexity towards the final fourth. It was important to make the process very simple and clear in order to make all the participants comfortable with their own participation, especially when being observed in their own classrooms.

After the third lesson all the tutors as students are given detailed feedback on how well their lesson was considered. This feedback content and process became critical in preparing to successfully pass the final fourth as their own summative assessment for the course. The

information, more importantly, served to develop not only practical teaching skills within their own classrooms but their own individual thinking of what they are doing as educators.

Greg was adamant that he would have failed his whole class of tutors if they all had been assessed on lesson four only. As a result of the first three formative lessons all the tutors, under his expert guidance, had reformulated their lesson plans and approaches.

*“It has been really illuminating for me that we’re there to actually develop peoples’ thinking and abilities, and formative assessment is an incredibly powerful way to do that – it has been hugely successful ... the difference in growth and development between the teaching practices was phenomenal from what they did differently.”*

One of the examples of work described in the interview was that of Athol Barlow (see report number 9) a welding tutor who was able to reflect and refine his own formative assessment process of providing exemplars of work to his own workshop students.

A second part of the strategy was the successful use of an electronic reflective journal. The process was first initiated by the posting of an *Education Gazette* article (January 2006) that claimed that feedback to students was a key determinant of classroom success. Greg was quite surprised at the amount and diversity of feedback posted.

*“What they said doesn’t matter, but the fact that some staff who I had never heard before, who never normally say “boo” now had something to say.”*

## **Transferability**

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While all students benefited from working and sharing their teaching Greg still feels that more adult learning theory is needed in order that they understand what underpins their teaching practices and that all have a deeper understanding of what and why they all are doing things. By this process the module becomes more universal and adaptable to most tutor needs in most subject areas.

One Greg feels that he has successfully designed one course for all, he still feels there is a definite need for supplementary smaller focused workshops on particular topics.

## **Strengths and limitations**

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At the beginning of the course some of the participating tutors were seeking a book, a single text, on which to base their whole learning module. While it may have been more convenient thing to do it would have set all the students down a linear path where all the content was prescribed to learn. Greg worked to convince them all that they were, with their own many years of teaching experience, their own best resource. By the tutors coming together and sharing and practicing what they all were doing they all received *“resources from a myriad of different places”* so they were less likely to be bound and fixed by one persons point of view. Greg felt that they became more creative and more responsive to the demands and needs of their own particular classes.

There had been some early concerns over privacy issues as a result of open access to classrooms, sharing of information and experiences. Protocols were established to protect the professionalism of all the participants.

## **Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy**

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### **Response from students**

The high participation and completion rate of the students indicates a high satisfaction of the course Module One. The evaluation information is being used to design and incorporate into the advanced modules ideas from the classes, such as more teaching tips.

### **Response from colleagues**

An Advisory Committee had been set up to receive evaluations for the course modules. Some tutors commented that if they were expected to help improve Māori success and retention rates then they needed specific ideas on how to do this. The original design of the modules was to try to integrate support for Māori student learning throughout and so deliberately not put in as a separate topic. This aspect is under review.

### **External reviews**

Collaboration with the Waiāriki Polytechnic is intended to continue in order to discuss the sharing of resources and design approaches.

### **Future plans**

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Greg would very much like to be part of a re-established group as he has previously experienced, but he does not see this happening in the near future. He plans and availability are also limited as he is so busy redesigning the successive modules, two to four.