

University Sector Case Studies

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1 Analysis of the case studies - University sector

Analysis of the Case Studies from the University sector from the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The University sector

The tertiary teachers

Ten academic staff members from The University of Waikato were interviewed. They included a research professor, an associate professor, five senior lecturers, two lecturers and a senior tutor.

Subject/Discipline

The ten university staff members work in four of the university's seven schools. Two are from the School of Arts and Social Sciences; two are from the School of Science and Engineering; four are from the School of Management; and two are from the School of Education.

The ten university teachers work in a total of eight different departments. They discussed assessment practices from the following nine subject areas: Sociology and Social Policy, English, Biology, Coastal and marine sedimentation and geomorphology, Marketing, Management Systems, Economics, Music Education and Drama.

Class levels, sizes and student groups

The university sector assessment strategies were employed in papers that lead to a range of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. The university teachers' assessment strategies were employed in four first year papers (Level 5), two second year papers (Level 6), three third year papers (Level 7) and one fourth year paper (Level 8).

The class sizes for the first year papers tended to be large with one class consisting of 100 students and two classes consisting of 300 to 500 students. The second and third year papers mostly consisted of between 30 and 60 students while the fourth year paper consisted of 80 students. Specialist option subjects in the School of Education sometimes had small class sizes of six or seven students.

When asked to describe the students in their classes, the majority of the university teachers described domestic and international students as the two main groups of students. Two of the teachers mentioned mature students and one mentioned classes in which the majority of students were international students from China. When asked to discuss other groups of students in their classes, some of the teachers mentioned Maori and Pasifika students and students on study abroad programmes. None of the teachers commented in any depth on students with disabilities.

Assessment background

When asked how they had gained knowledge of assessment practices, eight of the ten university teachers mentioned attending courses at the university's Teaching, Learning and Development Unit (TLDU). Several of these teachers are currently completing the Postgraduate Certificate for Tertiary Teaching. Three of the ten teachers had also learned about assessment from University qualifications they had gained prior to being appointed as university staff members.

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

- Working collaboratively with colleagues and/or being mentored by colleagues
- Being involved in the national examination system
- Adjudicating music performance
- Experimenting to find out what works well
- Drawing on their own individual experiences as students
- Following the University's assessment guidelines
- Reflecting on student evaluations

The Assessment Strategies

The University sector Case Studies

The ten university assessment strategies can be grouped in a number of different ways. For example, all of the strategies incorporate elements that demonstrate a focus on learner needs. The strategies are presented here in three broad groups illustrating some of the areas of commonality.

Several of the strategies are notable for their use of authentic tasks, which mirror 'real world' activities. Three of strategies are applied projects from the School of Management and include a Marketing Trade Show, A Mall Walk, and a group-based cumulative case study, which investigates the needs of a real organisation. A fourth strategy, employed by a teacher from the School of Arts and Social Sciences, makes use of authentic tasks while ensuring that the underlying scholarship of the tasks is maintained. This same tertiary teacher also employs two assessment modes: an applied track and a scholarly track.

Several of the strategies ensure that learners are provided with formative feedback. Two of these strategies are from the School of Science and Engineering; one employs short quizzes during lectures to generate student discussion and the other involves coaching students in preparation for exams. A third strategy, from the School of Management, alters the delivery of tutorials and essays to ensure that students take up opportunities to receive formative feedback. Students submit written answers electronically the evening before tutorials and they also submit draft essays a week before the final date and then take part in a peer review process which is guided by the teacher.

Several of the strategies are notable for the way in which they are designed to reward students for effort expended in specific areas relevant to their subjects. For example, one of the tertiary teachers uses bonus marks to reward students for exceeding normal expectations. A teacher of English requires students to complete seminars in pairs where they are rewarded for content, oral skills and creativity. A teacher of Music assesses students against themselves and rewards them for their individual progress. Finally, a teacher of drama, whose students are training to be teachers, co-constructs the assessment

requirements with the students thereby providing them with valuable experiential knowledge of assessment practices.

2 Case Study 1: Bridging the gaps between what students know and what we want them to know

A case study from the University sector. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The University Sector

Researcher: Jill Musgrave

Research participant: Dr Alison Campbell, Senior Lecturer - Biology, Department of Biological Sciences - The University of Waikato

Assessment Background: Assessment knowledge gained from secondary teacher training, involvement in national examination system and the university's Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLDU)

Assessment Strategies: In class quizzes

Subject: Biology

Qualification: Bachelor of Science

Level: Level 5 (First year paper)

Class Size: 300-500 students

Student groups: International, mature, domestic students

In brief

'We know that there are gaps between what students know when they come to us and what we think they know, and I use quizzes as a way of trying to bridge the gaps. Students have to be able to fit the new learning into what they've come with.'

A university lecturer adopted the following strategy in response to research that highlights gaps between what first year students know and what lecturers expect them to know. She believes these gaps arise, in part, from the way that NCEA standards compartmentalize topics and also from the tendency lecturers have of focusing on the facts in their specialist areas at the expense of making explicit the connections between topics.

The purposes of this formative assessment strategy are to highlight and reinforce issues that students need to be aware of and to get students to engage in their learning and link one concept with another.

The strategy consists of in-class quizzes during first year lectures where students discuss questions and attempt to persuade each other of their viewpoints. When the time is up, the lecturer explains what the answer is and why. If students don't have the correct understanding of the issue, then they know that they need to do more work. If they do have the right idea, they feel good about it, and if they have also persuaded their peers, then those peers also feel good about it. In this way, it feeds on itself.

Informal feedback, gained from students after lectures, has been positive.

2.1 About the tertiary teacher - Case Study 1

Part 2 in **Case Study 1: Bridging the gaps between what students know and what we want them to know**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

About the tertiary teacher

Dr Alison Campbell is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Waikato where she teaches across the spectrum of biology. While most of her teaching is at first year level, which is the focus for her discussion of assessment, she also teaches at second year level and occasionally has graduate students as well.

As the course coordinator for two first year biology papers, Alison's responsibilities include the timing of the assessments, the production of manuals and holding debriefing meetings at the end of each semester. Two to three other lecturers for each of the first year papers have input into the content of their lectures, but the course coordinator has the overview of the total content and usually drives any review or change to what is taught, how it is taught, and how it is assessed.

Alison has an interest in teaching, learning, and assessment practices. She is a trained secondary school teacher, and she is also involved in the national examination system. As a tertiary teacher, she furthers her expertise by attending relevant courses run by the University of Waikato's Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLDU).

Views of assessment

Alison considers summative assessment to be important in that it informs the final grades and 'where the students stand relative to each other at the end of the course'. However, she believes that formative assessment is probably more important in that it provides extensive feedback on how students are progressing during the teaching year and how they can improve their work. She says, 'I honestly can't see how you can develop the thinking or the critical abilities, unless you give them feedback on how they're progressing towards it.'

Alison says that students don't receive feedback for summative work. Markers are not supposed to write on exam scripts, and students don't get their final exam papers back unless they ask to see them. They do, however, get feedback for internally assessed work, and this is where they can find out where they are doing well and where they can improve.

2.2 Assessment trends - Case Study 1

Part 3 in **Case Study 1: Bridging the gaps between what students know and what we want them to know**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Assessment trends

Alison explains that, in Biology, the method of assessment has always consisted of tests, lab books, and final exams. She considers the most notable change over time is the current practice of a 50/50 division between internal assessment and final exams. When she was a university student herself, internal assessment did not play such a large part.

Description of the assessment strategy

The strategy consists of in-class quizzes during first year Biology lectures. Whereas Biology lectures traditionally consist of the lecturer talking and the students sitting, listening, and taking notes, Alison intermittently asks students to discuss in-class questions or quizzes that appear on PowerPoint. Students talk to those sitting next to them for a couple of minutes, explaining what they think the answers are and why. Part of each student's goal is to persuade others to accept his or her point of view. When the time is up, Alison explains what she thinks the answers are with reasons. If students have questions, she answers them, but if not she simply continues with the lecture.

Alison provides an example saying, 'I would expect you to know how osmosis works. Here's a quiz with a cartoon of a little worm in water that swells up. Tell your neighbour why it swells up.' The first time she includes a quiz she says, 'I'm just going to give you a quick quiz. You don't have to write an answer down. There are no marks. It's just something I believe that does actually help your learning.' Depending on the particular lecture, Alison uses up to four or five questions throughout a one-hour lecture. She finds that students engage in the discussions because they take place in a very safe environment where they don't have to share their answers with anyone other than their peers.

Alison describes the strategy as 'innovative in the sense that it's a new technique for me, and it's a new technique in the department, but [I don't] regard it as being innovative in the broader sense because the basis has already been published and used in other institutions.'

2.3 Motivation for adopting the assessment strategy - Case Study 1

Part 4 in **Case Study 1: Bridging the gaps between what students know and what we want them to know**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Motivation for adopting the assessment strategy

Alison started using the strategy a couple of years ago in response to research highlighting gaps between what first year students know and what lecturers expect them to know. She explains that the strategy 'was based on Dr Tom Angelo's work. I went [to his tutorial] and found it totally inspirational - it was what really pushed me into doing it.'

Alison explains that in the first year biology class, there are usually about 200 students with a range of entry levels. Only about 50 percent of the students have completed Year 13 Biology; some students have completed Year 12 while others haven't done either. She says, 'We know that there are gaps between what students know when they come to us and what we think they know, and I use the quizzes as a way of trying to bridge the gaps. Students have to be able to fit the new learning into what they've come with.' As Alison says, the assessment strategy encourages them to think, 'Oh okay, the stuff I learnt back there actually relates to this.'

When discussing what causes these gaps, Alison describes the potential for university courses to be driven by content. Individual lecturers usually focus on the facts they want students to know in their specialist area. This can occur at the expense of encouraging students to make connections between various areas of learning. She says, 'The links are almost certainly there but you're not making them explicit for the students. You do have to model that way of thinking. They learn those thinking skills from seeing other people do them as well as from practising them themselves.'

Alison considers that the gaps begin even before students start their university study. The NCEA has 'reinforced the tendency [for teachers] to teach to the assessment' because of a range of internal and external pressures. Because each Biology achievement standard contains a different topic, students are less able to make connections and think broadly. Alison reports a recent examiner's view that 'it's a real worry that students seem unable to move one context, one achievement standard, to another'.

Alison says the strategy also 'reflects my own philosophy about learning and what I want students to get from me. I want them to engage with the subject. I don't want them to sit there and think they just have to learn the facts. I want them to be able to communicate and think critically about what they've learnt.'

Purpose of the strategy

Alison explains that the main purposes of the strategy are 'simply to highlight points that students need to be aware of, or to reinforce particular ideas, or to get them to link one concept with another one. This is something I find they're not very good at doing.' The

questions ensure that students check their own understanding. Alison doesn't collect student answers because that is not her purpose. She explains that if students don't have the correct understanding of the issue, then they know that this is an area where they need to do more work. If they do have the right idea, they feel good about it, and if they are able to persuade their friends about their idea, their friends also feel good about it, and so, it feeds on itself.

2.4 Strengths and limitations - Case Study 1

Part 5 in **Case Study 1: Bridging the gaps between what students know and what we want them to know**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Strengths and limitations

The strategy encourages students to engage with the topic, link ideas and make connections across various areas of their learning. Alison is in a good position to make this happen as she gives tutorials across the breadth of both first year Biology courses and needs to know what other lecturers teach. In her lectures she says, '...so and so has talked to you about this in their lectures, and you can see how the two things are linked.' She explains, 'If you don't have the knowledge of what someone else has done, you can't make these connections.'

The strategy also helps students to answer exam questions that require them 'to think in a deep fashion. We do see that students are obviously actively applying [the discussions] - it's very exciting and it's very rewarding actually.'

Alison thinks the strategy would work equally well with small or large class sizes, and it works with diverse student groups. About ten percent of Alison's classes are international students, including students from the United States on study abroad schemes. Other groups consist of mature students and domestic school leavers. The strategy is motivating and enjoyable, and '...you can make it quite fun. I'm all for fun in learning. Students come away thinking that Biology is something to enjoy, and they feel part of it by getting the opportunity to talk through their ideas with their friends.'

Alison thinks the strategy would work for other disciplines. 'The questions would be different but the technique would work. For example, if you were a physicist and you wanted the students to review their understanding of a physics concept, you might put up a diagram of a physical situation with multiple-choice questions. You would have to choose a, b, c, or d and tell your neighbour the reasons for your choice.'

Alison considers that there are some limitations to using the strategy. 'Some lecturers would feel quite uncomfortable about it, and some would be concerned that students are [spending time talking]. I have been told I'm losing time when I could be getting content across.' Others would be concerned about 'the issue of crowd control [although] I don't have a problem with that. The class knows when I want to start talking. I don't usually have to say anything, I just train them up and they know.'

Alison also acknowledges that it takes a little longer to prepare each lecture and decide where to put in a quiz. Sometimes the quiz is positioned so that it 'breaks the monotony. I'd have to say that I have probably dropped content from lectures to let me do that.'

2.5 Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy - Case Study 1

Part 6 in **Case Study 1: Bridging the gaps between what students know and what we want them to know**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy

Response from students

Informal feedback gained from students after lectures 'has been quite positive - they like the little quizzes'. They say the strategy is useful because it 'helped us find out what we didn't know and showed us what you thought we should know'. Alison estimates that the formal feedback surveys conducted by the TLDU reveal a 3 to 1 split in favour of the quizzes. She thinks that those students who are not in favour just want the facts.

Response from colleagues and the institution

Alison has had a mixed response from colleagues but once they observe the strategy in action, they see its value. A colleague who was initially doubtful said, 'I am absolutely impressed by the way you get students to interact with you and with each other...I'm going to start using [the strategy] in my class.' As Alison says, 'That's just wonderful.'

Dissemination

Alison considers the best approach for sharing the strategy with others would be to invite them to come and see how it works. She says, 'I think lecturers, like anybody, learn from observation and seeing how things are done'. While Alison and her colleagues share their research at departmental seminars, 'there are no formal mechanisms in place' for sharing ideas for teaching and learning. This happens through the TLDU and Alison both attends and has run sessions there. She says, 'I think the issue is not so much that courses aren't run, but people don't go to them, and so the community with whom the material has been shared is actually quite a small in-house one.'

3 Case Study 2: The Marketing Trade Show: An applied project that mirrors the realities of work

A case study from the University sector. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The University Sector

Name: Trisha Koslow

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Researcher: Jill Musgrave

In brief

'When you go out into the world of work, no one's going to give you lots of multiple choice tests - they're going to give you a project.'

A university lecturer initially developed this assessment to overcome the problem of increased class sizes in the absence of a corresponding increase in budget or staffing.

Students work in groups to complete each stage of an applied project that mirrors real life business. They receive ongoing feedback, which they use to change and improve the evolving project. By the time they complete the final poster presentation, they have covered all of the required topics and understand 'the nuts and bolts' of the theory behind each stage as well as 'how all those different elements in marketing work together'.

Students initially express concern about the project workload, but they value the learning in the end.

3.1 About the tertiary teacher - Case Study 2

Part 2 in **Case Study 2: The Marketing Trade Show: An applied project that mirrors the realities of work**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

About the tertiary teacher

Trisha Koslow is a Senior Tutor in the Department of Marketing at the University of Waikato where she has a teaching position rather than a research position. She teaches mostly first year and second year papers and her role also includes curriculum development, supervision of tutors and sessional assistants, taking tutorials, and assisting colleagues with teaching related areas. Trisha has qualifications in Marketing and Education, and she also has industry experience and secondary school teaching experience from the United States.

Trisha is the course administrator and senior tutor for the Introduction to Marketing and International Management paper, which is the focus for her discussion of assessment. She usually gives some lectures and tutorials, and she also trains and supervises between six to ten tutors. Trisha has designed the overall assessment, the tests, and the assignments. While each of the two or three lecturers is responsible for designing their own lecture notes, they usually work as a team to prepare exam questions.

Trisha first gained expertise in assessment practices when she wrote curriculum and assessment papers for a Masters degree in Education. She has also added to her expertise through high school teaching, reading teaching newsletters, talking to colleagues and attending courses at Waikato University's Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLDU).

3.2 Views of assessment - Case Study 2

Part 3 in **Case Study 2: The Marketing Trade Show: An applied project that mirrors the realities of work**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Views of assessment

Trisha values assessments that require application 'because I've worked in the industry for many years...and when you go out into the world of work, no one's going to give you lots of multiple choice tests - they're going to give you a project'.

When designing assessments for first year students, Trisha thinks about how to prepare them for their second and third year papers, as well as how to prepare them for the long-term goal, the world of work and business. For example, she includes referencing guidelines in first year assessments but doesn't take off marks for poor referencing. Instead, she gives feedback to 'set the ground work'. By third year, students are expected to get it right. She also includes a mix of task types to acknowledge the fact that students have different strengths and weaknesses.

Assessment Trends

Trisha considers the biggest change in assessment has been driven by the influx of international students, who are mostly from Asia and are taught by different methods. She explains that they are used to memorisation of lecture notes rather than application and supporting their opinion with reference to theory. She has learned to modify her practice by explicitly explaining her teaching methods and altering the way she gives instructions for assignments. Trisha says that having a tutor in Shanghai preparing Chinese students for Waikato Management programmes has helped significantly.

3.3 Description of the assessment strategy - Case Study 2

Part 4 in **Case Study 2: The Marketing Trade Show: An applied project that mirrors the realities of work**. A case study from Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment.

Description of the assessment strategy

The Marketing Trade Show assessment was first developed in 2000 for the first year paper, Introduction to Marketing and International Management which usually has between 300-500 students and two or three key lecturers. The ultimate goal of the trade show is to present a new product in a particular industry such as health and wellness products, chocolate or furniture.

The students are divided into tutorial groups of 12 to 16 students. Each tutorial group is divided again into groups of three to five students, with four students being the ideal number. The first step requires each member of the group to think of a product idea, share their ideas and, as a group, choose one. Once they have chosen the initial idea, they complete assignments for pricing, distribution, and promotion. The final step, at the end of the semester, is a trade show exhibit. The students make a display and present their idea like a poster presentation for an academic conference or a home show. Each poster is assessed by judges, and, in addition to allocating marks, judges award prizes such as 'scarves, hats, water bottles or gift vouchers for Bennett's, to be shared within a group of three, four, or five students'.

The process mirrors real life business, and sometimes a group will work with a product idea for a while and then abandon it because they 'don't like the idea, or they discover it really does exist'. So, they start all over again without being penalised because it's part of the learning process. Some assignments are presented orally while others require written work. Students receive marks and verbal feedback; sometimes they get a group mark and at other times they get an individual mark to ensure the group doesn't carry 'free riders'. The final presentation gains a group mark. Students use the feedback they receive throughout the paper to change and improve their project, which 'constantly evolves right up to the very end'. By the time they do the poster presentation, they have covered all of the required topics and understand 'the nuts and bolts' of the theory behind each stage as well as 'how all those different elements in marketing work together'.

Motivation for adopting the assessment strategy

Trisha explains that the initial motivation for The Marketing Trade Show was that, in 2000, 'we had a lot of students, but we didn't have a lot of budget or a lot of staff and we tried to think of a clever, different type of assessment that ...was application orientated for the students but didn't rely heavily on us marking huge assignments or essays'.

The previous assessment was a Marketing Scrapbook that required each student to complete a scrapbook of examples of marketing at work where they described the

marketing theory and its application. The main limitation of this assignment was that although students were meant to work at the project throughout the semester, this didn't really happen with most students completing it at the last minute. This meant that students didn't benefit fully from ongoing formative feedback. There was also a huge amount of marking for staff at the end of the semester.

Trisha explains that to find ideas for The Marketing Trade Show 'we did a lot of reading in different marketing journals and articles [about] different practices of assessment'. For example, a colleague 'in geography had done poster presentations, and a colleague from Florida, in the US, had done a marketing trade show...based more on the marketing strategy point of view'.

3.4 Strengths and limitations - Case Study 2

Part 5 in **Case Study 2: The Marketing Trade Show: An applied project that mirrors the realities of work.** A case study from Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment.

Strengths and limitations

By completing the applied project in groups, students acquire industry skills as well as theoretical knowledge. The marking of individual assignments is significantly reduced, and the marking is spread throughout the semester, ensuring that students benefit from formative feedback.

Trisha also says that this assessment benefits international students, who 'have never been in a situation where they've been allowed to be creative; they just love it. They rise to the occasion and get excited and exuberant.' Staff organise the groups carefully depending on 'student needs, and their fears, and their comfort levels'. Sometimes the group consists of 'all international students, or all kiwis, or a real mix'.

The development of the assessment has been 'an onerous job', and the project keeps evolving each semester. However, over time, the amount of support increases, and because the tutors have done the assignment previously, they understand the organisational tasks involved in the project.

Trisha describes a potential for weakness in the reliability of marking because of the number of different people involved. She overcomes this by training the judges, using photos of past work to ensure they understand the criteria. This process is also used to motivate the students and teach them in preparation for the presentation. She uses graduates who are now working in the industry to judge the presentations, and as they have also done the project, this builds consistency. The department has also designed its own Excel spreadsheet to enter and process the marks, which are carefully monitored and moderated.

3.5 Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy - Case Study 2

Part 6 in **Case Study 2: The Marketing Trade Show: An applied project that mirrors the realities of work**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy

Response from students

According to Trisha, the majority of students prefer The Marketing Trade Show assessment to essays or multiple-choice tests. The typical initial response of students is that they say, 'Oh this is going to be so much work, and I've heard from other students how much work this is going to be.' However, in the end, most of them say, 'This is not as bad as I thought, and I actually had fun.' Students who have won prizes for their work have mentioned this in their CVs, and employers have asked them about this.

Response from colleagues

Trisha says that there is a lot of colleague support. She says, 'The trade show has become a tradition within the school.' Colleagues who have heard about the assessment have approached Trisha informally and have taken the idea and adapted it for their own papers.

Dissemination

A description of The Marketing Trade Show and how it is implemented has been presented as a seminar at the Australia New Zealand Marketing Education conference. Articles have also been published in local newspapers, such as the Waikato Times, the Hamilton Press, and the Waikato Business News.

When asked what advice she would give to other tertiary teachers who are considering adopting this assessment strategy, Trisha says that it is important to consider the team and ensure that colleagues are willing to support and assist. She says that the best way for other tertiary teachers to learn about The Marketing Trade Show assessment is to spend a day with her to find out how the assignments and the tutorials work and also to see The Marketing Trade Show presentation itself.

4 Case Study 3: The seminar assessment: A celebration of the students

A case study from the University sector. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The University Sector

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Researcher: Jill Musgrave

In brief

'At the end of the day, any course is about what the students have learned and how they have evolved and grown through the course.'

A university lecturer of English decided to include seminar assessments in her undergraduate papers. She says that the seminar recognises that different students have different skills and talents; it encourages them to think independently and creatively and helps them to develop oral skills.

Students present a 10-15 minute seminar in pairs. Half of the seminar marks are for analysis and content, and the other half of the marks are for presentation skills. The seminar topics relate to the novels students have studied and include a character study, a significant incident, the setting, and an aspect of the author's style. Students choose a range of ways of presenting their seminars such as PowerPoint, a stage show, or a video.

Although the seminar initially intimidates some students, after they have done it, most students say it was the thing they enjoyed most about the course.

4.1 About the tertiary teacher - Case Study 3

Part 2 in **Case Study 3: The seminar assessment: A celebration of the students**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

About the tertiary teacher

Dr Kirstine Moffat is a lecturer of English in the Department of Humanities at the University of Waikato where she undertakes research and teaches both graduate and undergraduate papers. Kirstine is currently teaching a new second year comedy genre paper, a first year literature and film paper, and a third year Victorian literature paper. She will also teach a New Zealand historical fiction graduate paper in the second semester. Kirstine was responsible for all aspects of the design and teaching of a second year paper called *Prize Winning Novels*, which is the focus for her discussion of assessment.

Views of assessment

Kirstine considers that an assessment ideally achieves two things. Firstly, as a measure of an individual student's progress, it provides a mark, and secondly, it is part of the student's learning experience. As Kirstine explains, 'In an ideal world, the assessment expands the student and makes them think about the material in a new or fresh way [and] encourages them to think independently.'

Kirstine has learned about assessment as a student, from colleagues, and also through experimenting to find out what works well. She describes essays as 'one of the primary modes of assessment that I would use', and she considers close readings to be 'a magnificent way of teaching students of English literature about the importance of reading really carefully'. In addition, she finds particular value in seminar assessments.

Assessment trends

Kirstine considers that there has been a recent trend towards experimenting and making assessment interesting for students. She says that an increase in the use of formal seminars as an assessment tool recognises the importance of oral communication skills. It also recognises that different students have different skills and talents. She sees this trend as an attempt to be as fair as possible. Kirstine says that while some students 'shine at prepared essays, others might not have the facility to write as well, but if you actually ask them to talk about their studies, they are articulate'.

4.2 Description of the assessment strategy - Case Study 3

Part 3 in **Case Study 3: The seminar assessment: A celebration of the students**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Description of the assessment strategy

While seminars are a staple of graduate study, Kirstine uses them in her second year paper called *Prize Winning Novels* where she requires students to present a 10-15 minute seminar in pairs.

Using one of the novels they have studied, students select a character study, a significant incident, the setting, or an aspect of the author's style. Students choose whichever presentation medium suits their skills, and Kirstine reports that past students have used a wide range of approaches. For example, some students have used PowerPoint to really good effect or drawings as a visual means of exploring details about a character. Other students have presented a stage show with subsequent discussion to present a particular incident in a novel, and a particularly shy group of students presented a video of their own performance where they were happy to watch themselves on film but not to present in a live situation.

Half of the seminar marks are for analysis and content; students 'have to have a hypothesis, an argument, and conclusions'. The other half of the marks are for presentation skills such as 'a clear voice, the ability to communicate with the audience through the oral medium, the ability to use the voice as a tool to vary the pace or the emphasis, eye contact to create a rapport with the people who are listening, and also creativity'.

Kirstine finds that the ideal number for the seminars is two, but if class numbers require it, she allows students to work as a trio, and if students have a strong case she allows them to work in a larger group. Kirstine advises students to choose someone they can work together with well.

The students receive step-by-step guidelines and a checklist of the seminar requirements, including both content and creative aspects. She also encourages students to rehearse. She explains, 'For an essay, you write a draft; you polish it; you proof it; you change it; you might ask someone else to read it; and you might take it to your tutor. It's the same with a seminar [where] you practise it; you practise it with a clock, having the props ready, and having any technology you are going to use ready. Quite often students rehearse in the actual space.'

Kirstine offers three areas of advice for other tertiary teachers wanting to use seminar assessments. Firstly, she says that the seminar questions need to be sufficiently concrete so that the cognitive and analytical aspects are covered but sufficiently open-ended so that students can be creative. Secondly, she says it is important to 'sell it to students; you have to convince some students that it's meaningful because some students [are] either intimidated or they just think they have to talk about something'. Finally, she says it is important to 'allow lots of time; if you tell people that they're doing a ten minute seminar,

they might take five minutes to set up and three or four minutes at the end to answer questions, and so you have to allow for that'.

Motivation for adopting the assessment strategy

Kirstine says, 'I'm not the only person who does this in my department, but I liked it as a student and wanted to try it as a teacher.' Whereas as an undergraduate student Kirstine had experienced only written assessments, as a graduate student she valued seminars and listening to other students' approaches to a particular text. She feels that this learning is also relevant for undergraduate students.

Kirstine feels strongly that her duty as a teacher involves both providing students with the foundation of knowledge about the literature they are studying and also encouraging students to think independently. As she says, 'I think that seminars fit particularly well. You're telling students that their views and their opinions are valid, and we want other students to hear those opinions and those views.'

4.3 Strengths and limitations - Case Study 3

Part 4 in **Case Study 3: The seminar assessment: A celebration of the students**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Strengths and limitations

Kirstine considers the main strength is 'first and foremost, the enthusiasm which ignites in students. Even the students who may be quite apprehensive at the beginning really take ownership of the assessment and make it their own, and they're prepared to put energy and enthusiasm into it.' She says that the seminar provides 'a release for some of the creative energies of students'.

Requiring students to work together provides them with support but also equips them with skills to 'navigate, and negotiate working with somebody else', which in turn prepares them for professions where working with other people is part of the job. Collaborative work also helps students to think about a text 'not just through their own eyes and not just through my eyes as a teacher but through the eyes of the person that they're working with'.

Another strength of the seminar is that it encourages students to take their work seriously and develop good work habits. The seminar is 'the kind of assessment where if you put effort into it, you will be rewarded. Students who take it seriously usually do very well, and people who haven't really thought about it and throw something together are quite exposed.' The seminars are also 'brilliant preparation for an exam because students pick different texts and a lot of them say, "Now that we have seen the seminar, we feel prepared for the exam".'

Kirstine considers the seminar has 'greater potential for students to be personal and through making personal connections, they perhaps become more receptive to a text'. For this reason, she finds that the seminar works very well with diverse student groups who are 'able to refer to some of their cultural markers in a way that they could not in a written format'. For example, German students have been able to relate the setting of a particular novel to their hometown in Germany or make connections between concepts in a novel with concepts in the work of a German writer. When studying New Zealand literature, Maori students are able to 'bring new and fresh dimensions to the reading of the text because they relate it to themselves'. She also feels that some international students really like the seminar because they are more confident about expressing themselves orally rather than in writing.

While there is an element of performance in all kinds of assessment, Kirstine thinks that students 'understand the performance aspect more when they're doing something orally'. She finds this to be 'a useful stepping-stone' for showing students that 'they can apply some of the same techniques to a written form of assessment. I try and encourage them to see that they can write an essay and prove a case without necessarily believing it.'

Kirstine describes a number of potential difficulties to be aware of when using seminar assessments. One such difficulty relates to ensuring that all students make an equal contribution, and she says that occasionally she has been prepared to step in and put a

student in another group or allow a person to work on their own because their partner is not contributing.

She also considers that there is a potential danger that people will put a lot of effort into the creative aspects at the expense of the cognitive aspects, but 'ideally the questions are designed to make students think very carefully and analytically about what they're doing as well as being creative'.

Kirstine acknowledges that the seminar requires more preparation time for her and time for supporting those students who find the seminar very intimidating. While she always reflects on her feedback notes and spends time typing them up in more specific detail after the presentations, she says, 'the bonus is that you mark the seminars in real time, and it's most agreeable. By and large it's an absolute pleasure. I look forward to it so much.'

4.4 Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy - Case Study 3

Part 5 in **Case Study 3: The seminar assessment: A celebration of the students**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy

Response from students

Kirstine has received student feedback from her own informal surveys as well as from the university's Teaching and Learning Development Unit's evaluations. Kirstine says that initially the seminar intimidates some students, but after they have done it, most students say it was the thing they enjoyed most about the course.

Response from colleagues and the institution

One of Kirstine's colleagues who had not previously used seminars at undergraduate level co-taught a second year paper with Kirstine and found the seminar very valuable and wanted to include it again in the following year. Kirstine says, 'I was really, really pleased about that.'

Dissemination

Kirstine has shared the strategy with others informally.

5 Case Study 4: Inspiring students to do their best

A case study from the University sector. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The University sector

Name: Professor Terry Healy

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Researcher: Jill Musgrave

In brief

'I'm not interested in what students don't know. I'm interested in them impressing me with what they do know.'

A university lecturer, who sees his role as being similar to that of a sports coach, adopted two strategies to inspire students to aim for excellence. The first strategy consists of giving students bonus marks for work that exceeds the normal expectation, and the second strategy encourages students to gain formative feedback for model essay answers in preparation for the final examination.

It is reported that students respond well to these strategies and say that they didn't know they could do so well.

5.1 About the tertiary teacher - Case Study 4

Part 2 in **Case Study 4: Inspiring students to do their best.** A case study from Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment.

About the tertiary teacher

Terry Healy, Research Professor of Coastal Environmental Science, has worked at the University of Waikato since 1973 during which time he has developed a range of courses in coastal and marine sedimentation and geomorphology. During the 1990s, when coastal issues became very important under the Resource Management Act, there was an increase in student numbers, and Terry's third year paper on coastal processes and management became the largest in the School of Science. Terry says that his main forte at the university is graduate supervision and research, and he has been the chief supervisor for approximately 110 Masters and PhD students.

Terry is the course coordinator and sole lecturer for the third year paper called Coastal Geomorphology and Management, which is the focus for his discussion of assessment. This paper consists of understanding coastal processes, sediments, and evolution of coastal landforms as a basis for coastal management. He says that he has learned about assessment practices from following university protocols and guidelines and also through years of experience.

Views of assessment

Terry explains that because his main interest is in graduate research and supervision, he tries to inspire and motivate undergraduate students to aim high and go beyond normal expectations to impress him. He says, 'I apply some of what I expect at graduate level at the undergraduate level.' He states that he is not interested in 'what students don't know'. Instead, he is interested in students being inspired to read widely about aspects that they are interested in, and he wants them to impress him with what they do know. When challenging students to exceed normal expectations, Terry says that he encourages students to treat him like 'a sports coach'.

Assessment trends

The most obvious change in assessment practices noticed by Terry is that whereas handwritten assignments were accepted previously, all assignments must now be completed electronically. He describes this trend as appropriate in that when graduates reach the workplace in consultancies, regional and district councils, they will be expected to produce electronically prepared reports.

5.2 Description of the assessment strategy - Case Study 4

Part 3 in **Case Study 4: Inspiring students to do their best.** A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Description of the assessment strategy

Terry describes two strategies, connected to his goal of encouraging students to aspire to excellence, which he employs in the third year paper, Coastal Geomorphology and Management. The first strategy consists of providing students with bonus marks in the major internally assessed assignment while the second strategy consists of providing students with formative feedback in preparation for the final exam.

For this paper, the internally assessed work is worth 60% of the total mark while the final exam is worth 40% of the total mark. The internal assessment consists of five laboratory assignments worth 45%, one test worth 5%, and a field trip assignment worth 50%. Students are able to achieve bonus marks for the field trip assignment.

In the first half of the semester, the teaching slots and designated laboratory sessions are used for providing the relevant background theory, and then the compulsory two or three-day field trip takes place during the mid-semester recess. During the field trip, students are assigned to groups to collect data, and then in the second half of the semester, they use their laboratory time to work with the data and produce individual field reports.

For the field report, students can gain bonus marks for providing answers that go beyond what would normally be expected. As Terry explains, 'One year we got someone who did an incredible job, almost like a Masters thesis. If they put in the effort, if they go into the library, if they bring in international literature and go well beyond the call of duty in any of these questions, they get bonus marks. I want them to impress me. Therefore, I want them to do the maximum.' To prepare students to aim for the bonus points in the field report, Terry also gives out bonus points for really good answers during laboratories.

The second strategy consists of providing students with formative feedback for model essay answers in preparation for the final exam. During the study week, students are able to bring a model answer to Terry for feedback. He says, 'Last year, about 15 students came and saw me. I tend to have a bit of an open door policy, so they can come in anytime.' As Terry's office is not on the main campus, students have to make the effort to visit him if they want to talk over their model exam answer. As he says, 'I'm not available to do it by email because it takes me much too long. I think it's important that it is person to person; we sit down and discuss it together which you can't do by email. The students get an instant response.'

5.3 Motivation for adopting the assessment strategies - Case Study 4

Part 4 in **Case Study 4: Inspiring students to do their best**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Motivation for adopting the assessment strategies

Terry explains that his main purpose is to encourage students 'to aim for excellence, to aim for the best they can do...not a bare pass, not the minimum they can do'. He says, 'I think the majority of students want to do well but don't know that they can do well. I don't think they've ever really had the sports coach or personal trainer approach.'

Another clear purpose of the strategies is to encourage students to continue to Masters level study. Terry talks to his students about the advantages of gaining 'a Masters degree which is recognised as a professional qualification and is likely to provide more job satisfaction in the professional world'. Terry sees a link between his approach and the university's vision statement relating to excellence saying, 'I think it is well within the line of the university vision strategy.'

Strengths and limitations

The main strength of both strategies is that because students are inspired to reach a high level of achievement, they do much better as a result. Another strength is 'that it does give the students a sense that we're interested in them, and they're not just numbers'.

Terry says that a potential limitation of offering to coach students in preparation for their exam questions is that it would be very difficult to achieve if the entire class of 40 opted to do this rather than the usual number of about 12 or 15 students.

5.4 Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy - Case Study 4

Part 5 in **Case Study 4: Inspiring students to do their best.** A case study from Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment.

Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy

Response from students

Terry says that he has had good feedback from students. He has received 'some very kind words because they didn't know they could do so well'. Terry says that the students who opt for 'the coaching for the exam question writing pretty much all end up with A's. I think it's satisfying when we see the students respond and see them want to come back and do graduate courses.'

Response from colleagues and the institution

Terry says that colleagues value his assessment strategies. He says, 'I remember one other professor in the department who thought that it's a good idea.'

Dissemination

Terry explained that he hasn't shared his assessment practices in formal forums. However, he has shared the strategies with colleagues at staff meetings. He explains, 'It wasn't a formal presentation to staff or anything like that. I was just saying that this is what I do, and it seems to be very effective.'

6 Case Study 5: Personal progress: Assessing students against themselves

A case study from the University sector. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The University Sector

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Researcher: Jill Musgrave

In brief

'Students are not assessed against each other; they are assessed against themselves. In this course, they are rewarded for putting in the effort.'

A university lecturer who teaches music to students preparing to be primary school teachers makes full use of her own skills and experience to promote individual student progress. She says, 'My passion is music, and my students should take music into the schools confidently and competently.'

Assessment tasks focus on individual progress with students being rewarded for the amount of progress they make compared with their starting point. For example, two students who begin the paper with vastly different levels of ability and expertise might finish the paper with similar grades. It depends on the amount of personal progress each student has made.

Julie reports that students understand and value this approach to assessing their progress.

6.1 About the tertiary teacher - Case Study 5

Part 2 in **Case Study 5: Personal progress: Assessing students against themselves**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

About the tertiary teacher

Dr Julie Jackson-Gough is a Senior Lecturer in Music Education in the Department of Arts and Language Education at the University of Waikato. Julie describes her work as 'actually making music' and music research. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Julie adjudicates singing, instrumental and piano competitions, conducts choirs and mentors conductors. She is currently engaged in research into the non-musical benefits of singing for four of the choral groups that she conducts.

The two papers that are the focus for Julie's discussion of assessment are called Music in Action 100 and Music in Action 200. These papers were originally option papers for a four-year Bachelor of Education degree. Since 1996, Julie has had sole responsibility for the development and design of the papers, and she explains that 'they got reinvented because I have a broad range of performance skills myself. I can also teach across those performance skills, and so these papers are what they are because of who I am. I still have parameters that I have to work inside within the umbrella of training to be teachers - of taking skills into the classroom.'

Julie learned about assessment as part of her Masters degree, which she completed in Florida and she has also gained expertise from years of experience of adjudicating music performance.

Views of assessment

Julie says that the most important aspect of assessment in the papers she teaches is that 'students are not assessed against each other; they are assessed against themselves'. She stresses the importance of 'personal progress, personal improvement and personal skill development. There has to be personal progress based on application to the learning, personal growing of understanding as well as growing of strengths.'

Assessment trends

Julie describes an externally driven change to the structure of the teaching degree on which she teaches which impacts on assessment. 'When I first started teaching, we had 36 hours to prepare students to teach music in a primary school.' However, over the years, there has been a reduction of time for teaching music in the compulsory paper. The four art disciplines of music, art, dance and drama have been combined within one paper, and there are just 12 contact hours for each. She says, 'So what has happened is that in those 12 hours we've just got to be very smart in how we utilise the time.'

6.2 Description of the assessment strategy - Case Study 5

Part 3 in **Case Study 5: Personal progress: Assessing students against themselves**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Description of the assessment strategy

The assessment for the first and second year Music option papers, Music in Action 100 and Music in Action 200, is ipsative, meaning that students are assessed against themselves rather than against each other.

She explains, 'I have the expertise; I have enough experience to know when a performance has progressed' from one point to another. For Julie, personal progress depends on the starting point and the distance travelled. She gives the example of one person whose starting point is very limited, who progresses from their starting point to a certain level and the example of a second person whose starting point is at a higher level who progresses to a level slightly higher than the first person and finds it easy. She explains that while the grade for the first person may be lower than that of the second person, 'the gap between the two grades [may] be far, far closer - maybe from a B+ to an A - because of personal progress'.

Each of the Music in Action papers contains the three assessment areas of ensembles, individual performance, and music reading. At the core of each assessment, there is a strong focus on formative learning, student progress and reward for effort. There is also a clear alignment between the teaching and assessment processes and the graduate industry of primary school teaching for which students are preparing. All assessment tasks incorporate cognitive, attitudinal, social and performance skills, but there are no written assignments with the task types consisting of music performance and oral presentations.

Encouraging each student to make progress also involves students working collaboratively. The ensemble groups contain a wide range of student abilities and experience. Those with no previous experience make excellent progress 'both in personal confidence and in skill demonstration' with the support of experienced students in the group. As Julie says, 'The weak ones are pulled along by the strong ones who learn how to co-operate and to work with what they've got and make music out of it.' Julie considers this is excellent preparation for the students' future primary school teaching roles.

There is also a collaborative aspect to the preparation for the individual performance assessment for which every student learns an instrument. Julie says, 'At the moment, we've got two saxes, two flutes, one piano accordion, one violin and one trumpet.' Julie gives the students individual lessons once a week throughout the semester. While she can play all of the instruments herself, she also uses the expertise of her students, when appropriate, and they help each other. She describes this process as 'modelling for the students that in the class there are resources, and the children in front of the teacher can contribute by bringing skills and knowledge that the teacher does not have'.

For the instrumental performances, students are assessed on personal progress, personal effort and application to the task, general understanding of the instrument, creativity, and performance and presentation skills. Julie describes the assessment criteria for the instrument as focusing on 'a whole realm of understanding. It's not just - go away and play it - but always thinking about how to apply this learning experience in the class room because you're all training to be teachers.'

For the music reading test, assessment is based on 'personal progress, personal effort and application to the task, accuracy of pitch, accuracy of duration, and general understanding of the principles of music reading'. Julie provides two tasks at different levels and 'students get to decide which one they take'. Julie explains that students choose the appropriate test 'because they like the challenge, and they also know that in this course they are rewarded for putting in the effort'.

6.3 Motivation for adopting the assessment strategy - Case Study 5

Part 4 in **Case Study 5: Personal progress: Assessing students against themselves**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Motivation for adopting the assessment strategy

Julie considers that her approach to assessment relates directly to her own skills and experience and serves the students well. She is able to ensure that individual students are catered for and that they make progress. She says, 'I have the raft of skills to be able to do it. All written assessment has disappeared in favour of performance assessment.'

Strengths and limitations

Julie considers that while the teaching of her music papers is very intense and requires a high level of energy, one of the advantages of the assessment is that she marks as the students perform, and so this is less time-consuming for her, and students 'get their grades straight away'.

Julie explains that some of her colleagues have concerns about her approach to assessment because they do not understand how she can be consistent in the grades she awards when rewarding individual effort. She says, 'I don't struggle with it.' She also reports that her students don't question their results because if they don't do well, 'they know that they haven't put in the hard yards and done their practice and progressed as far as they need to do'.

While Julie currently doesn't involve anyone else in her marking for moderation purposes, she acknowledges that she could do this as long as the moderator observed the student work over the duration of the paper.

6.4 Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy - Case Study 5

Part 5 in **Case Study 5: Personal progress: Assessing students against themselves**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy

Response from students

Julie says that she has received very positive informal feedback from her students. She says, 'Because music by its nature makes you feel good, you can't do music without being emotionally engaged in it, and they thoroughly enjoy themselves.' She explains that the university's Teaching Learning and Development Unit's evaluations consistently rate the course well, including the fact that students find it challenging as well as enjoyable.

Response from colleagues and the institution

In addition to providing feedback about the importance of moderating the marking of her papers, some of Julie's colleagues have suggested that her students tie their assessment into a public performance for a regular Wednesday arts event. Julie discussed this idea with her students, who chose to perform at the Wednesday Arts event as part of their assessment.

Dissemination

Julie has shared her assessment ideas informally with colleagues.

7 Case Study 6: Placing the participants in the role of the expert: Co-constructing the assessment requirements

A case study from the University sector. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The University Sector

Name: Dr Viv Aitken

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Researcher: Jill Musgrave

In brief

'Drama teaching is about walking the talk. I have other papers where I believe one thing with all my heart, but I'm constrained to deliver in a certain way, and I often open my mouth and say words that don't match the actions - the ideals and realities don't stack up. This paper is my opportunity to walk the talk, so why would I do anything else.'

A university lecturer co-constructs the assessment requirements with her students for her second year option paper called Introduction to Drama in Educational Contexts. Throughout the assessments, there is a strong focus on formative feedback, meta-cognitive skills and gaining an understanding of assessment practices through the experience of co-constructing the requirements.

The lecturer considers that this approach has 'a particular pertinence' because her students are going to be teachers, and they have to learn about assessment. She says, 'It's incredibly valid for them to come up with criteria for their own assessment.'

Although students initially find this approach to be tough, they value what they have learned in the end.

7.1 About the tertiary teacher - Case Study 6

Part 2 in **Case Study 6: Placing the participants in the role of the expert: Co-constructing the assessment requirements**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

About the tertiary teacher

Dr Viv Aitken is a Lecturer in the Department of Arts and Language Education in the School of Education at the University of Waikato. She teaches drama at first, second and third year levels and is the convenor and sole lecturer for the second year option paper called *Introduction to Drama in Educational Contexts*, which is the focus for her discussion of assessment.

Viv comes from a theatre background and has had to conceptualise ways of bringing her expertise into the field of education. She considers herself very fortunate to work with colleagues who are 'really strong on teaching for learning and assessment for learning'. She says, 'We spend a lot of time thinking about our assessments.' Viv also furthers her expertise by working with staff at the University of Waikato's Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLDU). She is currently completing the Postgraduate Certificate for Tertiary Teaching, and she finds being able to focus on her own practice in her assignments very helpful.

Views of assessment

Viv explains that since she moved from her previous position of tutor in Theatre Studies to working within the School of Education, she has come 'to understand about learning - how learning happens, and I don't see learning and assessment as two different things. They're part of the same thing.' She describes a separation between learning and assessment in her previous position where 'people were taught techniques in acting and then they had to answer examinations on conceptual stuff to do with drama, which is a huge leap'.

In the *Introduction to Drama in Educational Contexts* paper, Viv says 'The assessments should be co-constructed with the students; my continual aim is to make them the bosses of it'. This also mirrors the way she teaches drama where she places 'the participant in the role of expert'.

Assessment trends

Viv says, 'As a teacher educator, you notice that the language of assessment and learning changes, and I recognise that although these shifts hit us as changes of semantics, they're actually shifts in thinking as well. For example, I like to use the term Programme for Learning now instead of Unit of Work, and I like the way that focuses on the learner.'

Viv also describes the importance for her of the recent research by Russell Bishop and Alan Hall, which focuses on relationships with Maori students and emphasises 'putting the relationship with the student at the centre and recognising what they bring to the class room as a starting point'.

7.2 Description of the assessment strategy - Case Study 6

Part 3 in **Case Study 6: Placing the participants in the role of the expert: Co-constructing the assessment requirements**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Description of the Assessment Strategy

Introduction to Drama in Educational Contexts is a second-year option paper with between six to twenty-five students who are ideally in-service or pre-service teachers. Viv's assessment strategy requires students to co-construct the assessment requirements for the five tasks of the paper. This involves 'agreeing on deadlines, drawing up criteria for assessment, negotiating assessment approaches and agreeing how the marks will be distributed'. Throughout the assessments, there is a strong focus on formative feedback, meta-cognitive skills and gaining an understanding of assessment practices through the experience of co-constructing the assessment.

For the first task, Viv told the students they would be marked for participation, which would be peer and self-assessed, but the students were to decide on the protocols and criteria. To do this, they discussed online 'what successful participation looked like'. Viv then summarised the criteria and the group discussed and agreed on the final criteria. Students completed weekly online entries of 'how they were going according to their own criteria, and at the end of the semester those entries were given out as a hard copy, and students just gave themselves a rating and got a rating from a peer as well'. Students also set 'two personal goals and assessed themselves against those goals at the end'.

The second task was a reflection task, which Viv initially scaffolded with an online model, and students completed weekly online reflections to discussion points. Students asked Viv to provide a summative mark, an indicative, midway mark to reflect their progress and written feedback explaining how they could improve. Students also asked for weekly formative feedback, which Viv agreed to as part of her time for the online component of the paper. Viv felt that this feedback helped students to improve the quality of their 'meta-thinking'. Initially they reflected in 'shallow ways, and I kept saying, "Why? ...And this was because? ...And therefore, this means?" By the end, some of the reflective thinking was really rich - the best quality I've seen.'

The students suggested that they should complete the third task, which was a report for a teacher regarding drama resources, in pairs, as a two-page word document and that a teacher should mark it. Viv contracted a practising teacher to mark the task according to its usefulness for the teacher. The students also gained peer feedback online and posted the task online a week in advance for feedback from each other, so they could improve it before final submission.

Task four was a written assignment which required students to choose one of the drama approaches they had studied and, with reference to critical writing from two practitioners in that area, discuss the possibilities of the approach for their own teaching setting. This assignment allowed teachers from primary, secondary, early childhood and community

classrooms to apply the learning to their own teaching settings. Students submitted an early draft for which they received the bulk of the mark and written feedback. A certain percentage of the mark was held back and given as a block if students demonstrated that they had responded to that feedback. Viv found that the standard of the first drafts was higher than usual with students saying, 'Oh, she's going to get back to me.' As Viv explains, 'It was conversation.' Viv asked students to track the changes and submit the final draft electronically, including a short paragraph summarising how they had taken on board the feedback. Viv says, 'I quite liked the ones that said, "Well, I simply disagreed when you said that, and I'm justifying this with this reason." It got them thinking about their own writing.'

Task five was a Programme for Learning, requiring students to plan a drama for their own setting. Viv modelled the task in class and gave them her model, which they then adapted. Viv was available to students online, but because it took place at the very end of the paper when they were busy, they 'withdrew into themselves'. However, she found that 'the ones that were good were phenomenally good and surprised me. They'd gone in ways that if they were in close conversations with me, I might have stopped them from going - so I'm still thinking about that one.'

7.3 Motivation and purpose of the assessment strategy - Case Study 6

Part 4 in **Case Study 6: Placing the participants in the role of the expert: Co-constructing the assessment requirements**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Motivation and purpose of the assessment strategy

Viv describes her motivation as 'walking the talk'. She says that in her other papers, she is constrained to deliver in a certain way, and 'I often open my mouth and say words that don't match the actions. I often say, "Don't sideline the arts, and, by the way, we've only got six hours." I often say, "You must build on the children's prior experience before you teach them, but, by the way, we're only going in for a once off drama teaching experience this time." The ideals and realities don't stack up in so much of my teaching. This paper is my opportunity to walk the talk, so why would I do anything else.'

Viv also says that this approach has 'a particular pertinence' because the students are going to be teachers, and they have to learn about assessment.

'When I'm teaching teachers, it's incredibly valid for them to come up with criteria for their own assessment.'

Strengths and limitations

Viv describes several strengths of her assessment approach. Firstly, she mentions 'the ownership - the fact that the students grapple with the issues of assessment for themselves in a meaningful way because they're actually being assessed on it'. She says, 'It was incredibly successful in terms of getting them to think like teachers. I don't think anybody had a big shock with how they did; they knew exactly where the marks were coming from, and who was giving them, and they deeply cared about that. I was leading from behind.'

She also says that 'in some funny ways, it reduces my workload if they're peer or self-assessing, or they're sending it out to a practising teacher. That's actually an advantage for me.'

Viv considers another strength to be 'the fact that the assessment does genuinely measure the learning - and the clarity of it for them'. She explains, 'I had a student whose marks were in the 90s, and the stuff she produced was so fantastically researched and so clear because she knew precisely what was required and how to use the lecturer input in the best way. You have to try quite hard not to pass if you really know what's expected of you.'

The main limitation according to Viv is 'time, time, time. It certainly takes up brain space and headspace, and you have to get right in there with them so it's draining, but you're drained for a really good reason. You're feeding your students and that's important too.'

As an experienced user of the strategy, Viv would advise other tertiary teachers 'not to assume that you can't do it because of institutional [policies]'. The policy at her organisation states that students should receive a full course outline with assessment tasks, grades, and

due dates. Viv got around this by publishing the fact that those requirements would be co-constructed. Once the final information had been negotiated, she lodged it with the secretary and the institution as an addendum. Viv also advises, 'Don't over-assess which is what I've done; I've done five assessment tasks for a 12 week course which is too much.'

7.4 Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy - Case Study 6

Part 5 in **Case Study 6: Placing the participants in the role of the expert: Co-constructing the assessment requirements**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy

Response from students

Viv considers that the process of co-constructing the assessment criteria is 'terribly scary' for the students, who say that they have learned about co-construction but never actually had to do it. She considers that initially 'they would rather learn from the big guru'. However, she also reports that students say to other students, 'Oh, that's a tough course - that's really tough, but you learn heaps.' Viv says that the numbers are going up because of the reputation of the course.

Viv has also received student feedback as part of the fourth task, which requires students to respond to the initial feedback provided to them. She says, 'A number of them said, "This was such a useful exercise. Thanks for the opportunity to do this".'

Response from colleagues and institutions

Viv has shared the idea informally with colleagues and says, 'They're supportive. I don't think they know it fully because we're all too busy, but they would definitely support that idea.' Viv's Head of Department gave her advice concerning the course outline requirements, and the teacher who marked the students' resource reports suggested that this work should be published. Viv explains, 'I sent it off to the *Drama New Zealand Journal*, and they published four of them. That's really clear to the students that what they're doing is valid, I think.'

Dissemination

Although Viv will discuss her assessment practices informally as part of her tertiary teacher study and professional development, her publications relate to drama rather than teaching. She explains, 'I come to this education world with a slight feeling of impostor syndrome because I'm not a trained teacher. I've come from theatre, and there's other stuff I do that I'm more driven to tell the world about.'

8 Case Study 7: Involving students in a group-based cumulative case study

A case study from the University sector. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The University Sector

Name: Dr Eric Deakins

Organisation: The University of Waikato

Email: EDEAKINS@waikato.ac.nz

Researcher: Jill Musgrave

In brief

'Part of my philosophy in terms of assessment is not to get wrapped up in fine detail about whether they missed out a comma or a full stop. I don't actually care about that. Are they of value to employers? Are they of value to themselves? Are they doing themselves justice? While they are being assessed, are they having a good time? I try to provide relevant and authentic situations for them.'

A university lecturer provides valuable learning opportunities for his students by involving them in an authentic group-based case study to investigate the needs of a real organisation.

The case study requires students to work in groups and engage in various roles. Involvement in this process helps students to develop oral and written skills, critical thinking skills, self-directed learning skills, co-operative and managerial skills, ethical awareness and intellectual flexibility for application of theoretical knowledge to practical situations.

Students report that although the component parts of the paper look easy, by the end, they are working at a high level.

8.1 About the tertiary teacher - Case Study 7

Part 2 in **Case Study 7: Involving students in a group-based cumulative case study**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

About the tertiary teacher

Dr Eric Deakins is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Management Systems in the Waikato Management School at the University of Waikato. He teaches third, fourth and fifth year levels, supervises PhD students and is currently the post-graduate convenor for the department. Eric's research is in the areas of E-Government and E-Democracy. He has an interest in ways that IT can help the communication of women's ideas, and he has also been involved in Early Childhood Education, Ministry ICT issues and consulting work for small businesses. Eric is the convenor of the fourth year paper called E-Business Process Redesign, which is the focus for his discussion of assessment.

Views of assessment

Eric believes that it is important to provide relevant, authentic assessment tasks with a strong emphasis on assessing process and transferable skills.

Eric's students fall into two main groups: those who are about to complete their University studies and start work in New Zealand (or in China, in the case of his international students), and those who will continue with higher study. For the former group, Eric provides assessments, which develop skills that employers want such as oral presentation skills. He provides students with repeated opportunities throughout a paper to take part in presentations so that they can improve their skills each time. He describes this as 'a kind of safety net approach to assessment which gradually ratchets up the expectations'.

Eric also believes that transparency is very important in terms of what is being assessed and how it is being assessed. He works hard at putting together assessment guides that are clear for all students.

Eric has learned about assessment from a range of previous teaching and work experiences, including informal teaching experiences in the Merchant Navy, teaching Naval Architecture, and working with women at a childcare centre. A key learning for him from these experiences is the realisation that not all students process information in the same way. This has led him to focus carefully on individual learner needs. Once he started teaching at Waikato University, Eric sought advice about assessment from the Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLDU) where he regularly attends sessions.

8.2 Assessment trends - Case Study 7

Part 3 in **Case Study 7: Involving students in a group-based cumulative case study**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Assessment trends

Eric says that it's not easy to describe trends in assessment practices within the organisation in that research traditionally has taken precedence over teaching. He says, 'There are no mechanisms in place whereby we share that conversation.' However, he acknowledges that this is changing and says that younger staff members see the benefits of being more open about sharing assessment practices.

Description of the Assessment Strategy

E-Business Process Redesign is a fourth year paper with approximately 80 students who are in their final year of a Bachelor of Management Studies degree or a Bachelor of Electronic Commerce degree. Eric's assessment strategy requires students to take part in a group-based case study to investigate the needs of a real organisation. The case provides an authentic context in which students engage in various roles. Throughout the assessment there is a strong focus on process and transferable skills.

The case study is structured in such a way that students can 'arrive at the same destination by different routes'. If there are eight groups taking part in the case study, each group will engage in the same part of the case at any one time, but one group will have a turn at analysing and presenting one of the case parts as the main presenting group. As Eric says, 'It's rather like in a real consulting firm where there'll be seven other teams that are just basically trying to keep up with what's happening.' At the end of the case study, if there are eight teams, 'the class will produce two reports with 40 people producing a single report'. As Eric says, 'There's obviously quite a lot of effort and skill required to chunk that down.'

For each step of the case, Eric provides feedback as well as 'feed forward', discussing the areas that were done well by the presenting group as well as what could be strengthened. He then 'recalibrates' the case, providing questions and relevant information for the next part of the case for the next presenting group. As the case proceeds, students engage more deeply in the process, and Eric takes a less central role and 'just orchestrates' the process.

The various assessment components of the case study emphasise application of theoretical knowledge to practical situations and include group discussions, group seminars and bibliographies, group reports, group presentations and tests. The assessment components help students to develop oral and written skills, critical thinking skills, self-directed learning skills, co-operative and managerial skills, ethical awareness and intellectual flexibility.

8.3 Motivation - Case Study 7

Part 4 in **Case Study 7: Involving students in a group-based cumulative case study**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Motivation

Eric explains that if he didn't use this approach, valuable learning opportunities would be lost. The group-based nature of the case study provides flexibility for him to 'scale in terms of student numbers', and it also allows him to cater to students' abilities and interests. Eric also says, 'It makes life more interesting for me; it raises my enthusiasm which the class relies on.' Every year, Eric adjusts the case by incorporating new trends and current issues.

Strengths and limitations

Eric describes several strengths of the group-based case study approach. He says that it helps students to get jobs because it simulates reality and allows students to gain reusable skills. He also says that this builds the university's reputation and his own reputation.

Eric also considers that this approach takes him a lot less preparation time because the actual case, the assignment specifications and expectations are robust and don't change substantially. Another strength is that although the case was not initially designed to 'build in cultural differences, it has proven to be robust enough to do that'. One year, 72 of the 80 students in the class were Chinese, and so Eric allowed the Chinese students to shift the context of the case to China and describe how they would conduct themselves within a Chinese organisation. Meanwhile, the New Zealand students kept a New Zealand context. Eric explains that he learned a lot through this process, and both the Chinese students and the New Zealand students also benefited. Eric explains that this is possible because the 'central case is based upon generic principles - basic human person to person skills never change, yet the context around that can change, the country can change, and the organisation can change'.

Eric doesn't describe any limitations as such, but he says that the initial difficulty is in the course design and trying to work out what the basic principles of the case are and what you are trying to achieve. He advises, 'You have to have a clear focus, you have to have the enthusiasm to do it, and you have to be a good storyteller at heart.'

8.4 Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy - Case Study 7

Part 5 in **Case Study 7: Involving students in a group-based cumulative case study**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy

Response from students

Eric gains feedback from students in several ways. He finds the compulsory TLDU student evaluations useful in that they are consistent, but he doesn't like the fact that they are used for promotion purposes when they are not meant to be used for this.

Eric asks students for feedback directly during his class sessions. He also gives students the opportunity to give him feedback at the end of the paper so he can adjust the teaching for the next group of students.

Students have reported that although the component parts of the paper look easy, by the end they are working at a high level. Students also say that the learning environment is supportive, and the expectations and guidelines are clear.

Response from colleagues and institutions

Eric gains feedback from employers, who are studying on his executive education teaching papers, about the attributes of past students. When industry employers ask him to provide oral references for students, he also gains feedback about the range of skills they are looking for.

Dissemination

Eric shares his assessment procedures and forms with the staff in his department. He has given workshops for TLDU, and he is currently finalising a journal article relating to helping students value cultural diversity through research based teaching. Eric also intends to give a seminar to his department relating to the work he has completed for the Post Graduate Certificate of Tertiary Teaching.

9 Case Study 8: Traditional assessment tasks: Changing the delivery rather than the task type

A case study from the University sector. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The University Sector

Name: Dr Dan Marsh

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Researcher: Jill Musgrave

In brief

'We're always making changes in the hope of making things better. All the changes we make have upsides and downsides. I think we have to look carefully and see whether we are really gaining.'

A university lecturer who values traditional assessment tasks has made changes to the way he delivers tutorials and essays to increase student engagement with the learning and improve the quality of student writing. This development supports his school's initiative to include 'writing intensive' papers within every discipline in response to concern about the low standard of writing ability of some graduates.

To prepare for tutorials, students complete assessments for which they receive marks. The assessment tasks require them to complete set readings and electronically submit a one-page written answer in response to set questions the evening before the tutorial.

To prepare for essay assessments, students submit a draft essay, worth one fifth of the overall essay mark, one week before the due date for the final essay. Then they bring their draft essays to a tutorial for peer review. Working in pairs, each student reads a nominated part of the other student's essay and completes a peer review essay sheet.

Student attendance and participation in tutorials has improved, and students value the peer review process for the essays.

9.1 About the tertiary teacher - Case Study 8

Part 2 in **Case Study 8: Traditional assessment tasks: Changing the delivery rather than the task type**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

About the tertiary teacher

Dr Dan Marsh is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Economics in the Waikato Management School at the University of Waikato. He teaches papers at third and fourth year levels in Economics, Law and Policy and Environmental and Natural Resource Economics as well as a range of other papers. He is also the under-graduate convenor for the Department of Economics. Dan's research interests include areas such as innovation in the New Zealand biotechnology sector and policies and practices that reduce the environmental impact of farming.

Dan has learned about assessment in a variety of ways including experiencing assessment as a student himself. When he first began teaching, he supervised assessments and attended sessions run by the University of Waikato's Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLDU). Dan also discusses assessment practices with his colleagues and with staff at TLDU.

Views of assessment

Dan considers that one of the primary aims of assessment is that it should enable him 'to accurately say whether a student really has done excellent work, good work, satisfactory work, or simply has not mastered the material at all'.

Dan describes the assessment methods of his department as being at 'the traditional end of the spectrum' including tasks such as essays, tests and exams, which Dan considers to be valuable and rigorous. He says he is 'quite ambivalent' about the move away from traditional assessment types by some departments, and he questions whether the reason for this change is partly because students perceive other task types to be easier and more attractive.

Dan acknowledges that it could be argued that 'the fact a student can do well in a test or exam [only] proves that they can do well in a test or exam', and he also acknowledges that traditional task types 'may not prove they can do well in a discussion or work in a team'. However, as an employer, he would want to know that a graduate 'could at least have some sensible initial thoughts using economics without having to go off and look everything up - and a test or exam can test those kinds of things'.

9.2 Assessment trends - Case Study 8

Part 3 in **Case Study 8: Traditional assessment tasks: Changing the delivery rather than the task type**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Assessment trends

When asked about changes he has noticed relating to assessment practices over time, Dan describes a decrease in the use of essays, tests and formal exams and an increase in group work, presentations, online discussions and providing a proportion of marks for attendance and participation.

He questions the reasons for fewer traditional essays, suggesting that this perhaps stems from the fact that students come from a broader range of backgrounds and 'actually find it hard to write a good essay or maybe because it's such a lot of work to mark them'. He explains that the Waikato Management School has introduced 'writing intensive' papers because it was recognised some years ago that 'we were putting out graduates with a degree who really didn't have particularly good writing ability'. He says that 'a task force came up with a number of recommendations' to improve the standard of student writing. In all 'writing intensive' papers, significant weight is put on writing and on providing students with formative feedback to help them improve.

Dan describes another trend as 'marks for everything'. He says, 'In one sense it works. You put a mark on something these days and the students will do it.' However, Dan is saddened by the fact that most students do not seem to have an interest in learning for learning's sake.

9.3 Description of the assessment strategy - Case Study 8

Part 4 in **Case Study 8: Traditional assessment tasks: Changing the delivery rather than the task type**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Description of the Assessment Strategy

Dan has implemented changes to the assessments for his third year paper, Economics, Law and Policy, which is a 'writing intensive' paper, to encourage students to engage with the material of the paper and take up opportunities to improve their written work. These changes include tutorial assignments and various approaches for providing students with formative feedback for essay writing.

Dan has included three tutorial assignments as a component of the internal assessment requirements for the paper. For each of these assignments, students complete required reading and then electronically submit a one-page answer to set questions the evening before the tutorial. Students now come to tutorials better prepared for the tutorial discussion. Dan says, 'They're ready - they have done their answer, and they're interested in what other people say, and so in a sense it's successful though I still don't feel very pleased that I've had to do it that way.'

In the past, Dan used to see the essay assignment as 'an opportunity for students to research a subject on their own and see what they could do'. However, he received feedback 'that students thought the essay was unrelated to the rest of the work'. Therefore, he now spends a tutorial session talking about how to approach the essay. He also gives students a two-page essay guide and tends to teach the essay subject as well. Dan has tried two different approaches for providing formative feedback for essays.

Initially, he tried an approach whereby students were allowed to submit drafts of their essays for which they received written feedback to help them improve their final essays. When marking the draft essays, Dan spent a considerable amount of time providing detailed feedback for a selection of each student's errors, 'indicating grammatical errors or paragraphs or sentences where the meaning wasn't clear'. However, when the students resubmitted their essays, many of them simply included the changes Dan had indicated rather than using his feedback to improve the essays overall. He says, 'I didn't feel that was useful in the least.'

Following discussions with other convenors of 'writing intensive' papers and with staff from TLDU, he then tried a second approach. Students submitted a draft essay, worth one fifth of the overall essay mark, one week before the due date for the essay. Instead of marking the drafts in detail, Dan quickly scanned them to check the content and then each student brought a part of the draft to a tutorial for peer review. Working in pairs, each student read the nominated part of the other student's essay and completed a guided peer review essay sheet that Dan had prepared. Dan and a teacher from TLDU provided guidance and support for the students at this session.

Dan reports that students enjoyed the peer review process, which he describes as more successful than his previous approach. He says, 'It was certainly a lot less time-consuming for me and added more value in terms of students getting some extra knowledge of how to write better.'

9.4 Motivation and purpose of the assessment strategy - Case Study 8

Part 5 in **Case Study 8: Traditional assessment tasks: Changing the delivery rather than the task type**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Motivation and purpose of the assessment strategy

Dan introduced tutorial assessments to improve the value of tutorial discussions. Previously, students came to tutorials without having read or thought about the key issues in any detail.

Providing students with formative feedback for essay writing is a requirement of all 'writing intensive' papers in the Waikato Management School. Providing detailed written feedback for selected areas of students' essay drafts was time-consuming for Dan and did not lead to improvements in the overall standard of student writing. Therefore, Dan introduced the process of peer review as a way of encouraging students to engage fully with the opportunities provided for them to improve their writing.

Strengths and limitations

One of the strengths of the tutorial assignments is that student attendance at tutorials has improved. Students now come to tutorials having completed the required reading and thinking. While Dan is not altogether happy about the approach of 'giving marks for everything', the result has been positive in that students are now well prepared. They engage more fully in discussions, and they are interested in what others have to say.

The peer review process for the essays has also been successful in terms of achieving better student involvement and engagement with the learning. Dan says that he was 'quite pleased' with this process in terms of getting 'students to practise and improve their writing skills'. However, he feels that a limitation of the approach is that it depends, in part, on the ability of the peer reviewers. Whereas two teachers were available to provide guidance and feedback for between 15 and 20 pairs of students, in future, Dan might involve more staff to support the process.

Dan considers that a possible limitation of the changes he has made is that students could become overloaded because 'whenever you want a student to do something, you put a mark on it to persuade the student to do it'.

9.5 Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy - Case Study 8

Part 6 in **Case Study 8: Traditional assessment tasks: Changing the delivery rather than the task type**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy

Response from students

Dan receives student feedback through the TLDU feedback forms. He has sometimes asked students for feedback before the mid-semester break to find out what they like and what they feel could be improved so that he can use this feedback to review the second half of the semester. Dan reports that students value the peer review writing strategy. 'They seemed quite keen on it; they made very positive noises.'

Response from colleagues and institutions

Dan has not received any feedback from colleagues because his assessment changes are 'pretty recent. I'm not sure that my colleagues even know about it.'

Dissemination

Dan discusses teaching and learning practices informally with colleagues in his department where working groups often review various activities. As under-graduate convenor, Dan has to review paper outlines, and in that role he discusses assessment items with colleagues and shares his views with new staff.

10 Case Study 9: The Mall Walk: Making deep connections between theory and the students' lives

A case study from the University sector. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The University Sector

Name: Mary FitzPatrick

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Researcher: Jill Musgrave

In brief

'Theory, at the end of the day, is only an articulation of patterns of our experience. What students hear in the lecture theatre is not a rule; it's a pattern, and human beings live it variably. Because the assessment is based on personal experience, the hope is that it will be more meaningful. Students make personal sense of theory by understanding how that particular theory works in their particular lives [and in this way] students make deeper connections. It's all too easy for us to lecture theory without making those connections.'

A university lecturer developed an assessment activity called The Mall Walk for her third year, special topic paper, Retail Management, to ensure that students 'recognise theory in real life'.

The activity requires students to visit two local shopping malls and complete observation tasks evaluating aspects of the mall environment and their own behaviour in that environment. They then choose the five aspects that had the biggest impact on their own experience and discuss those aspects from a theoretical perspective using concepts and principles from the course. Finally, they formulate recommendations for the retailer.

Overall Mary feels that the students enjoy the activity. 'I think they found it hard work but at the same time still enjoyable.'

10.1 About the tertiary teacher - Case Study 9

Part 2 in **Case Study 9: The Mall Walk: Making deep connections between theory and the students' lives**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

About the tertiary teacher

Dr Mary FitzPatrick is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Marketing in the Waikato Management School at the University of Waikato. She teaches Marketing and is the convenor for several papers: Introduction to Marketing which is taught at first and second year levels; Marketing of Services which is taught at third and fourth year levels; and Retail Management which is a third year special topic paper. Retail Management is the focus for Mary's discussion of assessment.

Mary returned to university as a mature student and has learned about assessment, in part, from reflecting on what worked for her as a student. She also learned on the job when she first took over colleagues' papers and began to experiment with the assessment to make improvements. She enjoys attending sessions held by the university's Teaching Learning and Development Unit (TLDU) and finds it useful to attend classes each year as a 'top up'.

Views of assessment

Mary sees assessment as an opportunity to check the quality of her teaching and the quality of her students' learning. She also says that assessment affords her insights into her students as individual people. It is through the assessment that she finds out 'how they are experiencing, individually, the application of what we are learning in the classroom to the relevant bits of their daily lives. It feels like a privilege.'

Assessment trends

Mary mentioned a trend among Marketing colleagues towards assessment tasks that relate to the students' lives and encourage student engagement with the learning.

10.2 Description of the assessment strategy - Case Study 9

Part 3 in **Case Study 9: The Mall Walk: Making deep connections between theory and the students' lives**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Description of the Assessment Strategy

Retail Management is a third year special topic paper with approximately 50 domestic and international students who are studying for various business degrees.

The Mall Walk assessment is structured so that students are supported through the stages of 'personal experience, integration of theory and experience and reflection and evaluation. It's like a three step development rooted in experience.'

Firstly, students choose two Hamilton malls and complete two observation sheets where they evaluate aspects of the mall environment and aspects of their own behaviour as consumers in that environment.

Whereas the main focus is initially on observation and description, the focus then shifts to a deeper level of personal reflection when students choose the five aspects from the retail environment that had the biggest impact on their own experience. Mary explains that students 'discuss those particularly important aspects from a theoretical perspective using concepts and principles from the course to discuss what was happening in their experience'. At this stage, 'students start to integrate theory with their practice'.

Finally, 'students move beyond [the integration of theory and practice] and formulate some recommendations for the retailer. They step outside their personal experience and become more objective and professional.'

Motivation and purpose of the assessment strategy

The Mall Walk activity is based loosely on an American assessment that Mary's colleague and co-teacher for the paper knew about.

Mary explains that she always tries to 'tweak learning situations to allow students to talk about how they see theory and practice - to check that they recognise theory in real life'. Mary believes that students will engage deeply with the learning if they have opportunities to make connections between the theory and their own experiences. She says, 'It's a type of activity that I enjoy designing. I enjoy the pay back in terms of what it tells me.'

10.3 Strengths and limitations - Case Study 9

Part 4 in **Case Study 9: The Mall Walk: Making deep connections between theory and the students' lives**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Strengths and limitations

Mary says that the assessment strategy 'teaches students to reflect and be curious and wonder what's going on when they have a certain experience'. The task makes them responsible for reflecting deeply, and they are rewarded for making connections between their own experiences and the theory. She describes the satisfaction and sense of privilege she experiences when marking the Mall Walk assessment and students 'are making extremely important connections'.

Mary also describes the activity as 'stimulating and fun', and because it is based on personal experience, it lends itself to different styles of communication and ideally caters for all learners, including those from diverse cultural backgrounds.

However, Mary explains that some students feel uncomfortable with 'personal engagement or involvement' in the task, and she feels that international students from Asia are not used to this approach. She says, 'They manage the description stage but have difficulty with the integration and application of theory.'

Although the activity doesn't take long to prepare, the assessments take a long time to mark because the marker has to engage with the conversation. As Mary says, 'If you are serious about marking a deep learning experience, it deserves a longer marking time.'

Mary considers that this assessment would be transferable to other disciplines and other modes of delivery. Her advice is to ensure that students have enough time for the activity. 'If students are to have a deep learning experience, you need to give enough time for it.'

10.4 Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy - Case Study 9

Part 5 in **Case Study 9: The Mall Walk: Making deep connections between theory and the students' lives**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy

Response from students

Mary's students complete the feedback forms provided by TLDU, but she says that there are no specific questions about the strategy. Overall Mary feels that the students 'enjoyed doing it. They needed more time. I think they found it quite intense - they were pleased when it was finished. I think they found it hard work but at the same time still enjoyable.'

Response from colleagues and institutions

Mary has received positive feedback from colleagues about this assessment strategy, both from staff at the TLDU and from other lecturers in the Marketing Department.

Dissemination

Mary was asked to write up an account of the assessment activity for the TLDU newsletter.

11 Case Study 10: Achieving a balance between the scholarly and the 'real world' components of assessment

A case study from the University sector. Part of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment project.

The University Sector

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Researcher: Jill Musgrave

In brief

'While I don't particularly feel enthusiasm for the idea that we're a machine to deliver to employers, I think that it's important that the scholars that we produce do have a capacity to take the skills and insights that we've provided and apply them independently and thoughtfully in their paid employment and in their community activities.'

A university lecturer, who is passionate about teaching and making a difference to students' lives, strives to achieve a balance between the scholarly and the 'real world' components of assessment. He does this through the use of authentic assessment tasks and a choice of assessment modes.

Authentic assessment tasks include Asking and Answering Parliamentary Questions, Seminar Presentations, Letters to the Editor, Position Descriptions, Research Grant Applications, Media Releases and Ministerial Briefings. For each of these applied tasks, students are required to complete 'the fundamentals of scholarship such as acknowledgement, referencing and analysis'. The two different assessment modes consist of an applied mode, which has employment related tasks, and a more scholarly mode, which has more traditional academic tasks.

Students describe the assessments as 'useful and thought provoking'.

11.1 About the tertiary teacher - Case Study 10

Part 2 in **Case Study 10: Achieving a balance between the scholarly and the 'real world' components of assessment**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

About the tertiary teacher

David Swain is Associate Professor of Sociology in the Department of Societies and Cultures in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Waikato. He has been a tertiary teacher for almost 40 years and is currently teaching first and third year papers as well as supervising Masters and PhD theses. For twenty-five percent of his time, David is seconded to the Vice Chancellor's office as Chairperson of the Student Discipline Committee. In the following discussion of assessment, David focuses on a first year paper called Sociology in Practice and a third year paper called Social Policy.

David has learned about assessment in a number of ways including a brief experience as a teacher at his old secondary school. When David began tertiary teaching he taught papers that had been developed by other tertiary teachers and he was mentored by more experienced colleagues. David describes his motivation as 'internally driven', and he has always taken advantage of opportunities to learn about teaching and assessment by attending sessions at the university's Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLDU), by reflecting on student evaluations, and by co-teaching with colleagues.

Views of assessment

The main features of David's approach to assessment are 'being clear about the learning and teaching goals and integrating the lectures, tutorials and assessment with each other and with the learning and teaching goals'.

He strives to achieve a balance between 'the scholarly and the practical' to ensure that the 'scholars that we produce do have a capacity to take the skills and insights that we've provided and apply them independently and thoughtfully in their paid employment and in their community activities'.

David has a 'degree of scepticism about the default two essays and an exam' approach to assessment. He considers that essays 'are not particularly appropriate at the more junior undergraduate levels where they are actually quite prevalent'. Essay writing involves 'quite a sophisticated series of tasks', and for the marker, this can lead to a 'fatal slippery slope of getting distracted from content by what you'd like to correct in the way of poor writing'.

Assessment trends

David describes 'a growing awareness of and interest in the integrity of assessment'. He explains that his sensitivity to that interest is 'sharpened by my role with student discipline and academic misconduct'. He feels that over the last three to four years, progress has been

made in recognising the importance of academic integrity, in dealing with the disciplinary issues, and also in helping students to develop knowledge and skills so they are less at risk.

Other trends that David has noticed include a 'more articulate student demand for the delivery of quality in teaching which seems to parallel the introduction of significant fees for student'. David also considers there to be 'a broader uptake of opportunities for professional development by a more diverse group of colleagues'.

11.2 Description of the assessment strategy - Case Study 10

Part 3 in **Case Study 10: Achieving a balance between the scholarly and the 'real world' components of assessment**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Description of the Assessment Strategy

David describes two specific examples of his assessment approach, which aims to achieve a balance between the academic and applied aspects of assessment. The first example relates to his use of authentic assessment task types 'without losing sight of the fundamentals of scholarship such as acknowledgement, referencing and analysis'. The second example relates to his use of two different assessment modes in his third year Social Policy paper: an applied mode with employment related tasks and a more scholarly mode with more traditional academic tasks.

In the first year paper, *Sociology and Practice*, David employs a Letter to the Editor assessment task. Students are required to write a letter to the editor of 'a serious publication' and another to the editor of 'a lightweight publication'. For this task, students 'argue a systematic set of variations on a particular topic most of which will not be what they think and feel themselves'. The underlying scholarship for this task is included as numbered endnotes with citations for the sources used.

David also employs authentic tasks for his third year paper, *Social Policy*, including a Media Release task and Asking and Answering Parliamentary Questions. For the former, students are required 'to effectively communicate the ministerial or government take on a policy initiative or the opposition criticism of a policy initiative'. Once again, endnotes are required to cite the scholarly underpinning of the task.

For each authentic task, students research the content in depth, and David provides a rich learning environment where the assessment tasks link to a variety of resources, including lectures, tutorials, and online resources such as PowerPoint presentations, a websites folder, and online discussions.

David describes the two different assessment modes, which he employs in his third year, *Social Policy* paper, as providing a choice for students. He says, 'They get to choose the assessment mode that makes sense for them and their aspirations.' Assessment Mode A is the more applied track which makes use of employment related, applied tasks while Mode B is for students who are considering continuing with Honours and Masters qualifications. These students complete some of the same tasks as those completing Mode A, such as tests, but they also complete research papers and seminar presentations. David explains that in most years there is a 50/50 split between those who opt for the applied tasks and those who opt for the tasks relating to further academic study.

11.3 Motivation and purpose of the assessment strategy - Case Study 10

Part 4 in **Case Study 10: Achieving a balance between the scholarly and the 'real world' components of assessment**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Motivation and purpose of the assessment strategy

David describes his motivation for his approach to assessment as 'biographical' and a response to teachers he had who were inspirational and saw teaching as something that made a difference to students' lives. He says that he is 'passionate about teaching and one of the greatest professional pleasures is seeing insight dawn on students, excitement develop and their own passions ignite'. He wants the learning to have 'consequences for the students that they value beyond completing the paper and getting the grade'. David has also always been interested in 'applied research that makes a difference' and this relates to his teaching values.

Strengths and limitations

David describes a number of strengths of his assessment approach, including the rich, integrated learning environment and resources that he provides. This includes formative feedback for students, which he provides through email, online discussion and face-to-face appointments. David always tries to give students a reason for reading the detailed feedback he provides, and because a number of the task types are repeated for a second time, students have the opportunity to make use of the feedback they receive.

David considers that the students who benefit most from this assessment approach are those who are motivated and make the most of the learning opportunities provided. He sees the approach as being adaptable to class size, diverse student groups and transferable to other disciplines within his faculty.

While he wouldn't describe it as a limitation, David considers that the amount of time he puts into his teaching and assessment has 'an opportunity cost' in that any additional time he spends on teaching is not being spent on other aspects of his work.

11.4 Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy- Case Study 10

Part 5 in **Case Study 10: Achieving a balance between the scholarly and the 'real world' components of assessment**. A case study from *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching and Learning through Assessment*.

Receiving feedback and sharing the strategy

Response from students

David reports that students describe the assessments as 'useful and thought provoking'. David sometimes hears from his students, years after they have completed their study, that their study was valuable for their work. He also completes an analysis each year of students who don't complete and finds that these students generally have a record of not completing across the board.

Response from colleagues and institutions

David thinks that his colleagues possibly regard him as 'a little bit eccentric'. He says that he co-exists in a cordial manner with colleagues who are 'wedded to two essays and an exam. It's a fine working relationship where they don't persuade me to do two essays and an exam, and I don't persuade them to be innovative in my sorts of ways in what they do.'

David says that the organisation provides mixed messages in terms of feedback about teaching and learning. On the one hand, teaching awards celebrate teaching, but on the other hand, scholarship and publications carry more weight for promotion purposes especially since the arrival of the Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF).

Dissemination

David hasn't published in the area of assessment because that is not his professional area of expertise. Instead he discusses his assessment approaches with other enthusiasts at TLDU where he is happy to share his ideas. David considers that co-teaching with colleagues offers one of the most effective approaches for sharing and promoting practice within his organisation.