

## Analysis of the case studies

### 1. The educational sectors

#### 1.1 *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 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.

## **1.2 The ITP sector**

### ***The tertiary teachers***

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

### ***Subject/Discipline***

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

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

### ***Class levels, sizes and student groups***

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

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

When asked to describe the students who would benefit from the assessment strategies, the majority of the ITP teachers said that all students would benefit. Two teachers mentioned international students and one of these teachers referred specifically to students from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds. One teacher specified students

participating in a Maori teaching and learning environment; one mentioned students involved in performance in practical subjects; and another mentioned students who lack confidence.

### ***Assessment background***

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

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

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

### ***The assessment strategies***

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

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

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

### 1.3 **The PTE sector**

#### ***The tertiary teachers***

Ten staff members from seven different PTEs were interviewed. The majority were tutors and some held other roles within their organisation, including two Managers, a Resource Writer, a Head of Studies, and an Academic Services Manager.

#### ***Subject/Discipline***

The ten staff members discussed assessment strategies from the following eight subject areas: Travel and Tourism, Cultural Tourism, Tour Guiding, Arts and Community Development, Contemporary Christian Music, Farming, Automotive Servicing, and Child Protection Studies.

#### ***Class levels, sizes and student groups***

The PTE sector assessment strategies were employed in a range of qualifications including certificates, unit standards, and an undergraduate degree. The class levels included two at Levels 1 and 2; three at Level 3; four at Level 4; and one strategy spanned Levels 5 to 7.

The class sizes described by the teachers in the PTE sector were mostly smaller than those described by teachers in the previous two sectors. Overall the class sizes ranged from 10 to 30 students. Five classes consisted of 18 students, or between 18 and 20 students, two consisted of between 10 and 12 students, another two consisted of between 10 and 20/25 students and one class consisted of 30 students.

When asked to describe the students in their classes, six of the PTE teachers mentioned domestic school leavers; three mentioned mature students; three mentioned students who meet the funding criteria; one mentioned Maori and Pasifika students; and one described a diverse group of students with a wide range of previous formal learning experiences.

#### ***Assessment background***

When asked how they had gained knowledge of assessment practices, seven of the tertiary teachers said they had adult education qualifications at Levels 4 and 5.

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

- Experimenting to find out what works well
- Drawing on their own individual experiences as students including being a student of music performance
- Taking leadership roles in Kapa Haka groups and a Maori Tourism business
- Participating in The Learning for Living project

### ***The assessment strategies***

Several of the strategies from the PTE sector are notable for their use of authentic tasks that mirror 'real world' activities. Three of the strategies were described as simulation activities; two involved work based reality and one involved a mock job interview. Two other strategies were described as case study projects and a sixth strategy involved a practical demonstration within a group activity.

The other three strategies consisted of a project and oral presentation; a fact sheet and oral presentation; and an assessment that required staff to gather evidence from a wide range of sources to verify students' learning.

## **2. The teachers' views of assessment**

The following section presents the comments made by the tertiary teachers when asked to talk about their general views of assessment or their 'assessment philosophy'. It should be noted that, in other sections of the interview, many of the interviewees included comments relating to their views of assessment that are not captured here.

A few teachers commented specifically about the principles of sound assessment such as validity, reliability, transparency, authenticity, and fairness. While the majority of teachers did not refer to these principles explicitly, they discussed examples of their practice that related to the principles, and in so doing demonstrated an understanding of the key issues. It appeared that knowledge of these principles was largely tacit for many of the teachers.

The following specific comments related to the principles of sound assessment:

### **Validity**

- Assessments should test all the learning outcomes (ITP).
- Assessment should reflect the aim and philosophy of the course (ITP).
- Assessment must model the values, philosophy and content of the programme (ITP).

### **Reliability**

- Assessments should be reliable (ITP).
- A range of assessment strategies should be used (PTE).

### **Transparency**

- Transparency of requirements is important (U).
- Being clear about learning and teaching goals is important (U).
- Assessment should be transparent (ITP).

### **Authenticity**

- Relevant authentic tasks are valued (U).
- Assessment tasks need to involve authentic experiential learning to ensure engagement with theory and practice (ITP).
- Authentic experiential learning is valued (ITP).

- Assessments that are authentic are valued (PTE).

#### Fairness

- Assessment and learning should reflect the Maori worldview. Values are included in assessments (ITP).

The tertiary teachers' views of assessment revealed several further clusters of themes. Representatives from each of the three sectors made comments that fall under the majority of these themes. It is recognised that many of the following themes overlap with each other and with the principles of assessment described above. The themes are presented in order of decreasing numbers of interviewee comments, with an additional group of comments relating to assessment tasks and assessment systems at the end.

Assessment should be aligned with the teaching and/or the learning.

- Assessment should be part of the students' learning (U).
- Learning and assessment are part of the same thing (U).
- Lectures, tutorials and assessment should be aligned with learning and teaching goals (U).
- Assessment should be an integrated part of learning (ITP).
- Teaching, learning and assessment must be aligned (ITP).
- Assessment must be in line with the learning (PTE).
- Learning and assessment need to be an ongoing process woven throughout the course rather than a series of disjointed events (PTE).
- Assessment should be aligned with and contribute to the learning outcomes of the course (PTE).

Assessment should be student centred and relate to students' lives.

- Assessment should recognise different students have different skills and talents (U).
- Assessment affords insights into students as individuals; it is a privilege (U).
- Students should be empowered (ITP).
- Assessment should be student centred (ITP).
- Knowledge that is useful, that has a real function in their lives as teachers, should be constructed (ITP).
- Daily life experiences should be used (ITP).
- Assessments should involve application of learning from real life situations and students' experiences (ITP).
- Assessment should be designed so that learners can meet their learning goals (PTE).
- Assessments should include both oral and written components so people with different strengths can succeed in demonstrating their knowledge (PTE).
- Assessments should include 'real life' learning experience (PTE).

Assessment should be designed with further study or the workplace in mind.

Assessment should:

- Prepare students for further study and work (U)

- Assist students to know they can play music for primary school students (in their future work as primary school teachers) (U)
- Suit the students' goals of work in NZ or China, or further study (U)
- Be aligned to the real world of business (ITP)
- Be based on what students will experience in the workplace (ITP)
- Prepare students for work in the industry (PTE)
- Be related to the skills required in the field (PTE)

Assessment should provide students with opportunities to integrate theory and practice. Assessment should:

- Facilitate the application and integration of theory and practice (U)
- Achieve a balance between 'the scholarly' and 'the practical' (U)
- Facilitate the application of learning from real life situations and students' experiences (ITP)
- Ensure engagement with theory and practice (ITP)
- Require the practical application of knowledge (PTE)

Assessment should motivate students to engage with the learning. Assessment should:

- Encourage students to engage with the subject (U)
- Encourage active participation, increase confidence, provide fun (ITP)
- Motivate students to learn (ITP)
- Engage learners and be fun (PTE)

Assessment should promote self-reflection, self-direction and independent learning. Assessment should:

- Encourage students to think critically about their learning (U)
- Place learners in the role of experts and co-construct the assessment (U)
- Help students to make sound formative assessments of their own work; facilitate independent learning (ITP)
- Involve students in the assessment process (ITP)
- Provide feedback which promotes reflection (PTE)

Assessment should provide opportunities for formative feedback. Assessment should:

- Provide formative feedback to develop students' critical abilities (U)
- Allow students to gain feedback (PTE)
- Practice giving and receiving peer feedback (PTE)

Assessment should promote cognitive skills and the pursuit of excellence. Assessment should:

- Provide opportunities for independent, original thinking (U)
- Inspire students to aim for excellence (U)

Assessment should recognize student diversity. Assessment should:

- Suit students' goals of further study or the real world of work in NZ or China (for Chinese international students) (U)



There was also a range of comments about assessment tasks and assessment systems, which are presented here in one group.

- Traditional assessments (essays, tests and exams) are rigorous (U).
- The teacher is sceptical about the default two essays and an exam approach (U).
- Tasks with a strong focus on process and reusable skills are valued (U).
- Flexibility is needed when assessing critical thinking skills and creativity (ITP).
- Practical, hands on assessments work extremely well (PTE).
- Unit standards are good for defining skills, but can make learning less realistic (PTE).
- Tasks that test what students know and understand rather than what they can remember or how well they can write are favoured (PTE).
- The teacher does not believe that the pass/fail and closed book examination system promotes deep learning (PTE).
- Students' learning should not be constrained by assessment; the more regimented learning and assessment becomes, the more creativity is lost (PTE).
- Competency-based assessment does not allow for recognition of differing levels of performance (PTE).

### **3. The teachers' views of assessment trends**

When asked to talk about changes or trends in assessment practices, the comments made by the tertiary teachers within each of the sectors revealed some areas of commonality. In the University sector, the teachers' responses revealed a very wide range of different issues. A notable area of commonality related to a shift away from traditional assessment tasks such as essays, tests and exams towards tasks that give greater recognition to oral communication and relevance to the students' lives. Three of the teachers focussed on this trend with two teachers being in favour while one had reservations about the trend.

In the ITP sector, while there was a diverse range of responses, there was also some commonality among teachers. Arguably the most notable trend, mentioned by six of the ten teachers, was a more integrated approach to assessment where assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning within a module of study.

In the PTE sector, eight of the ten organizations offered unit standards within national qualifications or provider qualifications. This had an important bearing on the teachers' views of assessment trends. Several providers mentioned that they had added formative assessments in which students demonstrated integration of knowledge and skills to overcome the negative impact of unit standard assessment.

There were also some areas of commonality across the three sectors. As for the previous discussion regarding the teachers' general views of assessment, references to trends made by the teachers in other sections of the interviews are

not captured here. Individual teachers often commented on more than one assessment trend. The comments are presented in order of decreasing numbers of interviewee comments with a broader discussion of unit standards appearing at the end of this section.

Several tertiary teachers from the university sector commented on priority shifts that are largely internal to the organisation.

- There has been a stronger focus on internal assessment over time (U).
- Research takes precedence over teaching; there are no mechanisms in place to share conversations about teaching and assessment. Younger teachers see the benefits of being more open about sharing practices (U).
- There has been a reduction of time for teaching music and this impacts on assessment (U).
- There has been a broader uptake of opportunities for professional development (U).
- There is a trend towards giving students marks for attendance and participation and 'marks for everything'; students only do work if they get a mark (U).

Trends relating to preferred assessment task types were noted.

- There has been a decrease in essays, tests and exams and an increase in group work, presentations, online discussions and tests (U).
- The Management School has introduced 'writing-intensive' papers to improve writing skills (U).
- Some staff value traditional assessment tasks such as essays while others value tasks that relate to students' lives and encourage student engagement and learning (U).
- There has been more experimentation with assessment and greater recognition of oral communication (U).
- There has been an increasing popularity of case studies and team assessment approaches in management education (ITP).

Trends that are driven by student needs and expectations were noted.

- The influx of international students has required changes to teaching and assessment (U).
- There has been a more articulate student demand for quality in teaching parallel to the introduction of significant student fees (U).
- There has been a focus on the student's right to receive explicit clear assessment guidelines; it is the teacher's job to ensure that students have a full understanding of the task (ITP).
- Assessment strategies are being driven by the needs of students to give them a chance to achieve success (PTE).

Trends relating to an increase in assessment quality and standards were noted.

- There has been a growing interest in the integrity of assessment; in dealing with the disciplinary issues; and helping students to develop knowledge and skills so they are less at risk (U).
- There has been an increase in the rigour of administration and documentation of assessment processes (ITP).

- There is greater accountability through internal and external moderation and greater transparency and rigour in assessment processes (ITP).

A tertiary teacher from the university sector commented on changes in assessment practices that are driven by shifts in educational thinking and research.

- Assessment changes reflect shifts in thinking. For example research by R. Bishop & A. Hall focuses on putting the relationship with students at centre; the starting point is what students bring to the classroom (U).

Another teacher from the university sector commented on an assessment trend that results from changes in technology.

- The most obvious change is that assignments must now be completed electronically rather than in handwriting (U).

A teacher from the PTE sector commented on assessment trends that respond to external funding requirements.

- Assessments are being developed to respond to current tertiary education practice, which requires a high level of course completion to gain funding. On the one hand this may not lead to the best assessment practices being used, and on the other hand it is driving teachers to be innovative about the assessments they develop (PTE).

Tertiary teachers in the ITP sector commented on changes of assessment relating to Unit Standards and competency-based assessment.

- There has been a change [back] from competency-based assessment to achievement based (ITP).
- The Unit Standards approach has been adopted (ITP).
- National Unit Standards have been included in Wintec qualifications (ITP).

In the PTE sector, eight of the ten interviewees discussed assessment trends, which focussed on unit standards. The majority of the interviewees felt that there were both positive and negative factors involved in unit standard assessment.

#### Positive factors

- Unit Standard assessment requires learners to apply their learning on a practical level (PTE).
- Unit Standards have the advantage of making the required learning explicit (PTE).
- Competency-based assessment suits people who have not had a lot of academic success and gives a sense of achievement (PTE).

#### Negative factors

- Unit standards drive the learning and assessment processes (PTE).
- Unit standard assessment often measures surface learning (PTE).
- Unit standards do not always reflect the most relevant knowledge and skills used in the industry (PTE).

- With unit standard assessment, any learning that takes place outside the elements and performance criteria is neither recorded nor acknowledged (PTE).
- Unit standards have brought about a tendency to over assess which can limit or impede the learning (PTE).
- Unit standards can make learning less realistic when they separate out tasks and assess them in isolation (PTE).

#### **4. Motivating factors leading to the strategy development**

When asked to talk about factors that motivated them to develop new assessment strategies within their practice, the tertiary teachers spoke of a wide range of issues, which can be analysed in a number of different ways. For example, the majority of the strategies over all of the sectors could be described as being motivated by actual or potential problems. However, many of these same strategies could also be described as responses to particular areas of student need. Individual teachers presented the motivating factors in a variety of ways and with a variety of emphases. Within each of the three sectors the comments made by the tertiary teachers revealed some areas of commonality.

In the University sector, the teachers' comments can be described as falling into three broad groups. Four of the strategies were motivated by a desire to strengthen particular areas of student skill and knowledge while three of the strategies were motivated by actual or potential problems. At least three of the university teachers mentioned that their assessment strategies were motivated by ideas they had experienced, read about, or heard about from other educators.

In the ITP sector, the teachers' motivation was largely student centred. Motivation arose from teachers hoping to deepen students' approaches to learning and meet diverse students' learning needs. Poor student learning outcomes or students' negativity towards assessment tasks prompted some of the motivation. The teachers' comments can also be arranged into the same three broad groups described for the University sector. When viewed in this way, six of the ITP strategies were motivated by problems; two were motivated by a desire to strengthen particular areas of student skill and knowledge; and two were motivated by the ideas of other educators.

In the PTE sector, the teachers' motivation was largely driven by industry needs. Six of the ten teachers said their assessment strategies were motivated by the need to make the assessment tasks as close to 'real work' tasks as possible. Several teachers commented on the importance of aligning the assessments with the learning outcomes and skills students would require in the workplace, and in a number of cases, this was driven by industry feedback. Four of the teachers mentioned specifically that their assessment strategies were motivated by the needs of students and the need to cater for a diverse range of students.

There were also areas of commonality across the three sectors and individual teachers often commented on more than one motivating factor. The teachers' comments are presented here under five broad headings.

Solving actual or potential problems related to student performance, and/or student and industry feedback

- Low attendance and level of preparation for tutorials were noted. Students said the essay was unrelated to rest of the work (U).
- Learning opportunities would be lost if this approach were not used. The approach caters to particular student ability, interest and experience (U).
- Concern was expressed about the high failure rate in the test, which was of no value for the students who showed little commitment. The test assessed recall of a limited range of knowledge (ITP).
- There was frustration at the students' surface approach to learning. The teacher wanted to really engage learners and take their study further (ITP).
- Students were confused (ITP).
- Students and lecturers were bored. Time was wasted in team work (ITP).
- There was a negative response from students to the Unit Standard's 'Pass/Incomplete' result (ITP).
- Discrete written tasks for practicum were not holding together. There was real concern that students did not understand the developmental nature of the tasks and how they were related to each other (ITP).
- There was concern about the students' practical skills at the end of the course (ITP).
- Students lacked the ability to pull together the technical travel skills with the 'employment' skills such as time management and working under pressure (Feedback from the PTE Industry Advisory meetings).
- The assessments did not develop the students' public speaking skills, which are vital for people working in this field and did not encourage students to apply their learning in a practical way (PTE).
- The assessment was motivated by the desire to contribute to networking, child advocacy and community development in communities throughout New Zealand (PTE).
- The needs of students' success and retention drove the motivation (PTE).
- Industry input required a large practical aspect to this course to take place outside a classroom to give students a real feel for guiding and allow them to determine if it is the right job for them (PTE).

Solving actual or potential problems related to assessment design, course management, and/or teacher performance

- There was an increase in student numbers, a lack of formative feedback, and a large end of semester marking load (U).
- The teacher needed to be able to scale the projects in terms of student numbers. He also wanted to keep his enthusiasm high (U).
- This was an opportunity for the teacher to 'walk the talk' (U).
- The teacher wanted to use her own strengths and experience (U).
- The teacher wanted to reduce the marking time (ITP).
- There were difficulties in coping with record keeping against performance criteria (ITP).
- An outdated and not very valid assessment strategy motivated the desire to change to one that was a valid assessment (PTE).

- There was a concern that students were being assessed in ways that were not aligned to the set of skills that they would need to work in this field (PTE).
- There was a need to cover a lot of knowledge and assess a range of skills in a short time frame (PTE).
- Tutors needed to work effectively with each individual so that they can progress at their own pace and according to their interests while also enabling group learning to take place (PTE).
- There was a need to reduce the number of assessment items and to test what students know rather than how well they can write (PTE).

#### Strengthening particular student skills

- There was a desire to promote teamwork, creativity, and oral skills (U).
- Students don't know how well they can do. The teacher wanted to encourage them to continue with graduate study (U).
- 'Writing intensive' papers are designed to improve students writing (U).
- The teacher wanted to ensure that students are confident about playing an instrument once they are school teachers (U).
- Students will be teachers and so it's valid for them to come up with criteria for their own assessment (U).
- There was a need to reflect the Maori way of learning and teaching; ensure balance; and maintain Maori tikanga in a holistic environment (ITP).
- There was a desire to give students a practical experience of how their learning might come together in a 'real' task (PTE).
- Preparing students for employment interviews ensures good employment outcomes and continuation of Government funding. There is also a requirement of employers for people with excellent presentation and interview skills (PTE).
- Creating an audience and giving students the chance to perform and give and receive feedback makes the assessment as close to real life as possible for performing musicians by (PTE).

#### Responding to ideas of other educators

- The teacher attended a professional development session by a visiting educator and learned about research that reveals the gaps between what first year students know and what lecturers expect them to know (U).
- The assessment was loosely on an American assessment that a colleague and co-teacher knew about (U).
- The strategies were in response to inspirational teachers. Teaching can make a difference to students' lives (U).
- Attending a conference presentation led to 'eureka' moment (ITP).
- The assessment was influenced by the Trades model of apprenticeship learning (ITP).

#### Responding to diverse student needs

- There is a range of student entry levels. NCEA and university courses focus on discrete content areas whereas students need to see the connections (U).

- The assessment needed to cater for increasing diversity in student groups on a newly amalgamated programme and support a wider range of learners (ITP).
- The assessment needed to cater for a diverse range of students and be accessible to everyone (PTE).

## **5. Intended outcomes of the assessment strategies for students**

When asked to talk about the intended outcomes of the assessment strategies for students, many of the teachers' comments were closely linked to their previous comments regarding their motivation. Individual teachers often commented on more than one intended outcome and there were clear areas of commonality in the comments across the groups of tertiary teachers. These comments are presented here under broad headings in order of decreasing numbers of interviewee comments.

The assessment was designed to promote the development of relevant skills and knowledge.

- To encourage independent and creative thought, team work and to help students develop oral skills (U)
- To bridge the gap between what students know and what the lecturer wants them to know (U)
- To promote reflective practice and analytical skills (ITP)
- To foster a collaborative culture of sharing resources and ideas (ITP)
- To support students in practising real skills and developing confidence (ITP)
- To provide students with a good deal of knowledge and knowledge on marae (ITP)
- To lead to competent practice and the articulation of practice (ITP)
- To construct themselves as excellent teachers as they experiment with teaching (ITP)
- To improve self-esteem and understanding of the Maori environment (ITP)
- To demonstrate skills of networking, collaboration and advocacy, which are key learning outcomes of the course (PTE)
- To develop as performing musicians (PTE)
- To help students notice things about their learning and develop transferable skills for life and work (PTE)
- To improve students' speaking skills (PTE)
- To practice decision making skills (PTE)

To increase students' level of engagement in their learning

- To improve student tutorial attendance and preparation; to increase student engagement with essay writing (U)
- To help students engage deeply with learning through experience and make connections with the theory (U)
- To ensure the learning is stimulating and fun (U)
- To inspire students to aim for the best work that they can do and to encourage them to continue with graduate study (U)

- To ensure student engagement and formative feedback (U)
- To help students know what is required U
- To demonstrate collaborative deep learning (ITP)
- To engage deeply with theory through rich experiential learning opportunities (ITP)
- To improve student buy-in to assessment (ITP)
- To increase student engagement with learning through holistic application and real world examples (ITP)
- To empower students to have a shared understanding (ITP)
- To support students to link theory and practice (ITP)
- To help students demonstrate how they have integrated the knowledge and the skills they have gained during the course (PTE)

To encourage students to apply skills in authentic situations and demonstrate competence in 'real life' tasks

- To mirror the realities of work (U)
- To simulate reality (U)
- To allow the students own the assessment issues in meaningful way (U)
- To apply the skills they have learnt and put a series of tasks together into a realistic sequence of events (PTE)
- To integrate the knowledge and skills they have gained during the course in order to complete a set of 'real work' tasks (PTE)
- To apply the skills they have learnt in the course and guide an attraction based tour (PTE)

To bring about a change in workplace practices

- To empower students to become part of the 'critic and conscience of society' and have the ability to apply skills, insights and tools independently and thoughtfully in paid employment (U)
- To ensure students are confident about playing an instrument once they are school teachers (U)
- To help students get jobs (U)
- To changes their practice (ITP)
- To bring about improvements and innovations in the student's own practice (ITP)

To meet the needs and interests of the learner

- To recognise that different students have different skills and talents (U)
- To allow learners to progress at their own pace and be assessed against one or more unit standards within a group activity (PTE)
- To gather evidence from a range of sources and enable students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding without a lot of formal tests, which require high levels of literacy (PTE)
- To increase literacy and numeracy skills through the formative workbook assessment (PTE)
- To give students a chance to achieve success and demonstrate their skills and understanding (PTE)

To promote independent learning through self assessment



- To help students realise they can be self-directing in their learning (PTE)
- To encourage students to use self-assessment to look for opportunities for improvement through viewing the video of the interview with a teacher (PTE)
- To help students assess their interests, develop a career plan and focus on the learning they will need to reach their goals (PTE)

## 6. Strengths of the assessment strategies

When asked to describe particular strengths of their assessment strategies, teachers across all sectors focused on two main areas: strengths for student learning and strengths for teachers and their organisations. As in the previous sections, the only comments that are captured here are those made by the teachers when questioned specifically about the strengths of their assessment strategies.

While many of the strengths mentioned by the teachers could be described as benefiting students and teachers, the comments have been organised into one or other group according to the main emphasis given during this stage of the interview. Two additional groups of comments are listed at the end of this section, the first of which relates to university interviewees' comments about the applicability of the assessment strategies to other teaching and learning contexts. It is recognised that these comments have emerged because of differences in the way in which the interviewers conducted the questions. However, it was felt that the comments should be recorded here.

### Strengths for student learning

- Student engagement and deep learning (U)
- Student enthusiasm, sense of achievement and creativity (U)
- Teamwork (U)
- Student acquisition of industry skills and theoretical knowledge (U)
- Student acquisition of authentic, up to date knowledge (U)
- Knowledge that the lecturer is interested in them (U)
- A higher level of student achievement (U)
- Student practise of reusable skills (U)
- Improvement in tutorial attendance and preparation (U)
- Better student engagement with essay writing (U)
- Increased knowledge of what is required (U)
- Clearer guidelines for students (U)
- A rich integrated learning environment and formative feedback (U)
- Understanding of the connections between different parts of the course (U)
- Facilitation of independent learning (ITP)
- Student involvement in constructing the assessment task (ITP)
- Formative feedback which students feed forward to the next task (ITP)
- Collaborative learning (ITP)
- A safe and challenging environment (ITP)
- Formative feedback and 'feed forward' (PTE)

- Well prepared students because the assessment is aligned with the learning (PTE)
- Opportunities for self-assessment (PTE)
- Giving feedback as well as receiving it through peer feedback (PTE)
- Learning is scaffolded through the assessment with learning from one assessment being taken into the next learning and assessment task (PTE)
- Development of literacy skills (PTE)
- Student motivation and engagement in the learning (PTE)

#### Strengths for teachers and the organization

- Marked presentations in real time (U)
- Reduction of the teacher's workload through self and peer assessment (U)
- Less preparation time for the teacher; leading from the side in class; recalibrating the assessment at each stage (U)
- Building the university's reputation and the teacher's reputation (U)
- Rewarding student effort and penalising lack of effort (U)
- Ensuring that it is the students' own work (ITP)
- Improving the manageability of the assessment (ITP)
- Ensuring an explicit, reliable framework for making judgements about students' performance (ITP)
- Aligning the assessment with the teaching and learning (ITP)
- Modelling the philosophy of the programme of study (ITP)
- Giving teachers information that can be used to further develop the course (PTE)

#### Applicability to other teaching and learning contexts

- Can be used with any class size and subject area (U)
- Caters to international students (U)
- International students can draw on their own backgrounds (U)
- Students from diverse cultural backgrounds can take their experience into the assessment (U)
- Lends itself to different styles of communication (U)
- Adaptable to class size, diverse student groups and transferable to other disciplines within faculty (U)
- Adaptable for other subject areas (U)

## **7 Limitations of the assessment strategies**

When asked to describe limitations of their assessment strategies, the interviewees' from all sectors mentioned issues relating to teacher workload and limitations in terms of class sizes. Teachers from the university and the ITP sectors also commented on a range of student issues and reliability issues. Teachers from the ITP and PTE sectors commented on a range of management issues, some of which also overlap with teacher workload issues. Teachers from the ITP sector also made comments relating to competency-based assessment.

### Teachers' workload

- Additional time is needed to prepare lectures (U).
- The strategy is time consuming and draining (U).
- There is a heavy workload in the development stage (x2 U).
- Additional time is needed to coach the students and give feedback for model essay answers (U).
- The assignments are time consuming to mark (U).
- Time devoted to teaching and assessment has an 'opportunity cost' in that time is not being spent on other areas of the job (U).
- Reviewing the videos is time consuming (ITP).
- Time is needed to prepare and mark the assessment (x5 PTE).
- Case studies, videoed interviews, simulation exercises, practical demonstrations take a lot of time to develop and set up (PTE).

### Manageability issues

- There are ethical concerns regarding the use of real clients (ITP).
- There are difficulties associated with team assessments (ITP).
- There are difficulties associated with the active participation of the teacher and students in all assessment tasks (ITP).
- It can be difficult to ensure student attendance at the simulation exercise, on which the assessment was based (ITP).
- Using the same logic exercise for a simulation for several occurrences of the assessment relies on students having no prior knowledge of how to solve the problem (ITP).
- The voluntary nature of the assessment strategy is a limitation (ITP).
- There are difficulties associated with transferring the strategy into an online environment (ITP).
- The moderation of case studies, videoed interviews, simulation exercises, and practical demonstrations can be challenging (PTE).
- The teacher needs to have good networks when arranging the practical elements of the assessment (PTE).
- The strategy needs careful management and documentation if individual learning is to be monitored and recorded (PTE).

### Student issues

- Some students are resistant initially and find the performance aspect intimidating (U).
- Giving 'marks for everything' can lead to students being overloaded (U).
- Peer review depends on the ability of the student reviewer (U).
- Some students are uncomfortable with personal involvement; international students from Asia have difficulty with the integration and application of theory. Students didn't have enough time for the activity (U).
- The assessment strategy is time consuming for the students (ITP).
- The assessment strategy, designed to empower students and facilitate independent learning, is difficult for dependent learners (ITP).
- Not all students engage at a critically reflective and deep level (ITP).
- Some students just want to get the best grade (ITP).

- Some students experience difficulties when moving from collaborative work with formative feedback to individual completion of the final assessment task (ITP).

#### Class sizes

- The strategy would not be possible if all students requested it (U).
- The strategy relies on class sizes of fewer than 25 students (ITP).
- Large class sizes would either limit the strategy or make it impossible to implement (x 6 PTE).
- An assessment strategy requiring interaction between tutors and students and between students in groups would not work well in large classes where students come together for short periods each week (PTE).

#### Reliability

- There is a potential weakness in achieving reliability of marks (U).
- There has been criticism from colleagues regarding a lack of moderation (U).
- There is a potential issue of students not self and peer reviewing honestly and objectively (ITP).
- It is difficult to maintain the reliability of assessment across different students in different contexts with 10 different tutors (ITP).

#### Issues relating to competency-based assessment

- There are difficulties associated with a 'Pass/Incomplete' result, which means students receive no credit for achieving a result in earlier modules if they fail the final module (ITP).
- The strategy of allocating marks to performance criteria within a Unit Standard, compromised the competency based approach to assessment (ITP).

## **8 Receiving feedback**

When asked to describe any feedback they had received from students, the majority of teachers across all sectors provided anecdotal examples of the feedback as well as their overall assessment of the students' views. A comment that emerged across all three sectors was that students often found the assessment and learning difficult initially but valued it by the end of the course. Feedback from colleagues and the community was generally positive.

In the University sector, the majority of teachers mentioned that they received student feedback through the Teaching Learning and Development Unit (TLDU) evaluation forms. However, they also explained that these forms do not provide specific questions relating to their assessment strategies. Some of the teachers received student feedback through their own feedback forms in addition to the TLDU forms. One teacher completes an analysis each year of students who do not complete his paper; he finds that these students generally do not complete across the board. Teachers also described comments they received directly

from students during or after the course of study. While many of the university teachers had received feedback from their colleagues others had not.

In the ITP sector, the feedback that teachers received from students was generally positive. The feedback from colleagues was varied, some questioning certain assessment practices and others being very enthusiastic and adapting the strategy for their own teaching. Teachers from the ITP sector also included feedback from the community, which they reported to be consistently positive.

In the PTE sector, the feedback that teachers received from students was generally positive and several comments focused on assessments that helped them to develop close relationships with other students; and assessments that were relevant and would help them to gain employment or increase their networks. In nine of the ten ITP case studies, the assessment strategy was developed centrally in the organisation and used by all tutors. This meant that tutors discussed their views of the assessment with each other.

#### Feedback from students

- Students initially have concerns about the workload. However, the assessment is valued by end, as are the prizes, which can be included in the student's CV (U).
- Students recognise the effort made by the teacher. They find the course tough but they learn a lot (U).
- Students have initial concerns but value seminars by the end (U).
- Students value the assessment approach and enjoy the process (U).
- Students appreciate the approach (U).
- Students report that the learning environment is supportive, the expectations and guidelines are clear and say they are working at a high level (U).
- Students value the strategies (U).
- Students enjoy the strategy; they need more time; and they find it hard work but enjoyable (U).
- Students report their study was valuable, useful and thought provoking (U).
- Students are three to one in favour of the strategy (U).
- Students dislike the peer and self review aspects of the strategy initially but in retrospect express increased enjoyment and more learning from their peers (ITP).
- Initially there is anxiety about the workload, but later students value the assessment as essential for skill development (ITP).
- Students think the assessment is fair and well reported (ITP).
- E-mails from students say their CVs worked and they have a really good job (ITP).
- There is a range of comments from relatively positive to very positive (ITP).
- There was an improved pass rate on the first attempt: 63% compared with 45% the previous year (ITP).

- Students report that they are rewarding processes which make a difference to practice (ITP).
- Students report feelings of confidence (ITP).
- Students are generally engaged by this assessment (PTE).
- Students find this assessment valuable because they feel they are bringing together a lot of skills and that they are really learning something relevant (PTE).
- Students generally want to get a job and they think this assessment will help them. Many students give a lot of feedback to tutors once they have actually been for an interview (PTE).
- Students are happy when they see the improvement they make and come to realise how important speaking skills are for them if they are to gain employment in the cultural tourism field (PTE).
- Students say they develop confidence and learn about themselves as people (PTE) .
- Peer assessment and lots of team work means that students form close relationships with fellow students and they learn a lot from each other (PTE).
- For many of the students, the greatest revelation is that they can actually contribute to their own learning (PTE).
- After experiencing the process students realise the value of both the performance and the peer review aspects of the assessment (PTE).
- Students enjoy the rivalry of the group competition and companionship of teaching each other and take pride in their accomplishments (PTE).
- Students say they gain a great sense of accomplishment from researching and presenting their fact sheet. They also develop a rapport with the organisation they investigate (PTE).

#### Feedback from colleagues and the institution

- The strategy is highly valued by colleagues (U).
- Colleagues value the strategy (U).
- A practicing teacher recommended that the students' work be published in teaching journal and colleagues are supportive (U).
- Colleagues value the strategy once they see it in action (U).
- Some interest has been expressed by colleagues (U).
- Colleagues don't know about the strategies (U).
- Some criticism has been received from one colleague regarding a lack of moderation (U).
- Some colleagues may question the inclusion of peer and self-review in the overall grade (ITP).
- There has been a varied response from staff (ITP).
- Some interest has been received from other educators (ITP).
- The strategy was shared with all tutors in the section (ITP).
- Colleagues value the strategy (ITP).
- Tutors find this a demanding assessment but realise that they gain a lot insight into each student's progress and this enables them to give the students very specific feedback about their strengths and weaknesses. They also gain ideas about where in the industry a student might best be employed (PTE).

- Tutors see what a valuable assessment this is for students (PTE).
- Tutors also really enjoy seeing the students develop their own style and seeing their personality coming through (PTE).
- The strategy is demanding for tutors but they get a lot insight into each student's progress and this enables them to give each student very specific feedback about their strengths and weaknesses. Tutors also gain ideas about where in the industry a student might best be placed (PTE).
- Feedback from students and tutors suggests that the challenge of developing assessments, which include enough of the elements to make sure they are valid without over assessing, is a worthwhile project (PTE).
- Tutors find that they gain a lot of knowledge about community services from the students, which they can take and use in other courses (PTE).

#### Feedback from the community

- Feedback from employers is positive. Employers also give feedback about the range of skills they are looking for (U).
- The community tell tutors how good the students' language was (ITP).
- There has been positive feedback from the Waikato District Health Board (WDHB) where students are employed (ITP).
- There has been positive feedback from Child Youth and Family (CYFS) (ITP).
- Students make in-roads into safe practice (ITP).
- Students become confident teachers of the arts (ITP).
- Feedback from employers is also very positive (PTE).
- In three of the case studies, community groups were involved in the assessment strategy and this provided benefits for the students, staff and for the community groups themselves (PTE).

## **2.0 Plan for dissemination of the case studies**

### **2.1 The tertiary teachers' comments about dissemination**

The majority of the university teachers interviewed for this study share their teaching and assessment practices through sessions held by the university's Teaching Learning and Development Unit (TLDU). They describe the manner in which they share their assessment practices as informal, largely through discussion with colleagues. The majority of the university teachers said that they spent their time writing publications relating to their specialist disciplines rather than teaching and learning. Three of the teachers from the School of Management had published work relating to their assessment and teaching practices: including an article for the TLDU newsletter; a journal article about research-based teaching; a seminar at a marketing conference; and articles in local newspapers. The main suggestions made by the university teachers for disseminating teaching and assessment practices included co-teaching and inviting colleagues to come and discuss the strategy and see it in action.

Many of the teachers in the ITP sector noted that informal discussions with colleagues were a common method of sharing assessment strategies. These discussions typically take place in the staffroom, over morning tea and during social occasions. Only one teacher referred to a formal departmental meeting focused on teaching and learning while two teachers talked about sharing their strategies at various seminars organised at Wintec. Five teachers noted that formal occasions outside their own organisation, such as moderation meetings and conferences, provided opportunities for sharing best practice and prompted innovation and improvement.

In the PTE sector, a number of the assessment strategies were developed centrally and used by all tutors. This enables good practice to be shared widely. External moderation was also mentioned as providing a vehicle for sharing practice more widely. One PTE has shared their assessment strategies outside their organisation and this collaborative approach was seen as a way to develop high quality assessment material.