

Students can escape bad
teaching, but they can't escape
bad assessment
(David Boud, 1995).

(Re)Designing 'fit-for-purpose'
assessment tasks

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Phil Race's comments:

- Assessment remains the weak link in the chain. In a nutshell, we tend to assess far too much, yet not do it very well! We often end up measuring the things that are easy to measure (e.g. information recall), and sometimes don't actually measure directly enough the real achievement of intended learning outcomes.
- We need to help colleagues reduce the burden of assessment (for students as well as for us) while at the same time improving its quality.

(Race, 2006)

Lecturer [Teacher] Professional Learning Community

- ...the act of discrete teacher sharing...the establishment of a school [faculty] wide culture that makes collaboration expected, inclusive, genuine, on-going, and focused on student outcomes (Toole & Seashore-Louis, 2001, p.5)
 - shared norms and values,
 - a focus on student learning,
 - deprivatised practice,
 - reflective dialogue, and
 - collaboration (p.6)

Is the assessment task valid?

“Validity refers to the appropriateness and accuracy of your assessment...[validity] is specific to some use or interpretation - no result is valid for all purposes” (Athanasou & Lamprianou, 2002, pp.167-8).

- Representativeness, rubric and relevance (Borich & Tombari, 1999, pp. 234-5)
 - be clear about the cognitive learning skills and dispositions you want to assess and require a variety of products that reflect these (content validity)
 - design clear criteria and address standards for judgment (content validity and equity validity)
 - design task to address process, product, age/level appropriateness (construct validity)

In what ways is it ensured that assessment measures effectively what it intends to measure?

- Does the content of the task measure the stated learning outcomes?
- Is the task designed to ensure that content chosen can be adequately demonstrated?
- Is the task designed so that intervening skills/knowledge (e.g. reading skills, graphing skills) do not diminish possibilities of demonstrating student learning?
- Are the criteria and standards (HD, D, C, P, N) aligned with the task requirements and learning outcomes?
- Is the task formative or summative – does this have effect on what and how it measures?

Is the assessment task reliable?

- The consistency or accuracy of the outcome of the assessment process...assessors' understanding of the expected standards and their knowledge and skill are the most crucial elements (Australian Nursing Council, 2002).
- A reliable assessment task is one which consistently achieves the same results with the same or similar cohort of students. Various factors affect reliability - ambiguous questions, too many options within a question paper, vague marking instructions and poorly trained assessors (Department of Education & Training, Northern Territory, 2000).
- Reliability can only be tested by blind multiple marking (Race, 2005).

In what ways is it ensured that assessment is fair and consistent?

- Is the task description and requirements unambiguous?
- Is the language level appropriate to the learner's level?
- Do the students understand what is required of them?
- Do the students understand what is a quality response and what is a poor response?
- Is the task criteria specific to the standards (HD, D, C, P, N) clear to students? [Does the task have criteria? Does the task make explicit the standards for each criteria and their weighting?]
- Are the standards applied consistently to all students?
- Are assessors trained?
- Is a (blind) moderation process in place for multiple assessors?

Is the assessment task authentic?

Authentic assessment promotes worthwhile, significant and meaningful learning...active construction of knowledge...where students bring their own strategies and styles...and skills and strategies are best acquired in realistic context and authentic settings(Newman and Associates, 1998).

Authentic curriculum requires

- **Direct examination of student performance on worthy intellectual tasks**
- **Requires students to be effective performers with acquired knowledge**
- **Present the student with a full array of tasks**
- **Attend to whether the student can craft polished, thorough and justifiable answers, performances or products**
- **Achieves validity and reliability by emphasising and standardising the appropriate criteria for scoring varied products**
- **Involves ill structured challenges that help students rehearse for the complex ambiguities of professional life (Wiggins, 1990).**

Authenticity also refers to assessing the work of the student, not other people's work [linked to concepts of invigilation and plagiarism] (Race, 2006).

In what ways is it ensured that assessment is connected to a real-life application, and is owned by the student?

- Does the assessment task make a connection to and transfer to the world beyond the classroom?
- Does the assessment task replicate conditions under which the performance would normally occur in the real-world application?
- Does the task allow for production of knowledge from acquired concepts/content/skills (rather than reproduction)?
- Is the task designed to ensure that you are 'thoroughly satisfied' that the student is the author?
- Does the assessment task state requirements for appropriate referencing conventions and interpretations of 'originality'?
- Could the task be personalised to cater for real-world application and ownership issues?

Is the assessment task transparent?

- **Transparency is the extent to which learners know where the goalposts are...matching up assessment criteria to intended learning outcomes...a problem: some of the actual learning outcomes go far beyond the intended learning outcomes (Race, 2005).**
- **Learners often find it hard to get inside our assessment culture – the very culture which will determine the level of their awards (Race, 2005).**
- **Biggs (2002) calls for constructive alignment – outcomes, assessment, resources, teaching and cohort – explicitness and transparency.**

In what ways is it ensured that assessment is matched to subject description and outcomes, including graduate attributes and professional standards (where necessary)?

- Are the relationships between subject outcomes, learning exercises and assessment tasks made explicit?
- Does the task criteria (and standards) utilise specific terminology to match learning outcomes, graduate attributes and professional standards?
- Does the assessment task ask for more than demonstration of the intended learning outcome(s)?
- Taken together, does the suite of assessment tasks that a student experiences over the course of their studies align with the graduate attributes specified for that course?

Everything should be made as
simple as possible,
but not simpler'.

(Albert Einstein, 1879-1955).

First Year Principles

- **Sally Kift**

- Transition
- Diversity
- Design
- Engagement
- Assessment
 - 1. Schedule an early piece of formative assessment to be submitted and returned before Week 4 to:
 - relieve early student anxiety
 - provide feedback to both students and staff on student progress and achievement
 - identify students in need of extra support.
 - 2. Be consistent regarding communication of assessment expectations across the first year – use consistent criteria and standards, naming of assessment tasks, use of assessment verbs, etc.
 - 3. Make class time available to discuss with students tertiary assessment practices and expectations (e.g., to achieve shared understanding of meaning of assessment criteria; provide examples of good, fair and poor performance of assessment criteria; try correcting a piece of writing using track changes function in large class; have class (including teacher) write a paragraph to swap and mark against criteria; discuss the nature, quantity, and use of feedback with students).
- Evaluation and Monitoring

- **Keithia Wilson & Alf Lizzio**

Enhancing Assessment Practice

Optimising an experience of ‘early success’ builds academic and personal efficacy

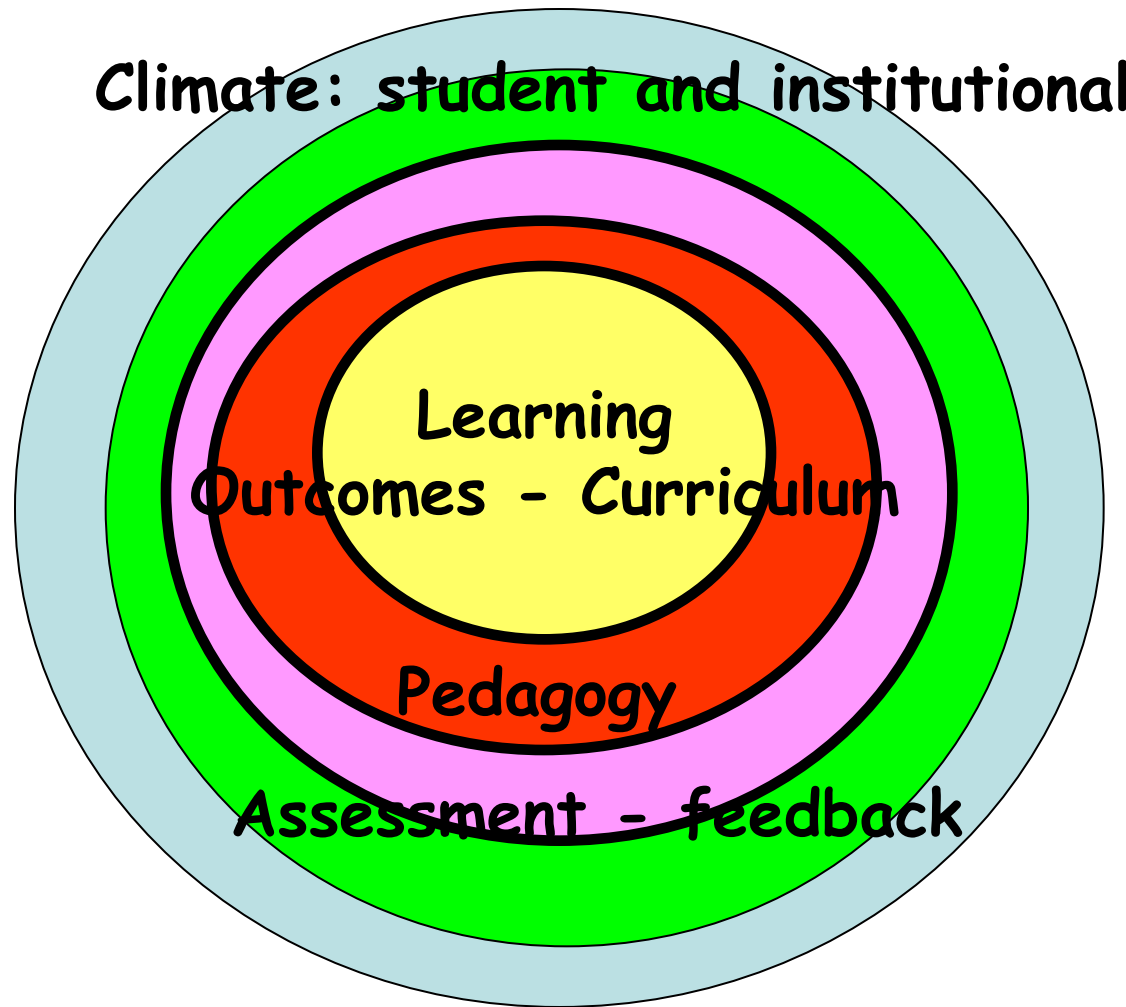
Key Areas: the nature and timing of early assessment emphasis on formative assessment the process of preparing assessment – scaffolding assessment preparation (practice items, essay writing etc.) the process of debriefing and learning from early assessment (summarise and feedback cohort strengths and weaknesses)

First Assessment Feedback

Efficacy building for students who ‘fail’ for ‘marginal pass’ first assessment in a core course

Key Areas: students complete a self-directed workbook specific to assessment task individual structured session with tutor leading to action plan follow-up phone or email contact

Constructive Alignment (Biggs, 2002)



Subject Coherence

- Align
- Outcomes
 - Grad Atts / Professional standards
- Resources
- Teaching
- Assessment Check
- <http://phil-race.co.uk/>
- <http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessing-learning/>

Action planning statements

- Please complete the evaluation form and write a response to the following:
 - One thing I'm going to do is...
 - One idea I'm taking away is...
 - I'm going to think more about...
 - I have found out that ...
 - I'd like to know ...
 - In future, I'm not going to...