Transition Pedagogy: A whole-of-institution approach to the First Year Experience

Professor Sally Kift
ALTC Senior Fellow
ALTC Discipline Scholar: Law

James Cook University
First Year Experience Conference
Townsville and Cairns
16 June 2011
It takes an institution to educate [and support and retain] a student.

With apologies to Hillary Clinton and African proverbs

Overview

• Context – Australian Higher Education 2010
  – A perfect storm?

• Snapshot of First Year Experience (FYE) research

• Model for a partnership, whole-of-institution, approach for engagement, success & retention in FY
  – A ‘Transition Pedagogy’ for the FYE –
    • Esp to harness first year ‘curriculum’ (broadly)
      – To mediate diversity & support intentionally
      – To do serious transition and retention work
    – Embedded contextualised support (for all)
    – 6 curriculum principles
    – Some practical examples throughout

http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-curric.htm
Australian Higher Education 2011

• Overall drop out rates ~28% (Bradley, 2009)
• 10+ years chronic underfunding → dramatic increases in staff:student ratios –
• Proportion of 25-34 yr olds with degrees is 9/30 OECD
• No growth in equity group participation since 1989 – eg
  • First Australians 1.3% (2.3%)
  • Disabled 4% (8%)
  • Low socio-economic status (LSES) 15% (25%)
  • Regional & Remote 18% (25%)
• Evidence of increase in LSES applications 2009-10
  • Query ultimate effect on participation

Learning & Teaching 2011: A perfect storm
Attention focussed on...

- ‘AUQA plus’ – new Tertiary Education Quality & Standards Agency (TEQSA)
- Quality of teaching and learning
- Student experience and student engagement
- ‘Quality, attainment and participation’
- ‘Academic standards’; ‘Brand Australia’
- **Widening participation** and diversity targets –
  - By 2025, 40% of Australian 25-34 year olds will have a bachelor level or above
  - By 2020, 20% of higher education enrolments at undergraduate level should be from low socio-economic backgrounds
  - Increased connectivity with and articulation from alternate pathways

A new quality and regulatory regime!

http://unileaks.org/


My University Website

http://www.myschool.edu.au/
Attrition Rate for *domestic* commencing bachelor students 2001 to 2008 (Qld)

DEEWR, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>QLD</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CQU</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.11</td>
<td>25.42</td>
<td>26.94</td>
<td>24.79</td>
<td>33.84</td>
<td>34.38</td>
<td>32.79</td>
<td>32.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GU</td>
<td></td>
<td>19.95</td>
<td>23.98</td>
<td>24.12</td>
<td>24.38</td>
<td>23.38</td>
<td>23.08</td>
<td>24.11</td>
<td>22.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCU</td>
<td><strong>25.33</strong></td>
<td><strong>27.06</strong></td>
<td><strong>27.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>26.48</strong></td>
<td><strong>25.75</strong></td>
<td><strong>28.04</strong></td>
<td><strong>25.18</strong></td>
<td><strong>24.65</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUT</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.63</td>
<td>19.84</td>
<td>17.62</td>
<td>19.18</td>
<td>17.74</td>
<td>18.84</td>
<td>19.01</td>
<td>17.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UQ</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.42</td>
<td>16.85</td>
<td>16.94</td>
<td>15.33</td>
<td>16.57</td>
<td>17.49</td>
<td>19.16</td>
<td>15.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USQ</td>
<td></td>
<td>26.49</td>
<td>27.51</td>
<td>27.71</td>
<td>30.12</td>
<td>28.79</td>
<td>27.59</td>
<td>28.51</td>
<td>26.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USC</td>
<td></td>
<td>32.83</td>
<td>39.24</td>
<td>40.09</td>
<td>37.49</td>
<td>35.79</td>
<td>35.66</td>
<td>32.35</td>
<td>27.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Total</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>20.97</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.70</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.60</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.69</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.86</strong></td>
<td><strong>23.09</strong></td>
<td><strong>23.30</strong></td>
<td><strong>21.18</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Attrition Rate for overseas commencing bachelor students 2001 to 2008 (Qld)

**DEEWR, 2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QLD</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GU</td>
<td>19.18</td>
<td>21.76</td>
<td>14.32</td>
<td>11.99</td>
<td>14.05</td>
<td>11.11</td>
<td>10.49</td>
<td>10.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCU</td>
<td>17.38</td>
<td>19.43</td>
<td>27.83</td>
<td>26.29</td>
<td>20.22</td>
<td>15.85</td>
<td>16.56</td>
<td>15.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUT</td>
<td>7.48</td>
<td>7.26</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>6.37</td>
<td>6.61</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>7.77</td>
<td>7.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UQ</td>
<td>6.30</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>6.51</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>5.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USQ</td>
<td>29.03</td>
<td>31.40</td>
<td>23.94</td>
<td>21.16</td>
<td>20.71</td>
<td>23.10</td>
<td>13.55</td>
<td>10.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Total</td>
<td>15.69</td>
<td>17.38</td>
<td>15.72</td>
<td>14.43</td>
<td>16.71</td>
<td>16.97</td>
<td>12.69</td>
<td>11.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*DEEWR, 2010*

Once students from disadvantaged backgrounds have entered university the likelihood of them completing their course of study is broadly similar to that of the general higher education population. Often, however, they require higher levels of support to succeed, including financial assistance and greater academic support, mentoring and counselling services.


Tinto (2009) offered words of advice ...

“stop tinkering at the margins of institutional academic life and make enhancing student success the linchpin about which [universities] organize their activities ... [E]stablish those educational conditions on campus that promote the retention of students, in particular those of low-income backgrounds”.

FYE approaches (Kift, Nelson & Clarke, 2010; Kift, 2009; Wilson, 2009)

- **1\(^{st}\) generation FYE**
  - Essentially co-curricula – professionals on curriculum’s periphery

- **2\(^{nd}\) generation FYE**
  - Curriculum focus – support, engage, and build capability through the student learning experience via pedagogy, curriculum design & L&T practices

- **3\(^{rd}\) generation FYE**
  - 1\(^{st}\) and 2\(^{nd}\) generation – integrated, embedded, quality assured and seamless across institution and its disciplines, programs & services via academic & professional partnerships

  = *Transition pedagogy –*

  a guiding philosophy for intentional first year curriculum design and support that carefully scaffolds and mediates the first year learning experience for contemporary heterogeneous cohorts.

  Kift & Nelson (2005)

Student success is largely determined by student experiences during the first year.


What matters to retention and progression

The total experience of university

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparedness</th>
<th>Program choice/ certainty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finances</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers: learning ‘profoundly a social experience’;</td>
<td>Staff: contact with staff &amp; teaching quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations: mismatch; ‘how things work around here’;</td>
<td>Course design: Clear, coherent, responsive, flexible, relevant, engaging, achievable, &amp; motivating;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Gen Student support: coordinated and ‘just-in-time’ &amp; ‘just-for-me’;</td>
<td>Assessment for learning: relevant, consistent &amp; integrated;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback: early, prompt &amp; constructive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Eg: Scott, 2006; Yorke & Longden, 2008; Kift, 2009; James et al, 2010)

(Eg: FCYS, 2009; NSSE, 2009)
Support is very important

- **2009 Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE)**
  - Based on US National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
  - What engages students in productive learning

- One (of six) scales reported that:
  - **71%** of students felt institutions provide **academic** support ‘quite a bit’ or ‘very much’
  - **BUT**
  - Only **23%** said got **non-academic** support (**36%** very little; **41%** some support);
  - Only **32%** said supported to **socialise** (**25%** very little; **43%** some support).
Common FY Curriculum Complaints (Kift, 2009)

- Lack of clarity and consistency regarding expectations
- Lack of coherence, achievability and relevance

**Assessment and feedback**
- UK Yorke & Longden (2008): 29% said feedback not prompt
- James *et al* (CSHE, 2010): only 35% found feedback helpful
- AUSSE (2009,76): only 40% FYs often/ very often received prompt feedback (cf 80.4% of staff thought feedback often/ very often prompt)
- UK NSS (2008): satisfaction with assessment & feedback lowest
- US NSSE (2009,38): 42% FYs sometimes/never receive prompt f’back

- Lack of preparedness re tertiary literacies: e.g academic; information; IT; numeracy; visual; statistical; professional practices; cultural; + + + ???

- Group work – esp group processes

- Staff interest – only 26% FYs believe staff are interested in their progress (CSHE, 2010).
Staff interest in student progress

One Professor's Fantasy -- PG rating

AmyMaaloxFilms 2 videos  Subscribe

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=27e0iDQFnCU
What this all means for us …

• ‘Joined-up’ *institutional approaches* = partnerships.
  – General and specialist
  – Academic and non-academic
  – Curricula and co-curricula

• Once 1st semester starts, harness *the curriculum* as academic and social ‘organising device’ to do serious transition and retention work
  – Both in and outside (physical and virtual) classroom – eg
    • By inclusive teaching, learning & assessment practices
    • Being explicit about what’s required for success (HE & discipline)
    • Attending to sense of belonging through curriculum strategies
    • Through pathways & interactions facilitated

(Kift, 2008)
What institutional approaches?

Recently, Yorke & Longden (2008) identified a number of broad areas of institutional activity:

– Institutional commitment to student learning & engagement;
– Proactive management of student transition;
– Attention to curricula ( & co-curricula)
  • For both academic & social engagement;
  • To increase chances of student success;
– Place emphasis & resourcing on the FYE;
– Systematic monitoring & evaluation of student achievement, and acting on the evidence thereby collected;
– Academic leadership.

Proactive management of student transition

Start Here

Find a course or career

Get to know QUT

Hear from real students

How to apply to QUT

Make this site as personal as you are

Sign in with Facebook

No need to create a new account - simply sign in with your Facebook login!

Once logged in you can see a shortlist of courses and other information under the 'my dashboard' section.

http://starthere.qut.edu.au/

Video FAQs

- Email a student
- Real experiences
- Meet real graduates

Get some help from current students

Ask a student a question

See all events and key dates

Questions gallery

Advice for making it at uni?

First impressions of QUT?

What do you think of Brisbane?

What's orientation week like?

Why did you choose QUT?

What's it like on your first day?

Advice for making it at uni?

First day advice?

http://starthere.qut.edu.au/realstudents/videofaqs

Link to student blog on uni life

http://starthere.qut.edu.au/realstudents/videofaqs
“A real account of student life”. Posts are not edited. Only moderate content to ensure it doesn’t breach QUT’s Student Charter.

Claire’s Little Secrets to Surviving University
...your very first day..is going to be both exciting and horrifying. I remember stepping into a room of over 500 students, totally overwhelmed.. [Then]... my lecturer said: “The class may seem crowded at the moment, but at least 50 students will leave after a month, and only half of you will graduate after four years.”... So to get you started, I ..share.. tips (I wish someone had told me!) on how to survive your first year at university.

1. Sit next to the best looking person in the room.

QUT’s bloggers were selected by a panel based on their first blog titled, ‘My top tips for surviving the first year of university’. The students aren’t paid for their blogs, but have received a netbook as a prize to help them post their updates during the year.
Proactive management of student transition

Orientation & Transition as a process over time.

UWA Consistency: UniSkills; UniStart; UniMentor; UniDiscovery & UniAccess

http://www.transition.uwa.edu.au/welcome/uniskills

ALSO:

Attention to critical issues such as: timetabling from FY student’s perspective

http://www.transition.uwa.edu.au/welcome/info_for_staff/what_is_a_fyi/examples/timetabling
Of ducks and carrots

Action
Data analysis
What is good teaching & support
What is a good student exp
Learning leadership & governance across silos
Area plans
Top level plan(s)
Vision

Reward & recognition
Staff development
Promotion criteria
Probation
KPIs
PP&R
An institutional context for good teaching and support

Coherent institutional FYE context

- **FYE Policy** MOPP C/6.2
  - Includes Orientation and Transition
  - Supporting Guidelines

- **Institution-wide evaluation**
  - FYEQ, AUSSE, Course Exit & Orientation, LEX, Individual Program Reports & Consolidated Course Performance Reports

- **Policy statements** relating to FYE in:
  - Curriculum Design Policy MOPP C/4.2
    - Eg: role of FY curriculum in whole of program design
  - Assessment Policy MOPP C/5.1
  - Unsatisfactory Academic Performance policy MOPP E/6.7
  - Supplementary Assessment Policy MOPP E/6.4

- **QUT Faculty (Academic) Director, FYE**
- **University-wide FYE & Retention Committee**
- **FYE Network** – FY faculty & practitioners network
- **First Year Coordinators Positions (Faculty)**

QUT’s Assessment Protocols (April 2009)
(To accompany top-level Assessment Policy)

2.5 Designing assessment for a whole of course approach from the first year of study

Five key ideas guide the design of assessment for first year students and are also relevant to assessment across the course.

1. **Variety** – provide types of assessment that feature different aspects of learning relevant to the discipline to engage students, cater for diversity in learning styles and to broaden students’ learning preferences.

2. **Consistency** – be consistent with the use of assessment terms within a unit and across the first year (e.g. descriptions, weighting and criteria) to reduce confusion for students new to university study. Provide consistency in terms of expected workload and weighting for similar assessment tasks across first year units.

3. **Relevance** – create relevance between the assessment task and unit activities and between the assessment task and the real world to motivate and engage students. Relevant assessment items should provide evidence of graduate capability development and should be suitable for inclusion in the students’ QUT or personal portfolio.

4. **Scaffolding** – ensure the process skills as well as the content knowledge that students need to complete an assessment item are taught or practiced and that early feedback and extra support is provided so that students can overcome any areas of difficulty they experience. An assessment related activity should be scheduled within the first four weeks of the semester to provide students with feedback on how they are progressing in the unit. Advice should be provided to students about what to do with the feedback they are given. First year assessment should provide opportunities for peer and self-evaluation.

5. **Monitoring** – ensure that assessment items within a unit and across a course are designed and scheduled to facilitate the monitoring of student engagement in learning. The assessment pattern must be organised so that all first year undergraduate students encounter at least one individual item of formative or summative assessment aligned with unit learning outcomes prior to the withdrawal without financial penalty date.

The course coordinator is responsible for oversight of the curriculum architecture (see MOPP C/4.2) including assuring that the assessment patterns are mapped across the course from first year to the final year and seek to maximise the range of assessment types. This range is not only relevant for variety, consistency, relevance, scaffolding and monitoring, it is also an important equity principle.

Focus on

A Transition Pedagogy and The First Year Curriculum
Why focus on curriculum...

• Because in all their diversity, with multiple identities and changing patterns of engagement, curriculum is
  – What students have in common
  – Within our institutional control
  – Only place we have contact with all students and can mediate that diversity, especially in preparedness & cultural capital

• Because otherwise our interventions are not comprehensive and their effect is left to chance
  – Will be bolt-on, piecemeal, and de-contextualised
  – May lack integration across processes & organisational areas
University of Newcastle: FY Student’s Guide

First Year Student’s Guide to University Study

About the guide
Prepare
Belong
Learn
Succeed

Prepate before semester
Belong settle in when you arrive
Learn become a strategic learner
Succeed in exams and more tips for success

The First Year Student’s Guide to University Study

Welcome to the School of Education and congratulations on your success. We know that students take time to adjust to the university culture and their new learning environment. This guide was developed to help ease your transition to university life and study. With this in mind, we’ve traced the student experience during first semester and mapped some of the phases of the journey ahead. Inside the guide you’ll also find many useful tips and strategies to help you survive and thrive. Please begin with the guide first.

Should you have any questions about this guide or you would like to give any suggestions or feedback please email Jill Scevak.

Good luck on your travels
Jill Scevak, Robert Cantwell, Greg Preston, Sharon Cooper School of Education
Terese Pluziwski and Diane Kirby University Counselling Services

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/school/education/pbls/
Uni of Newcastle Travel Diary

Kift, 2003

Overview of the Home Group Program

A major underlying educational process in the Medical program is the use of small group teaching environments to facilitate the development of student based active learning. The Home Groups and their Home Group Facilitator are centred on this fundamental process.

Home groups consist of approximately 8 - 10 students, with each Home Group assigned a Home Group Facilitator. Student assignment to groups is essentially random but assignment usually ensures that groups are stratified in terms of student age, sex and culture. Home Group Facilitators meet with their Home Group regularly. Contact time with the students in Years 1, 2 and 3 is – 1 x 1hr session each week in SP1 and SP2.

 Principally the role of the Home Group Facilitator is to provide the group with pastoral and educational support. Home Group Facilitators foster student/staff contact, co-operation amongst students, group interactions, active learning and provide a source of experienced feedback to guide students in the development of their own study, organisational and learning skills. In summary the major goals of the Home Group Program is to:

- Provide students with a personal, individual contact with the School
- assist students to develop a positive learning environment in a group setting
- assist students to develop a positive attitude to small group learning
- assist students to develop the skills necessary to be successful in a small group learning environment
- foster a positive attitude towards active learning
- assist students to develop the necessary skills to be a successful active learner
- encourage students to be reflective learners

Home Group Facilitators play an important role in providing students with feedback on reflective (formative) assessment. As part of this role the Home Group Facilitators undertake an interview with each of their Home Group students' once a study period. The aims of this interview are to assist the student to develop reflective skills, and to allow the Home Group Facilitator an insight into the student’s activities to provide an avenue of support. Additionally Home Group Facilitators should regularly encourage students to keep up to date with weekly subject based formative assessment tasks. There is a direct relationship
A principled approach–

- **Generic** ‘curriculum’ principles identified that are supportive of first year learning engagement, success and retention.

- Interconnected organising principles that –
  - Are research-based (but move *from theory to action*);
  - Help guide and inform *holistic* FYE practice;
  - Require cross-institutional *partnerships* to enact & enable;
  - Have been *rigorously evaluated* by the HE community internationally and are evidence-based (Kift, 2009);
  - Accord with theoretical and research-based frameworks for optimal FYE (e.g. *Foundational Dimensions*, 2005; US Parsing the First Year of College Project [http://www.ed.psu.edu/educ/parsing-project](http://www.ed.psu.edu/educ/parsing-project)).
Six (6) Curriculum Principles

[HE word bingo]

[Concurrent with good teaching and good support]

- Transition
- Diversity
- Design
- Engagement
- Assessment
- Evaluation and Monitoring

A curriculum that does serious transition and retention work!

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design</strong></td>
<td>Has the whole-of-program first year design been mapped? Are knowledge, skills,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>attitudes &amp; academic literacies required for later years in program well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>articulated, integrated and sequenced?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transition</strong></td>
<td>Which groups entering this course may need particular attention during their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>orientation &amp; transition to university life &amp; procedures?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diversity</strong></td>
<td>Is there a strategy in place for identifying (&amp; communicating to FY teachers) the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>diversity characteristics of this cohort?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement</strong></td>
<td>Are opportunities provided for students to make personal connections between their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>previous experiences, the program content and professional skills that are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>important to the discipline? Engagement with staff and peers designed in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Evidence-based approach to design and practice. Does the program / suite of FY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>units have affordances for ‘monitoring engagement’ and the support / resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>available to make interventions where indicated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment</strong></td>
<td>Which FY units have an appropriate assessment item scheduled in the first four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>weeks of semester? Assessment literacies explicated?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Intentional FY curriculum design

KiFT ALTC SENIOR FELLOWSHIP:
ARTICULATING A TRANSITION
PEDAGOGY

EDUCATION CASE STUDY:

ANNAH HEALY

[My role in the faculty is Project Manager FIRST Year Experience. I am responsible for the systematic operationalisation of the six FYE Principles across faculty programs, learning and teaching approaches, and staff development initiatives.]

December 2008

KiFT ALTC SENIOR FELLOWSHIP:
ARTICULATING A TRANSITION
PEDAGOGY

Law Case Study

Prepared by Lisa Westcott on behalf of the Law First Year Experience Program Team

[Lisa Westcott] would like to ... acknowledge all members of the Law First Year Experience team, a team dedicated to enhancing and improving the transition to effective first year study and beyond for all commencing law students at James Cook University.

December 2008

Kift ALTC Senior Fellowship
FYECD Symposium 2009

Symposium - the Movie

An Extract

EG, intentional whole-of-program design (1)

- 1st week of Sem takes up where orientation leaves off
- Opportunity to self-assess entering diversity of knowledge, skills & attitudes against discipline expectations (with development opportunities consequently provided)
- Identify first year curriculum objectives
- Make explicit to students whole-of-program roadmap
- Design-in discipline co-curricula and socialising activities (eg PASS)
- Physical or virtual space available for social interaction
- Evaluate whole-of-program, including orientation, especially for patterns of attrition amongst sub-cohorts.
- Monitor for current student (dis)engagement across program and support/ intervene with identified at-risk students
Peer to Peer Interactions

http://www.jcu.edu.au/learningskills/resources/mentors/

Monitoring for Student (dis)Engagement

Using the ON TRACK: Early Warning System

Staff can establish a number of rules based on grade book items to automatically identify students and intervene appropriately.

The three types of rules may include:

**GRADE RULE:** Looks at a student’s grade for an individual gradebook item. The gradebook items used in Grade Rules can be assignments, assessments, or manually graded items.

**DUE DATE RULE:** Identifies when a student does not complete work by the date established in the grade book. Due Date Rules can only be applied to items in the grade book that are created and graded through LearnJCU. Due Date Rules cannot be applied to manual graded items.

**LAST ACCESS RULE:** Identifies the last time the student accessed the course in LearnJCU.

The ON TRACK: Early Warning System is able to track student progress and maintains a record of the number of interventions. This reporting function enables staff to evaluate the effectiveness of their intervention strategies.

See how to use the **ON TRACK: Early Warning System** to create your own rules by viewing the short video tutorial at: http://www.viewletcentral.com/vc/viewlet.html?id=17089404 or, follow this instructional guidebook.

EG, intentional **whole-of-program** design (2)

Intentional mapping & coherence across FY subjects: eg

- As much as possible, whole FY program is coherent & integrated
- Make links/connections between subjects explicit
- Diversity in T, L & A approaches across subjects
- Assessment strategy coherent, integrated & manageable across subjects for students *and* staff
- Make no assumptions about entering knowledge, skills & attitudes
  - map subject responsibility for academic literacy development to assist transition to tertiary study, scaffold learning, and make explicit what is required for success (eg re academic writing, referencing, teamwork, *etc*).
- Consistency in communications of expectations/ responsibilities
- Develop early assessment literacies
Diversity in entering preparedness

First Year Assessment
First year student who would rather write a song than do his KKB101 essay.

So he did!

I don’t know if he passed or not. ;-)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccOoldztCss
Early tertiary assessment literacies: e.g.

- Explanation and consistent use of assessment verbs; consistent naming of assessment tasks;
- Explicit clarification of assessment expectations: eg, how to write, research, reference, orally present in different discipline genres;
- Explicit & consistent advice & assistance with referencing & paraphrasing expectations;
- Instruction & proactive support re group/team work;
- Assist students to make use of examples & model answers;
- Well written criterion referenced assessment (CRA) sheets AND ‘dialogue’ about way criteria and standards will be applied (ASKe, 2008: [http://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/documents/ASKe%20Intervention.pdf](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/documents/ASKe%20Intervention.pdf));
- Assistance with ‘what feedback is’ & how to make the best use of it (Race, 2009: [http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/Feedback_Booklet_Phil_Race.pdf](http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/Feedback_Booklet_Phil_Race.pdf)).
Assessment expectations...


http://www.dlsweb.rmit.edu.au/lsu/content/1_Stud ySkills/study_pdf/Blooms%20taxonomy.pdf
Assessment expectations...

Understanding academic languages & conventions

Example: A *Psychology* degree program uses the **same assessment definitions and criteria** throughout the entire program. A written assessment guide formally articulates these to students and staff (Gibbs, 2009)

Example: In a FY *Education* subject, small student groups are given a copy of the same written excerpt and each group is asked to respond in a specific way: reflectively, analytically, critically, etc. Responses are shared with the class to highlight the differences between cognitive levels (Healy, 2008)
Academic languages and conventions

Writing Skills Online

Academic writing
Help with the process of producing well structured academic writing.

- Essay Writing: The process
- Academic Writing Tips
- APA Referencing
- JCU Library Guides to Referencing (all styles)
- Summarising, Paraphrasing & Avoiding Plagiarism [PDF]
- Editing Your Writing [PDF]
- A visual guide to essay writing: How to develop and communicate academic argument [PDF, 2.6MB booklet – also available from Bookshop for $10]

Discipline specific writing tips from lecturers and postgraduate students.
- Law: mp3 | PPT with audio
- Community Welfare & Social Work: mp3
- Sociology: mp3
- Nursing: PPT, PPT(09)
- Business: mp3, PDF
- Psychology: PDF
- FAESS Writing: PDF
- Science: PDF

Types of academic writing

Discipline-specific samples and guidelines for critical essays, literature reviews, annotated bibliographies, practical reports, scientific reports, research proposals and more.

- Model Assignments: Samples and Guidelines

Grammar and writing

Web sites that provide practice to help you improve your grammar and writing.

- Guide to grammar and writing
- Activities for ESL Students
- Academic Vocabulary
- Uni Learning

Further reading:
ASKe (Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange) is a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) based in the Business School at Oxford Brookes University. It was set up in summer 2006 with a £1.5 million award from QUTIE in recognition of good practice based on pedagogic research into aspects of assessment.

The work of ASKe has been organized into three strands of activity:

**Strand 1: Mediating proven practice through:**
- A pre-assessment intervention which the ABM team has shown to work. A simple intervention such as a marking workshop prior to undertaking an assessed task can significantly increase students’ understanding of the assessment criteria and improve their performance on the task.
- ABM has supported the development of this kind of intervention on all Business School programmes, as well as in three other Schools (Built Environment, Health and Social Care, and Westminster Institute of Education). This same support is available for the remaining four blocks plus the partner institutions.
- The Academic contact awful (AC) system which the ABM team is further developing.
- In addition to researching effective ways of encouraging and promoting academic integrity.
- The Peer Assistant Learning (PAL) programme, long used by the Business School, which ABM then extended across the School. Support is also offered to at least three other School modules.

**Strand 2: Pioneering evidence-based practice**
- Appropriate development projects will be funded, both within the Business School and across the whole University. Projects will assess and support ways to develop and enhance assessment practices.

**Strand 3: Cultivating a community of practice**
- This ABM team has developed a new £5 million building for Business at Wheatley Campus. This provides a physical environment to support student learning outside structured class time, in which staff and students can meet to develop a shared understanding or academic standards.
- But it’s more than just a building. The ABM team argues that only a true community of practice will ensure shared understanding, so ABM (in conjunction with other partners at Brookes) is also developing the social environment necessary to sustain this physical space.

To find out more about ABM’s work, please contact.

1. **Pre-submission**: students mark 2 sample, similar assignments (good, average) using CRA sheet

2. **Attend 90 min workshop**: re-mark in groups; discussion & tutor feedback; review marks; get annotated versions of sample assignments

3. **Submit work + self-assessment** on CRA sheet
Assessment building in complexity &/or cumulatively

Example: In an Arts and Education writing subject, assessment begins with familiar tasks (eg. essay writing), progressing over time to unfamiliar tasks (eg. writing media releases). Formative feedback is provided with each piece of assessment and templates and models are provided for each new assignment type (Radbourne & LeRossignol, 2008).

Example: History subject, a large essay assignment split into 3 stages:
Stage 1: Students discuss the essay question in groups in the tutorial.
Stage 2: Preparation of a draft essay plan and bibliography (weighted 10%). Formative feedback is provided by tutors and peers in sufficient time to incorporate into the next stage.
Stage 3: Submission of final essay (weighted 35%). (McCreery, 2005)
Taylor (2008, 23) Strategies for assessment

Assessments for development
- Low weight, high marking
- Draft essay
- Reading log
- Notes on literature review
- Components of portfolio

Assessments for transition
- Low weight, low marking
- Reflective activity
- Study Plan
- Contract

Assessments for achievement
- High weight, low marking
- Examination
- Final report/essay
- Portfolio

Weeks from beginning of semester
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

Self assessment (formative or partially summative) – no or minimal marking time

http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1059&context=jutlp
Helping students to make use of feedback

1. Prepare students to receive feedback (eg align staff & student expectations to agree purpose; what is ‘feedback’)

2. Reduce emphasis on written feedback – supplement with dialogue

3. Provide timely feedback (eg generic feedback ASAP)

http://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/documents/Make%20FeedbackWork.pdf
Timely provision and use of feedback

Examples: *Timely, high quality generic feedback* (Race, 2009)
- Provide online or face-to-face overview of the cohort’s performance starts to emerge;
- Issue a pre-prepared one page handout immediately post-submission identifying what was expected under each criterion, features of a good answer, and common mistakes

Examples: *Using feedback* (ASKe 2007; n.d.)
- Provide examples of how other students have used feedback to improve
- Students complete and submit template with assessment describing feedback previously received and how it has been applied to current task
- Encourage peer discussion in small groups about feedback received and how it will be used
Some ideas in closing …

• Much of what we know and practice for improving the experience of first year students is immediately transferable to later years and contexts.

• Real impact requires institutional level commitment and institution-wide academic and professional partnerships.

• Good practice in the classroom will enhance the learning experience of all students.
When we get it right...

What would a good Week 1 lecture in the First Year look like?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUzjIsP1yxc&feature=PlayList&p=F2C026529F7622DC&playnext_from=PL&playnext=1&index=10
License

These PowerPoint slides are licensed under a Creative Commons license:
Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 2.5 Australia License