

ROUNDTABLE: ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING: USING INTERDISCIPLINARY SYNERGIES TO DEVELOP GOOD TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICE

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Relevant assessment

Key Contacts: Glenn Mitchell and Heather Monkhouse

The questions/comments on 'relevant assessment'

- How to develop peer-to-peer assessment as normal?
 - What is the relation between 'so what' test and graduate attributes/qualities?
 - Does assessment lead to learning?
 - Maintaining motivation – inspiration
 - Changing attitudes at a university-wide level
 - Addressing assessment issues at a system level
 - Course design to allow for future flexibility
 - Flexible assessments – choices?
 - How to focus students on importance of graduate attributes?
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1. Peer to peer assessment in with another body of assessments, Stand alone – not viable.
 2. Do students have the skills to do this effectively? When is it effective?
 3. Students learn critical evaluation – strong developmental tool. When they have to assess someone else's work they look at it differently.
 4. Medical – be comfortable with being able to evaluate others (nursing) there will be peer-to-peer assessment. Currently they don't have the skills.
 5. How do you assess peer-to peer? Formative activity is great? Structured list of what to do – then revise based on lecturer based on list given.

6. Students need to learn how to give feedback. Can make transparent for students: What the marking criteria means with an assignment.
7. Australian studies – 5 posts up per session on a particular topic – can be a comment based on another student's comment – if you post expect a comment. Regional students take this very seriously – more so than the more local students.
8. 'so what' depends on context – really quite different for different students, but we must provide the same:
 - core of what we do, and why we do it – if we can spark them, and inspire, excite them – it's great, but why do I need it? Students are aware we need them – customer is not always right?
 - Not everything is immediately relevant now – all useful eventually, or turn the question back to the student (reflection)
 - Un-embed graduate attributes will answer the 'so what'
9. Oftentimes – 'learning for learning's sake' to make students a good citizen of Australia (so unleash the graduate attributes).
10. Relevant assessment – we often investigate usefulness of assessment by talking to undergraduate students – better to talk to the graduates. Usually they have a wider perspective and can give better understanding of why certain tasks had been useful– or the employers (if they can articulate what they want).
11. Degree of separation between disciplines is not as great as might perceive and it is the graduate attributes that link.
12. In life most times we want to know what we are buying – at Uni this is not so transparent.
13. If the real way to evaluate assessment relevancy is to consult with graduates and employers – we need a good way to track/contact these people, and follow up regularly.
14. More mature students – bring in other life skills, more demands on time, have been away from formal education for a while.
15. Relevant – helping to bring clarity to assessment task and future, also about more clearly mirrors the tasks and skills students will need as graduates.
16. Whether the content is crucial – or 'magical'. Professional degrees – what must the student know to be safe and effective? Occupies a huge part of the curriculum – we are at some level compelled to teach both knowledge and skills together.
17. How we teach is therefore very important – is the knowledge taught as it would be used?
18. Get staff together to see how each unit's assessments might map in the course – workshop together. To engage academic staff ask: 'what drives you nuts' and float the graduate attributes in the background.

19. Most issues for academic staff:

- Pressed for time;
- Students under-skilled for next task; and
- Disheartening feel when students are failing or borderline.

20. perhaps these issues could be alleviated if the assessment is adjusted.

21. When we ask academics what are the graduate attributes into a unit – then say ‘why’? how will it be achieved?

22. Activate the graduate qualities – show some exemplars. Capabilities of the graduate qualities will differ for different disciplines – communication in music, nursing, computing etc

23. Outcomes for future research? What’s the trajectory of assessment leading to the acquisition to graduate qualities? How do we assess at what level the student is for the qualities?

24. Acquire the qualities after you graduate?

- Need a long-term, large-reaching mapping exercise spanning the spectrum of students and stake-holders
- Inter-relationships with other Universities
- Benchmarks are created by those who play the game
- Investigate what students think about assessment – what works/doesn’t work, the pedagogical underpinnings around assessment (student experience of assessment) in order to increase the relevancy of our practices

25. Maintaining motivation

- Let’s get it first;
 - Students say – ‘passion’ attracts them about teaching staff, ‘the teacher knows a lot about their subject’;
 - Students want to be taught, they want to be inspired;
 - Provocations, teaching matters;
 - When students inspire us there can be a reciprocal jolt in motivation;
 - Students help teach teachers – develop a student’s sense of entitlement; and
 - Time & resource intensive to assess effectively and create a challenging, stimulating assessment.
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RECORD OF GROUP'S PRESENTATION¹

1. Investigate the challenges

- Talk to the graduate – not just undergrads
- Talk to employers
- Need a good way to track and contact them and follow up over time
- Design 'proforma' to ask good questions
- Find the 'relevant' tasks in the world of the professional and the world of the citizen

2. What strategies?

- Peer to peer assessment – why?
 - Scaffolding/empowering students
- Handing the 'so what?' question back over to students – so that the reflection and evaluation is student-centered.

3. Outcomes from future research

- Investigate the student experience
 - What is the trajectory of student learning
 - Inter-institution collaboration to develop benchmarks and exemplars
 - Finding ways of inspiring teachers and learners
 - Finding ways of teachers learning from and being inspired by students and student learning
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CONTRIBUTING ISSUES AND CONCEPTS²

- How to focus students on importance of graduate attributes
- Maintaining motivation inspiration
- Changing attitudes as a university wide level
- Course design to allow for future flexibility
- Re-assessment we really need to ask WHAT are we assessing and how we will assess?
- What is the relation between "So what" test and graduate attribute/qualities?
- Does assessment lead to learning

¹ Record of the notes presented in support of the group's reporting back to the larger group

² These points are drawn from the suggestions of Roundtable participants (the points were recorded on the coloured postit notes).

- How to develop peer-to-peer assessment as 'normal'
- Addressing assessment issues at a system level
- Flexible assessments – choices?

The questions/comments on 'relevant assessment'

26. How to develop peer-to-peer assessment as normal?
27. What is the relation between 'so what' test and graduate attributes/qualities?
28. Does assessment lead to learning?
29. Maintaining motivation – inspiration
30. Changing attitudes at a university-wide level
31. Addressing assessment issues at a system level
32. Course design to allow for future flexibility
33. Flexible assessments – choices?
34. How to focus students on importance of graduate attributes?

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