

Enhancing the effectiveness of tertiary teaching and learning through assessment

Jill Musgrave (Victoria University of Wellington), Pat Reid (Waikato Institute of Technology), Rosanne Matheson (Aviation Travel and Training Group), Jane Stewart (Waikato Institute of Technology) and Oneroa Stewart (Bay of Plenty Polytechnic)

Introduction

Assessment has been identified internationally as an area in which tertiary educators need further professional development. The recent shift to 'assessment for learning' rather than 'assessment of learning' recognises that utilising the former is one of the most effective interventions we can make to improve teaching and learning. This research aims to document, via case study investigations, innovative and effective assessment strategies of 39 tertiary teachers from three different New Zealand tertiary education sectors.



The case studies

University

Ten teachers from the University of Waikato



Exemplar case study

Dr Alison Campbell
The University of Waikato
a.campbell@waikato.ac.nz

In-class quizzes require students to discuss questions and persuade each other of their viewpoints. If students get the answers wrong, they know they need to do more work. If they get them right and have also persuaded their peers, they feel good about it.

Strengths and challenges

The quizzes can be used with any class size and subject. They engage students, connect different parts of the course and promote deep learning. Additional time is needed for preparation.

Key issues

Formative feedback
Integrating assessment with teaching and learning

Alison says: "We know there are gaps between what students know when they arrive and what we think they know. I use the quizzes as a way of trying to bridge the gaps."

Maori and Pasifika

Nine teachers from the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic



Exemplar case study

Kuku Wawatai
Bay of Plenty Polytechnic
Kuku.wawatai@boppoly.ac.nz

Interviewing students is by far the most effective way of assessment

The words "or by any other means" were added to an assessment statement, and various protocols were negotiated in order to assess a student orally in an interview. At the end of the interview the student received instant feedback, and both tutor and student were very happy with the outcome.

Strengths and challenges

This strategy incorporates immediate feedback for students. The main limitation is the one hour time length for an individual assessment.

Key issues

Authentic assessment

Kuku says: 'I considered it to be creative, different, highly responsive and most definitely student appreciated.'

Institute of Technology/Polytechnic

Ten teachers from Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec)



Exemplar case study

Tim Croucher
Wintec
Tim.croucher@wintec.ac.nz

Rigour and integration in Media Arts

Formative strategies help students respond to written assignment briefs for practical arts.

- Students rewrite the brief in their own words following in-class discussion
- The teacher gives feedback referring to performance criteria
- The teacher writes a schema to describe standards for each grade level

Strengths and challenges

The strategies help students to engage in independent learning and are fair and reliable, with both teacher and students using same explicit statements. Students who lack self-direction sometimes have difficulties.

Key issues

Formative feedback
Integrating assessment with teaching and learning

Tim says: 'The relationship between the subject itself, the delivery of the education and the assessment we make of it, should be intimately integrated.'

Private Training Establishment

Ten teachers from a range of different PTEs



Exemplar case study

Jenny Love
Sir George Seymour National
College of Airline, Travel & Tourism
JennyLove@sirgeorge.ac.nz

Being assessed taking a tour is the only way to assess a tour guide

Being assessed taking a tour is the only way to assess a tour guide

Industry insisted that a large practical part of this course take place outside the classroom. The assessment gives students a feel for guiding and helps them decide if it is the right job for them.

Students take a group around a tourist attraction. After the tour, the group completes an evaluation form. The tutor collates his/her own evaluation with the group's form and gives each student feedback.

Strengths and challenges

Students are scared initially. Practice and formative feedback from peers and the tutor build student confidence. By the end, they have learned a lot about themselves and begun to develop their own tour guiding style.

Key issues

Authentic assessment
Acquisition of industry skills and theoretical knowledge

Jenny says: 'If you want to be a tour guide, it's all about stepping out of your comfort zone and doing it.'

Conclusion

The case studies and research materials provide a richness of information and valuable insights into the assessment views and practices of 39 New Zealand tertiary teachers.

Read more about the project on the Ako Aotearoa's website: http://www.nctte.co.nz/teaching_matters_forum_projects.php

Acknowledgements Poster publication – Jane Stewart, Robina Cummins, Cass Green, Lisa Jones