

Moodleposium @ University of Canberra

The highly successful Moodleposium was hosted here at the University of Canberra between 7-8 September, 2009. Organised in partnership with the ANU and CIT, the event was attended by an unexpectedly large group of approximately 270 people from a variety of educational and industry sectors. 56 different organisations were represented, including 33 from Tertiary institutions - of which 25 were Australian Universities.

UC adopted Moodle as its primary learning management system (LMS) for students in 2008, and since then it has developed significant collaborative relationships with industry partners, tertiary education providers, and the online learning community more broadly. UC is now recognised as a leading institution in Australia in terms of its virtual learning environment implemented using Moodle.

"Speakers were excellent, everything ran smoothly... UC collaborated with ANU and CIT and the team flavour was a very strong positive element which helped to make the conference work."

- James Neill, Lecturer,
University of Canberra



October 2009

Assessment Policy: Internationalisation P.1

Moodleposium @ University of Canberra P.1

Assessment Policy: Issues for the Review P.2

Assessment Policy: Work Integrated Learning P.2

Assessment Policy: Constructive Alignment P.2

Distributive Leadership Scholars P.3

Stuff That Works Lunches P.3

Welcome: Assessment Policy Edition

Professor Carole Kayrooz, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education

An eventful past few weeks includes our Moodleposium, faculty meetings on the 2010 Winter Term, ALTC Distributive Leadership Scholars and planning underway for the Associate Deans Education Networking Forum for associate deans education in universities in ACT and NSW. Both the Moodleposium and the ADE Forum have been initiated by UC in partnership with ANU and, in the case of the Moodleposium, also with CIT. Congratulations to those staff who helped to make the Moodleposium one of the most successful events we have held, establishing UC as a clear leader in the adoption of our learning management system, Moodle.

This issue of the BLT also includes information on the Assessment Policy Review underway. The Assessment Policy was due for review this year in line with our

annual policy review schedule. A sub-committee of University Education Committee is currently working to benchmark good policy practice elsewhere, gather all related UC data, incorporate some of the University's initiatives such as work integrated learning, and internationalisation and prepare a draft before taking this to the University community for consultation and comment. A working party of the University Education Committee will report back to the Committee late this year. The Review Group comprises myself (Chair), Peter Donnan, Laurie Grealish, Maree Sainsbury, Michele Fleming, Geoffrey Wakeford, Monica Kennedy, Helen Carter, Gay Landau and Lesley Watt. We will be pleased to have any feedback at all about the policy during the consultation phase shortly.

Internationalisation in the New Assessment Policy

In line with the University's signature theme of internationalisation (and Step 34 of the Strategic Plan) the assessment policy now directly addresses issues of assessment and cultural fairness in assessment. Specific reference is now made to the needs of students who spoke another language before English and to the inclusion of international perspectives in

assessment items. The policy is now inclusive of offshore assessment. The policy supports assessment for learning (rather than merely assessing what has been learnt) and this shift encourages new approaches to assessment that encourage students of diverse backgrounds to develop throughout the semester.

Constructive Alignment in Assessment

Constructive alignment is an educational concept referring to the systematic alignment of content, learning activities and assessment tasks, to address the stated learning outcomes (Biggs and Tang 2007). It is very well used in the UK, and in essence, states up front the outcomes lecturers expect. Unlike outcomes-based education, in constructive alignment we use outcome statements and open ended assessment tasks that allow for unintended but desirable outcomes.

Learning outcomes can exist at different levels :

- the institutional level as graduate outcomes
- the course level as statement of what course completers will gain
- the unit level as what students gain when they complete a given unit.

Constructive alignment is based on three questions :

- “1. What do I want my students to learn?”
 2. What is the best way in my circumstances and within available resources of getting then to learn it?”
 3. How can I know when or how well they learned it.”
- (p.249)

If you want to read more about this, one of the best books on constructive alignment is John Biggs and Catherine Tang's (2007) *Teaching for Quality Learning*, Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, New York.

Issues for the Review - Academic Policy and Review

In initiating the Assessment Policy review, the UEC noted that most information in the Policy is good and should be retained. However, issues have been identified from student and staff feedback. Some problems relate to compliance, rather than the Policy itself (but these issues still need to be addressed). Some staff find the document hard to use. The document is very long, and would benefit from restructuring in line with our new policy framework. Principles (policy) should be separated from procedures. General advice included in the Policy could be made available in a complementary best practice guide.

The review group has gathered information from a wide variety of sources including student surveys, Dean of Students, the Students' Association unit outlines project and staff comments through the Teaching and Learning Centre. The Strategic Plan, Academic Plan and AUQA report were taken into account. TLC has advised on other universities' policies and best practice. The secretary of UEC provided a list of assessment-related matters raised with the Committee.

UC Assessment Policy and Work-Integrated Learning

Work-integrated learning was identified as a signature theme for UC courses in the 2007-8 Course and Discipline Review. To date, assumptions about assessment in work-integrated learning have been embedded in disciplinary competencies and practices that are seldom subject to wider review and debate.

Incorporation of work-integrated learning into the assessment policy will serve to make these practices explicit, providing opportunities for continuous development, evaluation, and improvement. In the draft stages of the revised policy, the following changes are related to work-integrated learning.

The definition of assessment tasks has been extended from formative (immediate learning) and summative (certification) tasks to include a third type, called reflexive tasks. Reflexive tasks situate the learner as an active constructor of knowledge, able to self-regulate and not limited by the directions of others. Reflexive assessment tasks promote longer-term learning; they enhance student confidence and self-image as a professional, and are oriented to both work and learning.

Proposed changes

The review is still in progress. Proposed changes to the Policy include:

- Strengthening the linkage between course objectives, unit learning outcomes and assessment tasks (“constructive alignment”)
- Dividing the document into policy, procedures (including staff responsibilities) and guidelines
- Making language clearly prescriptive where this is the intention, i.e. “will” or “must” not “should”
- Incorporating signature themes such as work-integrated learning and internationalisation
- Adding focus on generic skills / graduate attributes in learning outcomes and assessment
- Removing information on exams and deferred and supplementary assessment that is covered in separate policies
- Improving feedback sections (a frequent source of student dissatisfaction) and moderation
- Ensuring that record-keeping requirements are realistic.

Summative assessment tasks are re-focused towards the purpose of certification; they are outcomes-based measurements of performance that indicate that the student/ graduate is adequately prepared for graduate work. As such, summative assessment tasks should be constructively aligned with graduate attributes and/or professional competencies as well as unit-level learning outcomes.

When summative assessment tasks are re-focused onto certification and graduate outcomes, clear and unambiguous information about the level of performance required for a satisfactory (pass) grade in work-integrated assessments is required, usually in the form of assessment criteria.

It is expected that as the University's work-integrated learning project develops, there may be further additions or developments to the Assessment Policy.

Laurie Grealish
ADE, Faculty of Health



Catherine Hungerford, Jason Washington-King, and Jo Gibson, participants in the Faculty of Health project. Photo by Sue Hewat

HOT TOPICS Winter Term

Staff from the Teaching & Learning Centre (TLC) are currently meeting with faculty members and teachers to provide support with the design of courses for the 2010 Winter Term. The Winter Term provides an opportunity to refresh and reinvigorate courses at UC with new strategies, learning activities and assessments. In particular, there has been a great deal of interest in the use of blended learning strategies to address the needs of the Winter Term. If you'd like assistance with your course, or you'd like more information on how TLC can help, please contact danny.munnerley@canberra.edu.au.

WHAT'S NEW E-Portfolios @ UC

E-portfolios are learner-created, electronic collections of "artefacts" - items of student work that demonstrate their skills or achievements.



UC is currently trialling the open-source e-portfolio tool "Mahara" as a tool for learning, assessment, and employability. Future versions of Mahara and Moodle will integrate, allowing students to instantly "archive" copies of their online work. For more information, please contact leonard.low@canberra.edu.au.

ALTC Distributive Leadership Scholars

In 2009 the University of Canberra became a cascade partner in an Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) project, "Distributive leadership for learning and teaching: Developing the faculty scholar model".

During this year, three UC faculty academics, Laurie Grealish (Health), Sam Hinton (Arts and Design) and Andrew Read (Business and Government) have been working on projects to address a teaching improvement identified from their Faculty strategic plan related to assessment. They are collaborating with academics from Flinders University, James Cook University and Latrobe University. A National Roundtable on Assessment was recently held at the University of Melbourne School of Business. Within each university there is also program support provided by the

Teaching and Learning Centre at UC.

UC Scholars and their Projects

- **Laurie Grealish** (Health) *"Alignment: learning outcomes, learning experiences and assessment in work-integrated learning in health disciplines."*
- **Sam Hinton** (Arts and Design) - *"Assessment engagement"*
- **Andrew Read** (Business and Government): *"Improving the quality of feedback"*

Activities During the Year

During the year the UC Faculty scholars have been involved in activities around developing their projects: meeting with UC leaders, creating action plans to address assessment issues, collaborating with other scholars at UC, La Trobe, James Cook and Flinders University as well as staff

in the Teaching & Learning Centre, identifying assessment resources, maintaining a reflective journal on the progress of their projects and participating in institutional and cross-institutional networks.

- **18 – 20 February:** Participated in a 3-day residential leadership training program at Macedon Spa, Victoria
- **18 – 19 June:** Planning and organisation for National Roundtable in September
- **16 September:** National Roundtable on Assessment at the University of Melbourne School of Business
- **16 November:** Proposed presentation to Academic Board at University of Canberra

Peter Donnan
Teaching & Learning Centre

"Stuff That Works" lunches

"Stuff That Works" lunches are held in the TLC Seminar Room (1C29) on some Wednesdays. Registration is not required - just come along.

23 Sept 2009 - Misty Adoniou: The value of personal connections in learning, and ways to achieve them.

21 Oct 2009 - Melanie Beecroft: Abandoning pre-conceptions: learning through creativity.

11 Nov 2009 - John Gilchrist: Research-led teaching to enhance learning.

18 Nov 2009 - Anne Daly, Laurie Grealish, Peter Donnan, Shane Nuessler: Instant feedback: the use of "scratchies" to encourage group discussion.