



## From the PVC Education

Carole Kayrooz



Welcome to Issue 1 2009 of the Bulletin for Learning and Teaching. As you know, we have a focus on assessment at the University to improve our student experience. During the 2007/8 Course and Disciplinary Review, we found that problems with assessment accounted for a high proportion of negative student feedback. More recent feedback shows assessment is an ongoing concern.

We have initiated nine projects to improve assessment practice, summarised in a separate document. The key concepts

underpinning these activities are:

- constructive alignment where the unit's learning outcomes align with content, methods and assessment schedule
- the management of student expectations about assessment
- the use of formative assessment to catch problems early; and
- the use of frequent and early feedback, not necessarily in writing.

Recently, I visited Oxford-Brookes

University, Oxford University, City University London and also discussed student feedback with colleagues at the Open University. Oxford-Brookes is focusing on assessment, research led teaching and internationalisation, as we are, so I am sharing some of the ideas gleaned from my visit there - with further material in the Recommended Reading below.

I would be very interested in your opinions and ideas on assessment so please feel free to e-mail me or [blt@canberra.edu.au](mailto:blt@canberra.edu.au) with your views.

## Recommended Reading

*"Instruments for obtaining student feedback: a review of the literature"* <http://snipurl.com/gvuf0>

*"National Student Survey: development, findings and implications"* <http://snipurl.com/gvuhe>

## UC Teaching Awards

The University of Canberra Teaching Awards recognise excellence in teaching for learning and acknowledge the central place of teaching and learning in the University. The winners of the 2009 teaching awards are:

### Vice-Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence for an Early Career Academic

- Kasi Bail (Health)
- Wendy Chesworth (Health)

### Vice-Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence for a Sessional Tutor

- Melanie Beacroft (Business and Government)

### University of Canberra Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning

- Misty Adoniou (Education)
- Wendy Chesworth (Health)
- John Gilchrist (Law)
- Andrew MacKenzie (Arts and Design)
- Mary-Jane Taylor (Arts and Design)
- Ting Wang (Education)

## Oxford Brookes Principles for Assessment FOR learning

Dr. Chris Rust

1. Feedback provided during assessment can be used FOR learning, not just to assess learning, for example, lecturers can ask students to mark assignments and compare and contrast high distinction, distinction, credit and pass work .
2. Assessment is a continuous process, beginning with research on the student cohort and copious feedback at the beginning of the semester, lessening as the semester progresses. Prepare the student to receive feedback by aligning their expectations with yours.
3. Feedback needs to be provided in a timely manner- manage student expectations about when it will be provided.
4. Learning outcomes need to be constructively aligned with content, methods and assessment.
5. Students value generic feedback where the lecturer summarises and shares the global feedback for an assignment with the cohort. If possible, providing collated feedback on exams is particularly important as this may be the last impression the student has of teaching within a particular unit.
6. Utilise different means of feedback as written feedback rarely communicates tacit understanding about disciplinary content and academic literacy skills. Specific feedback can be provided verbally and audio visually through electronic channels eg Moodle.
7. Student engagement is enhanced if written feedback is supplemented with dialogue- using in class discussions of exemplars, peer review discussions, tutor discussions, and learning through 'learning sets'.
8. Support processes of self assessment. Ask students to assess their own work first.
9. Students work can also be assessed by their peers as a formative exercise.
10. Feedback is not a 'one size fits all' and needs to be adapted to the circumstance.

## Teaching and Assessment: Insights from the UK

*Some of the highlights of Carole Kayrooz' study tour.*

### 1. Assessment at Oxford Brookes

Oxford Brookes has created a manifesto for change on assessment through The Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange (ASKe), a Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL). It was established in 2005 in recognition of good practice based on pedagogic research into aspects of assessment.

This CETL involves a broad international forum of experts on assessment in higher education, who believe:

- a) the debate on standards should be focused on assessment for learning rather than assessment of learning
- b) we need to move beyond systems focused on marks and grades towards the valid assessment of the achievement of intended outcomes

c) there are limits to the extent that standards can be articulated explicitly since ever more detailed specificity diminish the learning experience, and threaten its validity

d) active engagement of both staff and students is needed in dialogue about assessment and standards

e) assessment is largely dependent on professional judgement which, in turn, needs appropriate forums for sharing standards within and between disciplinary communities.

*The Oxford Brookes principles for creating assessment for learning are listed on the front page of this BLT.*

### 2. Constructive alignment and e-learning

The e-learning strategy at Oxford Brookes includes Course Design Intensives (CDI's) in which course teams are helped to select appropriate technologies within the context of particular courses. They do not have an institution wide approach

to e-learning but rather work with those areas that need/want development. This well received approach seems to combine constructive alignment with the latest in e-learning developments. Oxford Brookes recently commissioned an external evaluation of the CDI format – this could be interesting for UC.

### 3. Evaluating teaching and learning in a performance portfolio

The Oxford Learning Institute is building a performance portfolio that focuses on four Higher Education Academy's criteria for demonstrable proficiency in teaching and learning:

- Design and planning of learning activities and/or programs of study
- Teaching and/or supporting student learning

- Assessment and giving feedback to learners
- Developing effective environments and student support and guidance.

The premise is that if we can explicitly articulate the key developmental challenges for academics, we can accelerate their teaching and learning performance.

*Visit the Higher Education Academy website: <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/>*

## Teaching & Learning Week: "Work Integrated Learning"

13th – 17th July 2009

### Mini-Conference

13th July 9.30am – 2.00pm

### Keynote speakers

#### Professor Marilyn Wedgwood

formerly PVC External Relations Manchester  
**'Fitting engagement, finding the match and building sustainable relationships'**

#### Professor Stephen Griffith

Griffith University  
**'The Educational Value of Work Integrated Learning'**

*Marilyn and Stephen will run workshops across the remaining four days, addressing key issues. Disciplines may book one-on-one sessions with them - please contact Jenny Coggins on [jenny.coggins@canberra.edu.au](mailto:jenny.coggins@canberra.edu.au).*

## Teaching & Learning Events

*A successful Moodle Show and Tell was held on 22 April. UC will be hosting the following teaching and learning events this semester:*

### Big Picture Evaluation (HE Forum)

*Carole Kayrooz*

Wed 6 May 12.30-13.30

UC Council Room

### Applications of ICTs and potential uses to education and e-learning (two seminars)

*Prof Uma Kanjilal, visiting ICT expert*

Tues 11 – Wed 12 May

### From Sage to Guide to Meddler

*Prof Erica McWilliam*

Wed 13 May 4pm/7pm

### Work Integrated Learning Week

*Invited presenters: Stephen Billet and Marilyn Wedgwood*

13 – 17 July

## UC Faculty Assessment Projects

An Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) Distributed Leadership Grant has been obtained by the Teaching & Learning Centre (TLC) at the University of Canberra for three Faculty Teaching and Learning scholars. This Project builds on a previous project developed at the University of Wollongong (<http://www.uow.edu.au/cedir/DistributiveLeadership/index.html>).

Faculty scholars develop and implement a project plan to address a teaching improvement identified from their Faculty strategic plan related to improving assessment practice. They also participate in a national assessment roundtable organised and facilitated by scholars engaged in the

project and the participating universities in 2009 are Flinders University, James Cook University, LaTrobe University and the University of Canberra. The three University of Canberra faculty scholars for 2009 and their projects are:

**Laurie Grealish** (Health) - Alignment: learning outcomes, learning experiences and assessment in work-integrated learning in health disciplines. This project will map out the teaching and learning practices, related competency-based assessment and grading practices, and the resource requirements across the health curricula in clinical psychology, dietetics, nursing, nutrition, midwifery, pharmacy, and physiotherapy.

**Andrew Read** (Business and Government)

- Use of rubrics. This project aims to improve the quality of feedback through the use of assessment rubrics within the faculty.

**Sam Hinton** (Arts and Design) - Assessment engagement. Feedback in a number of Arts and Design units is traditionally subjective, entailing the critical appraisal of student work, often against a set of generic or broadly defined criteria. This project will review current feedback strategies; survey students' attitudes to feedback; develop a best-practice feedback cookbook; engage some staff to implement feedback strategies in semester 2 units; and assess the value/success of the feedback cookbook.