

Vol. 2, Issue 1, March 2022

Te Puna Ako News

Updates on Learning and Teaching at Unitec



Learning and Teaching Symposium

Assessment for a changing world

The theme of Unitec's 2022 Learning and Teaching Symposium was change in assessment – how thinking about assessment has been changing and what this means for change in our programmes and courses. This change is creating assessment that's learning-oriented and student-centred.

The symposium addressed all assessment components in advocating for

- tasks that align with course learning outcomes and learning and teaching activities so we evaluate the knowledge and skills we want to evaluate
- tasks that are authentic and inclusive to encourage student engagement and motivation
- giving students the opportunity to use marking criteria so they learn to judge their own work as they are doing it
- feedback processes that are meaningful to students and encourage improvement
- assuring the quality of all this in our assessment through robust pre-moderation

Below are summaries of the keynote and parallel sessions plus links to recordings of the sessions.

If you are thinking about making changes to your assessment, talk to your Te Puna Ako liaison about where to start.

At a glance

- Profile - Jocelyn Williams, Manager, Te Puna Ako
- Assessment symposium - a review and recordings

Te Puna Ako News gives you a quick update of learning and teaching news, good practice at Unitec and practical ideas on how you can create better learning .

The TPA liaison for your school can be found on the Nest. Click on this link [here](#).

Get the latest Unitec Covid Info when you click on the banner below (on the Nest). Includes info about staff communications, forms and guidelines.



What we learnt at the symposium about ways to assess

Keynote 1

Designing more authentic, learning-oriented assessment tasks

Sally Brown and Kay Sambell

The main points of this keynote address

- We need to rebalance the focus of assessment from assessment *of* learning (measurement) to assessment *for* learning
- Do assessment *with* not *to* students – engage students more in the assessment dynamic (task, criteria, evidence, feedback) by creating more authentic tasks, teaching them to self-evaluate, and enable their use of feedback
- The concept of authentic tasks is broadened from assessment that reflects the activity of the profession to those which foster personal growth and development, that is 'learning as becoming'
- Sally and Kay provided a simple, six step process to designing authentic assessment starting with driving verbs in the learning outcomes
- Our feedback process needs to be redesigned to make sure students find it useful, timely (so it can feed forward), and student-focussed
- This means having feedback dialogues not monologues and helping students build their own evaluative expertise.

A constant theme of the symposium sessions was to 'involve students in the assessment dynamic'.

If you didn't manage to get to everything (or anything) here are the links to the recordings of the symposium sessions

[Welcome and keynote 1](#)

[Keynote 2](#)

[Alignment](#)

[Pre-moderation](#)

[Feedback](#)

[Inclusivity](#)

[Authenticity](#)

[Closing remarks and karakia by Pou Hautu Keith Ikin](#)

Keynote 2

Students in the process of assessment

Linda Aumua and Annette Pitovao

The second keynote addressed:

- putting students at the centre while thinking and planning for assessment
- the constantly changing world around teachers and students. There are changes in student cohorts every year, institution direction, the economy, and industry needs, etc
- knowing your students and what they expect is critical for their success
- 21st century students are very diverse and come to the classroom with their own vast knowledge and experience
- learning is not limited to what is taught in the classroom as students can now easily access information via different media
- sharing information and collaboration for learning is now taking place via social media platforms.
- using a variety of assessment methods to meet the different needs of students is a requirement of changing times.

New Moodle resource for teaching staff: Academic Quality

It is particularly useful for new teaching staff as an introduction to academic quality at Unitec, covering topics like Programme Regulations, Course Descriptors, Moderations, CEPs & PEPs.

Here is the [link](#)

Aligning Learning Elements

Presenters: Sarah Bampton (Interpreting and Liaison) and Lee-Anne Turton (Early Childhood)

Aligning the different components of a programme and its courses is fundamental to our approach to learning and teaching. This session explored how programme outcomes flow into courses, their learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities and assessments. The presenters extended alignment to include alignment with Treaty obligations, Te Noho Kotahitanga and regulatory requirements.

Alignment is a crucial concept in learning and teaching. It assures us that the things we aim for the students to learn (outcomes) are being taught and capabilities developed (activities) and evaluated (assessment).

The presentations in this session showed how:

Alignment is deliberately built into the design of the courses and assessment from the beginning.

Quality Assurance through Pre-moderation

Presenters: Alexandra Whitham & Daniel Wagner, Creative Industries

Moderation is a crucial part of the teaching and learning process, assuring the quality of assessment and ensuring results are fair and valid. Pre-moderation is an opportunity to improve an assessment through reflective practice and conversations which draw on the collective wisdom of peer teachers. As part of the process, it is important to check that learning outcomes can be met by the assessment.

Last year, lecturers in Performing & Screen Arts were compelled to re-design a major film and performance project to suit the Alert Level 4 lockdown environment. Creative agility was required to quickly craft a cross-discipline assignment that both captured the essence of the conventional (face-to-face) filmmaking experience which also stood on its own merits as

Students are constantly presented with learning outcomes, tasks and criteria for all assessments so they know where they are heading and how they are being evaluated.

Alignment with the graduate profile is crucial - we look beyond graduation to what students will have to do on a daily basis in their work.

Aligning with learning and teaching activities means modelling, in class, approaches/resources required to complete the assessment. The aim is to build student capability so they can succeed in the assessment.

Summary

The importance of the 3 dimensions of authentic assessment realism, cognitive challenge and evaluative judgement were presented in the examples in this session. Alignment is complex – but start somewhere simple – perhaps with LOs, Graduate Outcomes and assessment - then bring in other things over time. Assessment is meaningful when it is authentic, aligned and understood.

ALIGNMENT

[Click for the full recording](#)

an online project. Screen and Acting staff worked together to plan an activity that addressed the Learning Outcomes of both courses. This social moderation approach signalled a departure from the conventional model whereby a lecturer designs an assessment and passes it to a colleague for pre-moderation. It was a dynamic process of collaborative, living pre-moderation that grew organically out of the project design process.

Programme teams were encouraged to look at their moderation practices to identify any gaps or risks and to consider if there was anything from the presentation which teams could integrate into their own moderation practices.

This was a highly inspirational presentation, and it was a privilege to be able to introduce Alex and Daniel with their enthusiasm and integrity around assessment in the PASA programme.

PRE-MODERATION

[Click for the full recording](#)

New Thinking in the Importance of Feedback

Rather than giving feedback 'TO' learners, new thinking suggests putting learners at the centre of feedback experiences and doing feedback 'WITH' them. To do feedback WITH students means that we encourage learners to engage with a variety of feedback processes, and then expect them to take action based on input received.

Caralyn Kemp (Environmental and Animal Sciences) discussed the importance of recognising the affective aspect of feedback. She described how, in her level 7 course, she gets her students to practise giving, receiving and reflecting on feedback in relation to their written work. Caralyn models this on the blind double peer review process for publishing an academic article within their discipline. Learning to receive critical feedback and act on it becomes an authentic task, as well as contributing to students' deeper understanding of content AND academic writing.

Gilian Graham (Nursing) described the value of giving verbal feedback on her Level 5 students' interactions/role plays in the moment in the f2f classroom. She discovered the value of using the recording tool, Vocaroo, during lockdown last year. This free tool is an easy way to record yourself, where you can send a URL of your verbal feedback to students. GG (Gilian) found that her students really appreciated getting feedback from her personally, and she loved the ability to use her voice/gestures/tone to give examples of potential ways that students could improve their work.

Engaging in constructive, timely and dialogic feedback at all levels of learning will help ensure that students take these skills beyond the classroom and campus and into their professional settings.

FEEDBACK WITH STUDENTS

[Click for the full recording](#)

Authentic assessment aims to

Engage students in the actual practices of the profession by using and applying skills and knowledge to address either 'real world problems' (Lund, 1997) or plausible situations that stimulate students to engage in solving actual problems, applying knowledge and making decisions while linking theoretical concepts to everyday experience.

Involve students in the process of being able to judge the quality of their own work
Position students in relation to their practice as they move between being a student and a future practitioner, at the same time as being able to bring their authentic self.

Research suggests that if students can see the purpose and meaning of an assessment they are more likely to engage in it. They are also more

motivated as they can see themselves "becoming" the practitioner in the field of work they are studying for.

The two staff presentations highlighted the willingness and process undertaken to provide their students with a more authentic assessment, one because of the need to develop an online assessment as students could not get out on practicum and the other considered the research question, "How does authentic assessment enhance student learning and engagement?"

In both cases students acknowledged the motivation that an authentic assessment provided along with connecting their learning with real world settings.

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

[Click for the full recording](#)

Ensuring Inclusivity in Assessment

This session opens with a question, "What does inclusivity mean to you?" Inclusivity is important because of the ever-changing landscape of education and our constantly evolving students and cohorts. It is important to raise our awareness and equip ourselves with the knowledge, ability and sensibility in making our learning and teaching environments inclusive of all learners and colleagues alike.

Paula Bold-Wilson and Hoa Nguyen (Social Practice) – Mana-enhancing teaching practice:

Paula and Hoa anchor their session to our obligations to Te Tiriti, Te Noho Kotahitanga values and I See Me initiatives. They suggest to design courses and facilitate learning more inclusively by leveraging peer learning and students' rich cultural contexts as springboards for discourse, thus making students partners in the learning process. Whether facilitating class discussions or giving assessment feedback to students, we should ask ourselves: am I upholding their mana or am I diminishing it? Paula's final challenge was "Shift-away from deficit-theorising and think about students' aspirations and share positive narratives in the classroom space."

Robyn Gandell (Bridging) - Privileging movement

Robyn opens her session with a metaphor of how we set up bridges in education for students to cross in terms of learning and teaching. However, we are aware that there are some students who may be neurodivergent and because our bridge is not designed for them, they may not be able to cross it.

Robyn's session questions the western education paradigms and how this influences what we value and what we unwittingly ignore in our learning and teaching approach. She shows how students think in movement and how this is incorporated in assessments. Since there are many ways of knowing and being, how do we avoid misrecognition and mischaracterising our students' divergent thinking and doing?

Katy Mann Benn (Learning and Achievement) - A case study of how to assess inclusively

Katy Mann Benn shares a project that she was part of called 'Realising Opportunities'. Its aim is to improve access to university education and research for students who are academically able but less likely to participate because of systemic and/or economic barriers.

Katy focuses on how inclusivity was built into the assessment design and delivery of the programmes that she led. She emphasises how inclusive assessment runs parallel to robust assessment practices such as aligning it to the learning outcomes and by giving multiple opportunities for formative feedback.

Katy concludes by highlighting what Paula, Hoa and Robyn have previously said which is the need for educators to work with the rich diversity of our students; to value their narratives and lived experience; and to understand and respect our students' cultures so we are able to center it in our teaching, learning and assessments.

INCLUSIVITY

[Click for the full recording](#)

Dr Jocelyn Williams, Manager, Te Puna Ako

Welcome Joce Williams

Dr Joce Williams is the new Manager of Te Puna Āko. She comes from a similar role at MIT where she also led a team of academic advisors supporting all MIT Schools. Prior to that, she was Academic Director for a PTE Business School, working across academic quality (EER, new programme development), research management (PBRF-related), and the challenges of creating a teaching and supervision infrastructure for a new postgraduate business programme including student research, in an organisation where none of this existed. And back in the day? Joce was a teacher, programme leader and HOS at Unitec. Her connection to this whenua goes back... quite a few years!



Her discipline “home” is Communication Studies, an interdisciplinary field that fired her imagination when she was teaching and doing a Master of Management by research in the early 2000s at Unitec. Joce quickly came to recognise that deep knowledge of and skilled practice in communication is relevant and of high value to almost any profession or sphere of life you care to name. And, she says, don’t overlook the accelerating impact of the 4th Industrial Revolution triggered by the widespread adoption of the internet from the late 1990s. Vastly increased digital connectivity holds both opportunity and, as we are seeing, dark risks. Joce’s research traverses the digital divide, new media/media ethics, and specific topics including students’ vulnerability to phishing, and online customer trust.

Joce’s life as an educator began with an arts degree, a Diploma in Teaching and then several years in a Manurewa High School which she remembers as a fully transformative time that confirmed for her, she was in the right career. She says this early training in the basics of teaching teenagers remains fundamental to what she knows and advocates for in learning and teaching. Be who you are; it’s OK to make mistakes; be real. Then make things right. That’s powerful for students. Know your learners and relate to them on a personal level; care about them and their journey and help them get there. Give them meaningful tasks that they can relate to.

Her vision this year for Te Puna Āko - which she co-leads with Digital Learning Manager James Oldfield - is that the highly capable team of TPA Academic Advisors provides learning and teaching leadership for Unitec whanau especially in the digital learning space, but also beyond here, so that Unitec innovation in learning and teaching has a strong presence and visibility in Te Pūkenga.

Joce has lived for many years in West Auckland and now in the Waitakere Ranges. She loves the bush, bird life and sea – and the peace. Her creative urges get more attention these days, so she’s been revisiting old hobbies like hand-building basic clay vessels! “OK, I know – a classic Titirangi-dweller!”

She also finds walking is meditative - if the conditions are right! With two of her three children having re-located to the Queenstown area in the last year, Joce has good reasons to properly explore Te Waipounamu. A trip in December 2021 included memorable moments like walking the Hooker Valley track close to the sacred ancestor of Ngāi Tahu, Aoraki Mt Cook. She says she felt a wholly new sense of scale. The distant sound of the mountains groaning as ice shifted in the intense heat is something she says she’ll never forget.
