Assessment in higher education:
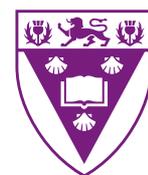## Reframing traditional understandings and practices

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Assessment in higher education:
Reframing traditional understandings and practices

Case Studies: H-P Bakker, N Brouwer, A Buckland, A Chinomona, M De Vos, N Donaldson, N Dukhi, J du Toit, F Ellery, R Fox, C Grant, M Guilfoyle, H Kruuse, S Matthews, B Meistre, S Shackleton, I Siebörger, J Snowball, S Vetter, S Vice and R Western

Editors: Sherran Clarence, Lynn Quinn and Jo-Anne Vorster

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Assessment in higher education: Reframing traditional understandings and practices

CONTENTS

Introduction

Few lecturers would deny the importance of assessment in higher education. For many though the emphasis is still on the assessment *of* learning rather than assessment *for* learning. Not all lecturers have opportunities to think differently or deeply about the potential of assessment to contribute meaningfully to students' learning on their courses and beyond their courses.

By Lynn Quinn

The case studies in this publication provide examples of lecturers who have considered the role of assessment in their courses carefully. All of them have engaged with matters related to assessment as part of the formal courses or qualifications offered by staff of the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL) at Rhodes University. In these courses lecturers are encouraged to reflect critically on their current assessment practices, engage with some of the literature and research on assessment in higher education, and then re-conceptualise their assessment methods and approaches. These case studies were drawn from the assignments and portfolios that they completed as part of the summative assessment for the courses they attended. The purpose of the case studies is pedagogic and to illustrate a range of assessment practices and principles. For the sake of clarity some of the details have been omitted or slightly changed.

Centrality of assessment for 'directing' students' learning

Students can, with difficulty, escape from the effects of poor teaching, they cannot (by definition if they want to graduate) escape the effects of poor assessment (Boud 1995: 35).

Contrary to what many believe, assessment has a greater impact on student learning than teaching; assessment strongly influences how students respond to their studies. Assessment signals to them what their lecturers regard as important and thus what they should pay attention to. It acts as an incentive to study and to study in particular ways. As Boud and Falchikov (2007: 3) point out:

Assessment

- has a **powerful effect** on what students do and how they do it
- **communicates to them** what they can and cannot succeed in doing
- **builds or undermines their confidence** - as learners on a course and in the future, in the world.

Lecturers often plan the curriculum for a course, then devise the teaching and learning activities, and then the assessment. When students approach a course they first look at how it is assessed, they then decide on the learning activities they need to engage with in order to meet the assessment requirements. Assessment is thus, for most students, a 'lever' which determines how and what they will learn in a course:

Priorities for lecturers:

Priorities for students:

Figure 1: Lecturer and student priorities
(adapted from Biggs 2003: 3)

If, however, a course curriculum is designed in such a way that when students work towards meeting the assessment requirements they are in fact achieving the purposes and outcomes of the course then assessment as a 'lever' has a valid educational purpose. In short, if the 'planned' curriculum and the 'actual' curriculum are the same, then students will engage in the desired learning activities.

Biggs' concept of **'constructive alignment'** is useful for reminding curriculum/course designers of the need for coherence between all the elements of the curriculum (Biggs 1999; Biggs and Tang 2011). The course purpose, outcomes, teaching methods, assessment methods (approaches and criteria) should all be aligned to ensure that the desired learning is achieved. The 'constructive' part refers to constructivist principles of learning - learning which actively engages students in constructing their own understanding of course material. In an aligned system, the assessment methods will be designed in such a way that students will be guided into the kind of learning the lecturer wants in order to meet the course outcomes.
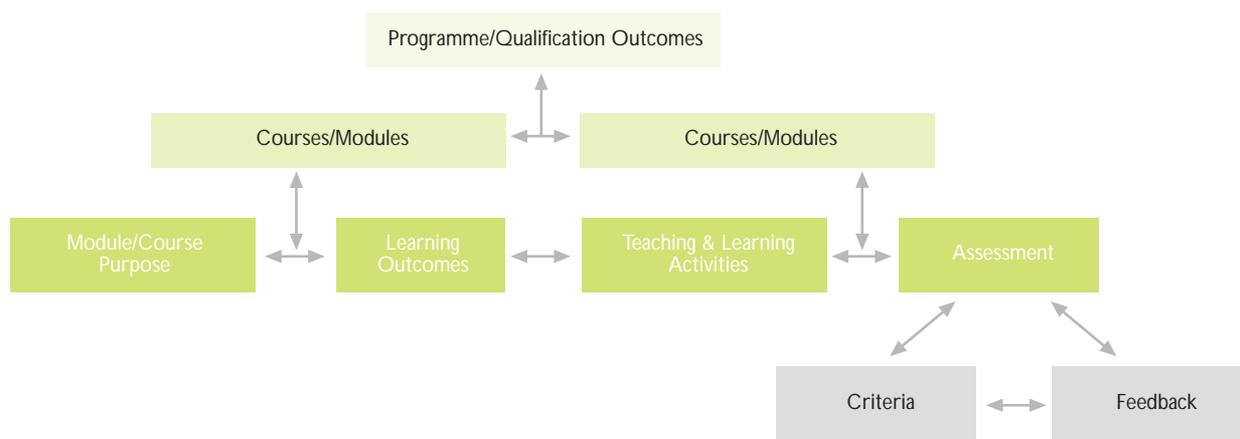
Figure 2: Curriculum alignment process (adapted from Biggs 1999)

Rethinking the purposes of assessment: summative, formative and sustainable assessment

For many lecturers, the challenge is to rethink whether and how their current practices are working. Is assessment doing what it exists to do? Research conducted by Boud (2007) shows that in many institutions the dominant discourse is still assessment *of* learning, that is, assessment is still predominantly related to issues of measurement, certification, quality assurance, and so on. It is about certifying existing knowledge and giving students feedback on current learning. In many contexts assessment thus continues to play a relatively minor role in *promoting* learning - particularly learning for the longer term. The challenge is for lecturers to think beyond their immediate classroom contexts and to consider whether and how assessment is preparing students for a lifetime of learning and work - what Boud terms 'sustainable assessment'.

Sustainable assessment is assessment which focuses not only on 'content' but also on the processes of learning; on how students will continue to learn after the point of assessment; it contributes to 'the formation of a capable person who can engage in *professional work and contribute to society as an informed citizen*' (Boud 2007: 19 emphasis added). Some of the case studies provide examples of lecturers using assessment in various ways to prepare students for a range of professions and also to become the kind of compassionate,

caring, involved citizens of South Africa and the world who can contribute to changing society.

For Boud, a key function of sustainable assessment is the **development of judgement**, which he describes as 'informing the capacity to evaluate evidence, appraise situations and circumstances astutely, to draw sound conclusions and act in accordance with this analysis' (2007: 19). In this argument, assessment becomes a process of informing judgement. In many of the case studies in this volume, part of the reasons for lecturers introducing peer, group and/or self assessment and involving students in designing assessment processes is actively to promote the development of students' capacity to make judgements about their own and others' work. Being able to do this in a realistic and ethical manner is likely to be important for all graduates in their future professions and workplaces.

This publication is most interested in providing examples of formative and sustainable assessment, that is assessment primarily designed to contribute to students' learning in a course and beyond. This does not, however, mean that concerns about reliability, measurement, objectivity, standards and integrity are not important. These concerns need to be viewed within an appropriate educational frame which allows concerns about learning to take precedence.

Criteria

For teachers and students to be able to make both valid and reliable judgements

of students' work it is useful for them to have criteria against which to make their judgements. The process of designing criteria can contribute to ensuring that there is clear alignment between course purpose and the outcomes that are envisaged for students doing a course. Many of the case studies in this volume demonstrate various ways in which teachers have made explicit the criteria that will be used to assess students' work. Making both what is expected of students as well as the standards of achievement as clear as possible at the outset of an assessment event contributes to more transparent and fair assessment for all students. In some cases, students are involved in designing their own assessment criteria. This, and being given opportunities to use criteria to assess peers' or their own work, contributes to their deepening understanding of how their work is assessed and what is valued in their discipline. Defining and describing criteria for complex, higher order learning is not easy. Knight (2001) suggests that criteria be regarded as 'indicators' of what is expected rather than as inscribed in stone to be slavishly adhered too. Assessors should also always be open and alert to the unexpected, creative, innovative ways in which students may choose to respond to assessment tasks. It is therefore a good idea to include criteria related to criticality, creativity and innovation to signal to students that this is what is valued in the course and in higher education. Most of the case studies in this publication discuss the role of criteria in assessment both of and for learning.

Feedback

One of the basic principles of learning is that learners need feedback. They need to know what they are trying to accomplish, and then they need to know how close they are coming to that goal (Cross 1996: 4).

For assessment to be truly formative and to contribute to students' learning they must receive high-quality feedback on their work. For feedback to be effective it should:

- look forward towards improvement and learning
- be constructive and developmental
- help students to understand whether and how they have or have not met the criteria for the task
- focus on both content and on writing
- induct students into the discipline's ways of thinking, arguing, writing, talking
- provide information to help students learn to make judgements on their performance
- be provided soon after the assessment event so that it is relevant and meaningful to the students
- be given in such a way as to encourage active engagement on the part of the students.

Feedback can take many forms depending on the context. It can be given by teachers or tutors to individual students in writing on their tasks, by filling in feedback forms, or through discussions with individuals. General feedback can be provided to students in lectures and tutorials or through written summary documents. In lectures and tutorials feedback can also occur through the asking of questions, eliciting a student response and opening up a space of generative dialogue. Feedback can be provided by different role players: teachers, student tutors and peers. A number of case studies in this volume demonstrate the value for students of both giving and receiving feedback on assessment tasks.

Many lecturers complain that students seem to ignore the feedback they are given and are only interested in the mark they have been assigned. It is true that the positive effects of feedback will only be

achieved if students *pay attention to the feedback* they have received. As will be seen from some of the case studies in this volume, feedback is thus often given to students at the draft stage of a writing process. This ensures that students are invested in the feedback as they must engage with it in order to revise their work. It also contributes to helping students to understand that writing is a process.

Feedback needs to be aligned with the purpose of the tasks and the assessment criteria so that students can fully understand what they have done well and where they fall short of meeting the criteria. This enables students to judge more accurately their work in terms of the purposes and aims of the course. Feedback provides guidance for students on where and how they need to focus their attention in relation to their learning.

Context

Lecturers' overriding concern for their students should be ensuring that they have access to disciplinary knowledge, to what Wally Morrow (1994) calls 'epistemological access'. As formal access for a more diverse student population has increased, so there has been increased concern about the lack of success of many of the students in higher education. As Scott argues:

> Genuinely accommodating the diverse intake that is needed for development means ensuring that the education process, in terms of design and teaching [and assessment] practices, is aligned with the students' *legitimate learning needs*, so that they have a reasonable chance of succeeding. Access without success is a hollow achievement, does little or nothing to meet South Africa's social and economic needs, and it may erode public support for the higher education sector (Scott 2009: 10, emphasis added).

This does not mean that we should be 'lowering standards' to achieve better pass rates. What it does mean is that curricula, teaching methods and particularly assessment methods and approaches need to be fair for all our students. Assessment needs to be an integral part of curriculum design and students need to be fully aware

of and understand what they need to do to succeed. It means that we need both to teach and, in particular, implement formative assessment tasks in ways which inform processes of student learning but also explicitly prepare students for high-stakes summative assessment events. This is well illustrated in some of the case studies.

The case studies have been drawn from a range of disciplines (and academic levels) across the University. Although the key concepts and principles related to assessment can be applied to all disciplines, there is no 'one-size-fits-all' way of assessing students' learning. Each lecturer has to decide what is most important about their discipline for each course, and design assessment approaches and tasks which will best enable them to measure their students' learning. Furthermore lecturers should consider ways in which assessment will further develop their students' learning and understanding of disciplinary ways of creating knowledge and representing that knowledge (in written, oral and visual forms). It is hoped that the range of case studies from across the disciplines will give readers new ideas to try out or adapt to their disciplines and contextual circumstances.

Conclusion

The purpose of putting together these case studies was not necessarily to showcase best practices but rather to share with a broader group of academics a range of assessment practices, approaches and tasks. Our hope is that readers will take from these ideas ways in which to ensure that:

- they are assessing what is important in their disciplines
- they are assessing what they think they are assessing
- they can make valid judgements about students' abilities on the strength of assessment results
- they are finding ways of actively involving their students in assessment processes where possible
- the assessment tasks and processes are fair
- assessment takes place throughout a course and not just at the end (time on task)

- teaching methods prepare students for assessment tasks
- assessment allows as many students as possible to succeed and access the knowledge and ways of being of the discipline
- assessment is varied, innovative and interesting for students
- assessment is regarded as integral to curriculum planning
- assessment is not only regarded as a way to measure learning but also contributes to learning
- students receive constructive, developmental feedback that helps them to make judgements about their learning
- assessment has positive and motivational affective effects on students (not destructive)

- assessment is not only about learning on a particular course, but it is also about learning for students' futures beyond the university; learning to cope with the 'supercomplexity' of the world (Barnett 2000)
- reflection on assessment contributes to ongoing improvement of course design and teaching methods.

It is important to recognise that assessment is not just an intellectual exercise, but that it has very real effects on the lives of students. As Shepard suggests:

> Our aim should be to change our cultural practices so that students and teachers look to assessment as a source of insight and help instead of an occasion for meting out rewards and punishments (2000: 10).

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Developing professional practice through portfolio work

In this module, Hans-Peter worked with Honours students studying Strategic Marketing. The assessment tasks he designed aimed to teach students how to apply the principles of strategic marketing to particular topics in an in-depth manner through having students source and use relevant information, write and present their work professionally, and work with peers. The main tasks students worked on in the module were a group presentation on a marketing strategy for a recognised brand, like Nike, as well as individual written assessment tasks that, with the group task, formed a portfolio of work for summative assessment. Students worked on these tasks during classes as well as in their own time outside of class.

The group presentation tasks were designed to enable students to connect the theory they had encountered in lectures and in previous years of study with its application to specific problems and cases. Hans-Peter asked the students to choose case studies from recognisable, real companies or brands like Samsung or Nike, rather than fictitious ones. Thus, although they were preparing a simulated campaign, they were working with real brands that they would encounter in a professional setting.

The students worked on their group presentations each week during the module, building up to the final presentation. This was accomplished, in part, by engaging each week with different readings and discussion topics related to their case studies. The weekly seminars were balanced between students working on their own in their groups with Hans-Peter there to advise and guide them as needed, and leading parts of the session, scaffolding the readings and drawing relevant connections between theory and practice to further teach students how to do this in their own work. Thus, the weekly sessions were characterised by discussion, lecturer facilitation and peer feedback. The aim was to model the kinds of thinking and working processes students would need to engage in as members of a professional marketing team. Further, Hans-Peter's aim in this assessment task was to teach students more overtly to connect theory with practice, so that rather than just memorising parts of the textbooks they transformed this into knowledge which can be applied in a range of ways.

Hans-Peter Bakker
Management

Goals of assessment tasks in this module:

- To enhance students' ability to connect relevant theory with practice and thus transform their knowledge of the theory into applied understanding

- To enhance students' written and oral presentation skills

- To teach students to work effectively in teams

- To develop students' ability to work with different source materials, such as academic readings, as well as more practical documents.

The students, in addition to the group task, also selected individual theoretical assignment topics that were aligned with or closely related to the group projects in which they were involved, to deepen their understanding and use of the theory. This formal written assignment was more theoretical and the group presentations focused more on application and professional practice, the two complemented one another in terms of the overall aims of the course.

Hans-Peter has made several adaptations to this assessment plan over the years in terms of the timing of the task, and the level of detail and time-on-task expected from students. The workload for this module is demanding for students. However, he feels that the portfolio assignment as a whole, encompassing oral and written work, done both in teams and individually, prepares students well for what is expected of them in professional marketing practice.

Points to ponder:

In professional disciplines there can be tension between engaging students more closely in the world of practice, and the need for more academic engagement in theoretical learning. This kind of assessment strategy manages this tension well by achieving both goals.

In what ways could your assessment tasks, where relevant, create bridges for students between theoretical knowledge and practical applications, especially in relation to the world of work?

Encouraging interactive peer assessment in lectures

Nicolette taught Financial Accounting to a small group of honours students. The main purpose of the course was for students to master the application of theory to problems related to the use of financial instruments in real-world accounting practice. To achieve this, she wanted the students to be more actively engaged in lectures through doing tasks and receiving immediate feedback on the ways in which they were connecting theory to practical problems.

Nicolette designed and implemented this assessment activity arising from her concern that students were not getting feedback on their work in time for it to enable development of their thinking and application of theory to problems. The solution she implemented aimed at giving students more immediate feedback on their work, and further aimed at sharing the responsibility for giving constructive feedback between the lecturer and the students themselves. As their programme was very full and the work demands were high, this kind of task was appreciated by the students.

Nicolette Brouwer
Accounting

Goals of the formative assessment component:

• For students to work on small tasks during lectures, enhancing application of theory to problems

• For students to give one another feedback

• For students to receive feedback from the lecturer that is more immediate and directly focused on the classwork task.

How the task worked:

• In class time, the lecturer handed out an advanced tutorial question

• Students then had enough time to complete the question as fully as possible, thereafter passing their paper down the row so that each student ended up with another person's answer

• The lecturer then used a 'chalk and talk' approach on the overhead projector/whiteboard to work through the question with the students while they reviewed their peer's work and raised questions.

This task was formative in nature, as it was designed to encourage students to engage differently with one another and with the lecturer during class, shifting the more traditional format of lectures to make them more interactive, and student-focused. Tasks were completed in class, and peer-assessed in the same lecture. The feedback was given both by peers and by the lecturer who reviewed possible answers to the questions posed on a whiteboard/screen in class. These task-oriented lectures thus became more interactive, as students were writing, thinking, marking one another's work, and discussing solutions with one another and with the lecturer, rather than simply listening to a lecture.

Nicolette felt that this process enabled her students to discuss and negotiate why some issues were dealt with in certain ways, and why particular solutions were or were not correct or plausible. The chief benefit of this kind of exercise was that the answers to the problem were reviewed immediately after the task was completed, and students were able to work through their own solutions with the lecturer and by reviewing a peer's solutions. This strengthened their understanding of how to apply theory to a range of problems, as well as their ability to write more effective solutions to problems posed in more formal assessment tasks.

Points to ponder:

Lectures, particularly in larger classes, can be spaces that discourage rather then encourage active debate, writing, and talking about coursework or assessment. However, lectures can be more interactive, with some planning, as this task shows.

Could you devise in-class writing exercises that students could then discuss with peers, and with you, that encourage them to more actively apply theory to problems, or posing problems and finding solutions?

Participatory goal setting for assessment

Andrew had been assessing his undergraduate students in quite traditional ways and was concerned that assessment was 'done unto students'; that they had little say in the processes and that this was not encouraging the kind of independent learning in which he would have liked his students to engage. In addition, they were not given opportunities to learn how to evaluate their own and others' performances - a practice that would be essential for them in future dramatic arts careers.

With these concerns in mind, Andrew decided to make some changes to his assessment practices. Early on in the course he created an opportunity to discuss with his students the range of practical and theoretical assessment tasks they would be working on over the coming semester. The discussion included setting out for students his expectations of the elements of the tasks they would need to work on, what would be required of them, and what kind of preparatory work they needed to do over the duration of the semester. The students were then required, in groups, to work on designing the assessment criteria they thought would be most appropriate to assess both the practical and the written theoretical tasks which were set for the semester. Andrew guided this discussion to ensure that students understood the purposes and outcomes of the assessments in relation to the overall outcomes of their learning in the Drama programme. Students were actively encouraged to debate and engage with the assessment criteria so that they could jointly agree on what grounds their work would be assessed. They were thus given opportunities to work out, with their peers and guided by the lecturer, exactly what they were expected to do, and how their work would be marked, for both formative and summative purposes.

Following this collaborative setting of criteria, the group then discussed how, collectively and individually, they could achieve those criteria and thus meet the outcomes for the course. Students were, therefore, given opportunities to develop ways of working individually and collectively towards shared goals, and in the process would hopefully take increasing responsibility for their own learning.

Andrew Buckland
Drama

Goals of the collaborative assessment component of the course:

- To encourage students to incrementally take responsibility for their own learning
- To teach students to self-assess and make improvements and changes to their performances.

On reflection, Andrew found that this activity assisted him in:

- Getting to know his students and reducing the power differential so that students felt more invested in the assessment processes; and

- Clarifying, for everyone, exactly what the course requirements were, what the expectations of both lecturer and students were, and what kind of things would be valued in the assessment process.

As a result of this activity, and collaboration around the assessment tasks and criteria setting, students did not have to work out through 'trial and error' what they needed to be doing, when, and how. In addition, they were given an invaluable opportunity to practise designing criteria for judging their own and others' work and thus developing an understanding that it is not always fair simply to judge performances by intuition.

Points to ponder:

How could you adapt an activity like this for your course, discipline or student group to help you, and your students, more clearly articulate what the discipline is about, what the course you are teaching is about and what they are expected to do?

Using tutorials to align a course and encourage deeper student engagement

Amos teaches Statistics 1 to students majoring in Statistics, but also to students majoring in other commerce subjects, like Accounting, Economics, Business Science and Information Systems. In considering his assessment plans, Amos noted as a key concern the issue of how to introduce students to the basic Statistical concepts and techniques that are most useful in these commerce disciplines. He was also interested in encouraging students to begin to take on new ways of seeing themselves as future data managers, statistical thinkers, analysts and decision-makers in their chosen fields. The challenge for Amos in designing the assessments was how to achieve these goals with such a large, diverse class of students. As is the case in most 'service' courses, students have a range of different motives for doing the course and many are there because it is a requirement rather than because of an intrinsic interest in the subject.

To address some of these issues, given the large class size, Amos wanted to aim his assessment strategy, in part, at motivating students and tutors to spend tutorial time optimally. Tutors tended to work through the tutorial exercises as quickly as possible and often let their students leave the tutorial as soon as all the exercises had been worked through, sometimes before the period was over. Amos thus decided to use tutorials to create opportunities for formative assessment. He wished to ensure that there were opportunities for students to grapple with complex new concepts and problems in smaller groups where they would be able both to give and receive feedback on their work.

Amos designed all the tutorial sessions, including a mini-test for each one, to ensure alignment with the course purposes, outcomes and processes. He made sure that tutorial topics were explicitly related to the lectures for each week. He provided the tutors with assessment criteria and guidelines for marking the mini-tests, and spent some time discussing with them effective ways for facilitating the tutorial discussions, particularly the relevance of the work they were doing for a range of contexts. He encouraged tutors to use the whole tutorial period to engage with students.

Before each tutorial students were given a specific set of questions to answer in preparation for the tutorial. At the start of each tutorial the tutors administered a 10-minute mini-test to assess what students had understood of the work covered in that week's lectures. Students were then given a memorandum in order to mark a peer's test.

Amos Chinomona
Statistics

Goals of the tutorial component of this course:

• To align specific topics more closely with the work discussed and taught in lectures

• To encourage more active learning, writing and thinking through assessed tutorial tasks

• To prepare students better for tests and exams.

After the peer-marking part of the tutorial, the tutor then helped the students to work through the test answers. This was an opportunity to discuss and clarify any misunderstandings they still had about the content of that week's lectures. Students spent the rest of the tutorial working in pairs or small groups, facilitated by the tutor, discussing and answering the preparatory questions set in advance of the tutorial, and designed to help them revise the work they had been taught thus far. They could ask questions about concepts they found confusing, or clear up misunderstandings they might have.

Amos felt that his tutorial programme ensured that students spent consistent 'time on task' throughout the course, and that they had opportunities to clarify difficulties in the safe space of tutorial groups. Further, he was able to receive useful regular feedback on how students were coping with the course content, and felt that his students were better prepared for summative tests and exams.

Points to ponder:

Tutorials can, when aligned clearly with the curriculum, create intensive and constructive learning spaces for students. They can incorporate a range of creative, small-group tasks and activities, and can add an interactive dimension to the curriculum that is difficult to achieve in large classes.

Can you think of ways in your context to use tutorials optimally for formative assessment purposes?

Critiquing and adapting criterion-referenced assessment grids

Mark's aim in this third-year Semantics course was to develop students' understanding of linguistic theory and enable them to apply the theory to discipline-specific problems. In this case, the task was a small-scale research project, through which he tried to encourage his students to take deeper approaches to learning and to engage in critical thinking. He further wished to encourage his students to challenge him in academically appropriate ways and to contribute creative insights to discussions in the classroom.

In order to achieve his aims he decided to use a modified version of Biggs' SOLO taxonomy[1] to design a criterion-referenced marking grid specifically for this course. Using the grid he designed a feedback sheet for students. On the sheet there were spaces for a mark allocation, reasons for the mark allocation, and detailed general feedback. Students were given the grid before embarking on the project and Mark discussed with them how the taxonomy would be applied to their assignments; they thus had a good sense of how they would be assessed.

Mark assessed the research projects using the SOLO taxonomy categories: prestructural, unistructural, multi-structural, relational, and extended abstract. Learning outcomes such as language use and register, argument, relating this research project to existing research and exemplification of concepts were assessed using these categories.

The grid explicitly avoided rigid descriptors of learning outcomes that are common to criterion-referenced marking rubrics. Rather, it conceptualised teaching and learning as a process of mediation between students and the community of practice of the discipline. For example, in keeping with Mark's specific aims for these third-year students' learning, he added an additional category on the feedback form that he called 'this challenged me'. Mark used this category to give students feedback on aspects of their research projects that challenged *his* thinking. He found, for example, that some students were able to challenge his preconceived notions of methodology or application of a concept, or his own knowledge of a specific topic that they had researched and written about. Using this category he was able to show students how they had challenged him and extended *his* learning.

Mark De Vos
Linguistics

Goals of the tutorial component of this course:
- To promote students' critical thinking to enable them to see that they can contribute creatively to the teaching and learning environment and to the field
- To acknowledge students' contributions and creative thinking.

[1] See Appendix 1 for an example of a SOLO taxonomy

Mark thus provided feedback in which he encouraged and acknowledged students' growing confidence in contributing creatively to debates in the discipline.

Further reading:

De Vos, M. and Belluigi, D. (2011). 'Formative Assessment as Mediation', *Perspectives in Education* 29(2): 39-47.

Points to ponder:

Could you design an assessment grid that acknowledges students' creativity and intellectual development; that provides space for the unexpected? What would count, for you, as an original or challenging contribution from a student?

Encouraging and supporting creativity in written assignments

Natalie teaches part of a second-year course on critical gender psychology. The assessment described in this case study was an essay assignment, in which students were required critically to evaluate a topic related to various gender theories, relate the topic to a real-world issue or problem such as gender stereotyping or objectification, and demonstrate an ability to reflect on ways in which the issue affected them or was part of their lives. For the latter part of the assignment they were expected not only to reflect from a personal perspective but also to use various theories on the issue of gender as an analytical lens for exploring the topic.

Natalie realised that her expectations for this summative assessment assignment were high for second-year students and that they would require substantial scaffolding to achieve the desired outcomes. In preparation for the submission students were asked to keep a reflective journal in which they were encouraged to write about what they were learning in class and tutorials, record questions they might have about the readings or class materials, and document ways in which they could see the theory playing out in their daily lives. Natalie hoped that keeping the journal would promote personal as well as critical, and hopefully transformative, reflections in which students would begin to make connections between gender theory and aspects of their lives. The journals were not compulsory and were not assessed in any way. However, Natalie explained to the students that if they paid attention to the journal writing it would function as private pre-writing and would provide a wealth of material to be used for their assignments.

The compulsory written assignment asked students to engage critically with theories on stereotyping and objectification using real adverts from the media as part of their source materials and prompts. The assignment question, asked students to choose an item from popular culture (e.g. a magazine or television advertisement or song lyric) and analyse it using what they had learned in lectures, from prescribed readings, and from their own literature searches. Further guidance was given around what students needed to include

Natalie Donaldson
Psychology

Goals of the tutorial component of this course:

- To develop students' writing, critical thinking and reading abilities

- To enhance students' understanding of selected critical gender theories and its application not just to invented problems but also to the real social world in which they live and to their own lives

- To encourage students to be creative in their thinking, writing and assignment presentation, and to make the task enjoyable.

in terms of doing the analysis, such as a critical discussion of sex and gender, and relating this to the advertisement or lyric they had chosen to analyse.[2]

Natalie also wished to encourage her students to be creative in terms of the form in which they made their submission. So, although they were guided by upfront and explicit assessment criteria, students were given considerable latitude in terms of the form in which the submission could be made. Some students elected to write and submit traditional essays while others produced mock magazine format assignments, DVDs, posters, PowerPoint presentations, and cartoon strips in which they provided evidence of having met the assessment criteria in relation to engagement with theory and the application of the theory to issues of gender stereotyping in popular media.

Natalie believes (and student feedback confirms) that encouraging students to write in their reflective journals was a very useful pre-assignment task for those students who were able to do it. She also enjoyed reading and marking the range of assignments. She believes that giving students a choice in terms of the format encouraged much more creative responses to the topic and in some cases pushed students to engage in considerable depth with the theory. Students appreciated being more actively involved in the assessment process.

Selected assessment criteria for the assignment:
- Description of media item
- Critical engagement with chosen representation of gender
- Critical engagement with the implications of the chosen representation
- Critical engagement with personal thoughts and feelings
- Integration of theory and concepts
- Inclusion of prescribed readings
- Acknowledgement of sources.

Points to ponder:

Can you think of useful pre-writing tasks you could give your students to help them prepare for high-stakes summative assessment tasks?

An essay can be written in a fairly formulaic manner, and plagiarism is something that lecturers worry about a great deal. It is harder to plagiarise when writing or designing a poster, DVD, website or photo-story. Could you ask your students to do something similar with one or more of their assignments?

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[2] See Appendix 2 for the full question and assessment criteria, as an example for this type of task

Connecting undergraduate learning with future professional practice

Natisha taught an Anatomy and Physiology (A&P) course to first-year Pharmacy students. One of Natisha's key concerns in her course was how to help students begin to connect their undergraduate learning with their eventual professional practice as pharmacists.

To help them do this she decided to implement a group assignment, with oral and written components, in which students were required to apply knowledge of basic human A&P to different disease pathologies, using standard treatment guidelines widely used in this field. The assignment also required them to consider the role of the pharmacist in promoting human health.

In order to prepare students for this complex, summative group assignment, Natisha set a number of tasks to scaffold students' learning. Students were required to submit a number of individual written tasks and practical reports that were aligned with the work taught each week in lectures. These tasks required students to engage with and articulate their understanding of basic theoretical A&P knowledge. This was useful foundational knowledge for them to apply to the different disease pathologies or problem cases they would be dealing with in the group assignments.

In order to push students out of their comfort zones of only wanting to work with friends, Natisha divided the class into groups of five students each. She provided the students with a clear assignment description as well as assessment criteria. Both these documents were discussed with students prior to their starting the group task to ensure that they all understood what was required of them.

The assignment required students to choose a disease pathology, for example tuberculosis, and research their chosen disease, making use of the library with the assistance of subject librarians. The first part of the assignment was an oral presentation. Each group prepared

Natisha Dukhi
Pharmacy

Goals of the group assignment:

- To encourage students to work with and support their peers
- To enable students to make connections between the theory of anatomy and physiology and its application in a range of disease states
- To give students opportunities to demonstrate their learning both orally and in writing
- To encourage students to consider their future professional roles in treating illness and promoting human health.

a draft of their assignment in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. These were submitted to Natisha who gave students prompt formative feedback. She ensured that all groups had sufficient time to respond to the feedback prior to doing presentations for the class during the lectures. After each presentation she encouraged the class to discuss the presentation and offer further formative feedback to the presenting group.

The second, part of the assignment, was a written task. Each group was required to use their presentations and all the feedback they had received to write a formal report on the disease pathology they were researching. At this point they were also asked to include a section considering the 'implications for practice'. In this section they had to discuss the role of the pharmacist in caring for a person affected by the disease and also in educating patients about the importance of self-care in ensuring long-term health.

Although the structure of the Pharmacy curriculum was such that professional practice was only dealt with explicitly in later years of study, Natisha felt it benefitted students to begin imagining themselves as future professionals from the outset. Being able to connect the theory to actual practice made the content more meaningful and motivated students to pay more attention to their studies.

Natisha noted that there were challenges with getting students at first-year level to work successfully in groups. However, despite these challenges she believed that this assignment provided a range of introductory learning opportunities for these first-year students - learning important for their academic careers but also for beginning to prepare them for professional practice:

- They learned about how to work co-operatively with a range of different people
- They learned basic information literacy skills
- They learned about a range of different diseases from their peers
- They had an opportunity to practise communicating information in two different formats: an oral presentation and a written report
- This assignment gave students an opportunity, at an early stage in their studies, to begin to see themselves as pharmacy professionals.

Further reading:

Dukhi, N., Southwood, S. and Srinivas, S.C. (2014). 'Evaluating Students' Experience of an Integrated Assessment: A Case Study in Health Promotion', *Indian Journal of Pharmaceutical Education and Research* 48(3): 1-5.

Points to ponder:

In what ways could you build into your curriculum and teaching relevant connections with practice, to give your students opportunities to imagine themselves as future professionals in the field?

The engaging spaces project

For Jeanne, it was important that at fourth-year level her Radio Journalism students were given the opportunity to develop the skills and dispositions they would need for work in the radio journalism industry. She also wanted them to experience working with people in local communities, to connect their learning with real-world applications. She decided, to achieve these ends, to include a service-learning component in her course.

The students were divided into groups, each of which was assigned to a particular community project such as the Eastern Cape Drama Company, UBom! and Upstart, a local youth development project. The assessment of the service-learning component was two-fold. Firstly, the students, in their groups, were required to develop materials for an interactive/multimedia website that they both had to create and maintain. The website had to include audio and visual materials, like podcasts, pictures, videos and text, that explored the work of the project to which they were assigned. Creating these materials required students to draw on concepts and skills they had acquired throughout their studies. Secondly, in order to give students an opportunity to reflect on their experiences of working in these community spaces, they were required to write a regular blog about their observations. The blogs were also used to reflect critically on how organisations interact with communities through projects.

Jeanne du Toit
Journalism and Media Studies

Formative assessment criteria for the blogs:

- Evidence of research, growing insights, ability to reflect critically
- Presentation and writing
- Consistency (i.e. the same amount of effort with each blog)
- Variety of topics.

Summative assessment criteria used for the website:

- Presentation (design, navigability, etc)
- Content (visual, audio and text; ability to capture valuable insights about the nature of community engagement).

The work on the project thus required students to work collaboratively with each other as well as with community members. However, they also worked individually in terms of contributing specific resources (e.g. photographs, podcasts) to the websites and the blog writing.

The lecturer's role throughout the project was to assist the students in finding appropriate resources, to provide ongoing advice and formative feedback to the groups as they worked on the websites and their blogs. The blogs were assessed formatively against set criteria while the websites were assessed summatively against criteria negotiated and discussed with the students.

On reflection, Jeanne believes that the service-learning component and particularly the way in which the two aspects were assessed afforded the students the opportunity to learn:

- specific skills, such as website design, blog-writing, and aspects of media design
- how to engage in critical reflection on their individual and their group's work
- how to engage with community partners
- other skills such as working in groups, time management, and working to deadlines
- how to manage their emotions and personal feelings when engaging with people in possibly unfamiliar and difficult circumstances.

Goals of the service-learning component of the course:

- To develop students' practical knowledge of the participatory production of media, while encouraging their engagement in social spaces beyond the confines of the university
- To guide students in the creation of a 'product' which is public, practical and generative and that prepares them for work in the field of radio and media journalism.

Points to ponder:

These assessment tasks were designed to prepare students for life beyond the course. They look forward to the kind of learning students need for the longer term, for their future careers as radio journalists.

In what ways could you design your assessment tasks to prepare students better for the longer term?

Shared peer and lecturer essay assessment

This second-year Environmental Science module introduces students to the science underpinning four global environmental problems. This includes exposing students to the policies, processes and international institutions designed to deal with environmental problems. In order to demonstrate their understanding of how these problems are conceptualised and addressed at global and local levels, each student was required to write an essay of 2,500 words during the module. In order for this summative assessment task to contribute more meaningfully to students' learning on the module, Fred decided to introduce a drafting process including feedback from a peer as well as the lecturer.

At the start of the module Fred and the course coordinator assisted students to identify a partner they would work with during the module. Each student pair was required to select different topics for their essays. Fred provided explicit assessment criteria to assist students in the writing process. These criteria were discussed with students to ensure a shared understanding. Students then researched and wrote a draft of their essays. They were required to hand in two copies: one for their peer partner and one for the lecturer.

Thereafter a four-part responding-marking process was implemented:
1. The students were given one week to read their partner's essay and give them constructive feedback using the assessment criteria. At the same time the lecturer also read all the essays, providing developmental feedback. No marks were awarded at this stage.
2. Copies of all essays with peer comments on them were then given to the course coordinator. Her role was to assess the quality of the feedback the students provided to their peers. Each student was awarded a mark for this that counted 4% towards his or her coursework mark.
3. Students were then given both sets of their essays with formative comments from their peer and their lecturer to work with in order to revise their essays.
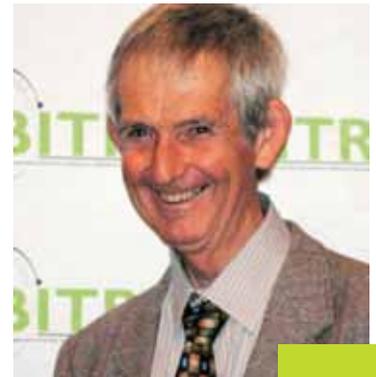
Fred Ellery
Environmental Sciences

Goals of the formal assessment task:

- For students to think through problems critically, using theory they have learned as well as knowledge from the course

- To engage students more deeply and actively with the writing and thinking process through not only working on their own draft essay but also through reading what other students have written on their topics, and learning from the feedback they give and receive

- To give students the opportunity to learn to make judgements about what is valued in their discipline.

4. Finally, the students submitted a revised version of their essays that the lecturer marked, using the assessment criteria. He awarded each essay a summative mark.

According to Fred the drafting and formative feedback processes, although quite labour- intensive, contributed to students' learning in four main ways:

- The processes ensured more intensive engagement with the content knowledge of the course, thus increasing the depth of student learning. This was evident in the final essays submitted by students.
- The feedback received by students helped them to improve their writing to develop a better understanding of academic conventions such as how to construct substantiated arguments.

- The peer feedback process ensured that students worked closely with the assessment criteria. This seems to have helped them to internalise these criteria and thus build a better understanding of the standards of the discipline.
- The peer feedback process also gave students the opportunity to practise the skill of making judgements about others' work and giving constructive feedback. These are skills that will be essential for them in most workplace contexts.

Points to ponder:

Assigning a mark to the feedback students offered their partners indicates the seriousness with which they needed to treat this responsibility, and encouraged them to work hard at reading and considering their partner's work as well as their suggestions for improvement. Perhaps this is something to consider when designing and offering a workshop for students on how to give useful formative peer feedback.

Could you consider doing something similar for your peer assessment tasks?

Role-play and game-play to encourage problem-solving

Roddy and his colleagues in the Geography Department were teaching a third-year course, Development and Environment in Africa. Their interest in this course was to expose students to the knowledge and skills for solving complex problems related to environmental and development issues in Africa and to give them opportunities to practise applying the knowledge and skills they learned on the course. To achieve these aims they designed a complex assessment task, involving a role-play simulation, report-writing, and a computer-based simulation.

All three parts of the task involved students taking part in iterations of a simulated game. The game used in the course was an adaptation of the 'African Catchment Game' that was originally designed in the late 1980s for Southeast Asian conditions.

To prepare them for participation in the task, the students were required to read a few texts on role-plays and simulations and then to draw mindmaps showing their understanding of the main ideas and concepts in the texts. It was important for students to understand how full participation in the game would enhance their learning. The mindmaps were later updated after the simulations had been completed, to show students' changed understanding of key concepts.

For the first part of the game, the role-play simulation, the class and the lecturers travelled to a venue off-campus for a weekend to play the game. The lecturers felt that taking students away from campus would enable them to concentrate more fully on the learning involved in the simulation. The next step was to assign students various roles to play such as farmers, bankers or retailers and to give them 'tokens'. Everything in the game was represented by a token, for example money, food or livestock. Lecturers, acting as game managers, facilitated the role-selection process.

On the first day the students were led slowly through the mechanics of the game. The students, in their roles, played several continuous 'years' of the game. A wide range of interactions and strategies were built into the game that required strategic thinking, as well as collective and individual decision-making. The 'managers' of the game (the lecturers) monitored the activities students undertook and the strategies they used to fulfil their roles, such as farming (planting, harvesting, and selling their crops).

On the second day, the pattern was the same, but variations were introduced to take account of certain environmental or developmental themes discussed earlier in the module. At the end of each day there was a debriefing session. Students were also required to keep a journal in which they noted their immediate responses, impressions and so on of their roles and the game.

A formal written report was handed in for assessment two days after the game was played. This required deeper reflection on students' roles in the game, as well as on the way they applied their theoretical learning to solve the simulated problems both individually and collectively. This was assessed using a set of criteria students were given, and which was explained, before the assessment activity was completed.

The final part of the assessment plan for the module entailed students working with a computer-based simulation in which they had to apply their learning from the theoretical readings and the role-playing game further to another set of simulated problems that required strategic thinking, both individually and collectively. This simulation extended their ability to build on prior learning. Students' learning from this part of the process was assessed via a formal report, in which they were required to discuss their learning, reflection and development of applied understanding, and use of conceptual knowledge.

Roddy Fox
Geography

On reflection, the lecturers felt that by asking students to undertake different kinds of practical and academic tasks, for example imagining themselves in a particular role in both the role-play and computer simulations, and then writing about their learning in reflective reports, this complex assessment clearly linked the 'thinking' and the 'doing'. Students were required to strategise and plan, go through a problem-solving process, and then reflect on what happened and why. This experiential learning task thus introduced students to ways in which problems are conceptualised, approached and solved by practitioners working in this field, and provided students working at this level with a clear bridge between their academic learning and eventual professional practice.

Further reading:

Fox, R. and Rowntree, K. (2004). 'Linking the Doing to the Thinking: Using Criterion-based Assessment in Role-playing Simulations', *Planet* 13(December): 12-15.

Points to ponder:

Different disciplines solve problems, and design problem-solving processes in different ways. How does your discipline solve problems?

Could you break down a problem-solving process for your students through an assessment task that prompts them to follow a logical, relevant process, and work out, with guidance, how to propose and evaluate solutions?

"Gestating" an MEd thesis

Callie co-ordinates an MEd in Education Leadership and Management (by coursework and half thesis) for educators currently teaching in a range of educational institutions, like schools and Further Education and Training colleges. The course is offered part-time over two years with students travelling to Rhodes for a set number of block teaching sessions in the first year of registration, and less frequent contact sessions in the second 'thesis year'. Callie has become more and more aware of the fact that, because most of her students have been away from academia for some time and because they are studying in a language which is not their first language, they find the writing and reading demands of an advanced degree programme like an MEd extremely challenging. In particular the students struggle with the genre and writing demands of a thesis.

Callie has devised a number of strategies to address these challenges:

1. She has ensured that the *coursework component of the course is used to prepare students for writing their research theses.* Throughout the coursework component of the course Callie set a number of short writing tasks to be completed by her students. The purpose of these formative tasks was for her to give students constructive and developmental feedback that would help to build their writing skills as well as their confidence in writing. The coursework component of the course was formally assessed by means of examinations that were focused on parts of their research work, such as writing a literature review. This provided Callie with insights into how her students were progressing both in terms of their learning and their ability to express their learning appropriately in writing.

2. Throughout the coursework component of the course she introduced activities such as *seminars and discussion sessions to prepare her students for the research* component of the qualification. Topics in these seminars included things like: finding their research interest, formulating research questions, writing a research proposal, writing a literature review, formulating a research design, and so on. After these sessions students were assigned short writing assignments on the various topics that were covered. As with all tasks and assignments, Callie ensured that students received formative feedback on an ongoing basis. She thus worked to integrate the coursework component and the research components of the course, using the former to prepare students for the latter.

Callie Grant
Education

The drafting/'gestating' process:

- Students attended regular seminars aimed at developing their understanding of research processes, which continued throughout the coursework component
- Students worked on regular writing tasks on which they received developmental feedback
- Callie provided and talked through exemplars of completed, competent theses
- Students developed their theses over time, in a scaffolded and supported manner.

3. Throughout the course Callie worked hard to demonstrate to her students that *writing a thesis is a process*; it is not simply 'written up' in a simple or linear way after the research has been conducted. Rather, a thesis of this length and complexity needs to be 'gestated' over time. She ensured that they understood that to arrive at a suitable product the writing has to go through successive iterations or drafts. She thus required them to submit chapters or sections of their thesis for feedback and constructive critique at regular intervals.

4. Another strategy Callie used to help her students to understand the genre and requirements of thesis writing was to show them *exemplars of completed theses* to guide their writing. Through class discussions she helped students to 'deconstruct' the exemplars to understand better the structure, academic writing conventions, and so on of well-written theses.

The four strategies described above in which Callie integrated the two parts of the course were thus designed to provide substantial scaffolding for students towards writing their research theses. Callie believes that these strategies provided the support her students needed to acquire successfully the requisite skills for writing MEd theses.

Points to ponder:

Doing research is not just something expected of postgraduate students – there are increasing expectations for undergraduate curricula to involve students learning how to do research.

In what ways could you include a research component in your courses, and scaffold the process in such a way that students understand how research is 'gestated' over time, and in stages?

Practising professional practice in the classroom

This module was offered to students in their first year of a master's counselling psychology programme. The purpose of the module was to teach students about the use of narrative therapy as a therapeutic practice. For Michael the main outcomes of the course were for students to learn the techniques and methods involved in using narrative therapy, and for them to be able to apply the theory and techniques in practice. To enable 'trainee psychologists' to develop these outcomes, using seminar-style teaching, Michael discussed the theory with them, showed them videos of the techniques being applied, and encouraged them to practise the techniques on their own and with each other.

In terms of the assessment in this case study, Michael had previously only relied upon written and oral examinations administered at the end of the module. He realised that this was not giving students opportunities to apply the theory and he was not assessing the extent to which they were able to use narrative therapy practices in dialogues with colleagues. He thus introduced a formative and summative assessment task that required students to conduct 'live interviews' during seminars. In these 'interviews' students took on the roles of psychologists and supervisors and role-played therapeutic encounters between them. The assessment strategy he devised enabled his students to meet two important course outcomes: applying narrative therapy techniques in a therapeutic context and conducting supervision sessions with fellow therapists utilising the techniques of narrative therapy.

He implemented the following process:

- Each week one trainee psychologist was interviewed by two other trainees working in a pair (taking on the role of supervisors/counsellors).
- The 20-30-minute long interview was observed by the rest of the class and the lecturer.
- During the interview, the trainee told a story in which s/he reflected on an aspect of the training or counselling works/he was currently experiencing. The two 'therapy supervisors' were required to use narrative therapy techniques to conduct the interview, encouraging the trainee to develop his/her story using relevant techniques and tools.

Michael Guilfoyle
Psychology

Goals of this formal assessment task:

- For students to apply theoretical ideas and techniques to a practical therapy situation that closely mimics counselling practice
- To introduce trainees to the kinds of work they will do with therapy clients as they progress in their MA studies
- To develop trainees' ability to observe and guide others as well as to encourage self-reflection.

- After the interview they received feedback from the lecturer and the rest of the class.

In preparing for the interviews the trainees were encouraged to explore issues that had arisen from their engagement with their clients[3] in other practical work during the programme. They might, for example, discuss a therapeutic method or an aspect of therapy that had been interesting or troubling. The interviewers were then required to apply a narrative therapy technique in the interview with the aim of helping the interviewee to tell his or her story.

Even though these were masters students many of them found the public nature of the interviews daunting. Michael felt that requiring the interviewers to work in pairs to support each other in practising narrative therapy would reduce the feelings of risk for the students and that the process would also facilitate students learning from their peers.

Although this was a summative assessment task for which students were awarded a mark by the lecturer, it also had a strong formative element[4]. After each interview fellow students were required to provide formative feedback to the students who had done the simulation. Michael facilitated discussion, which encouraged critical reflection and consolidation of learning. He also shared learning and stories from his own professional practice so that students were given insights into the ways in which he had made errors and tried things out, learned and made changes to his practice. Questions that interviewers tried out and that appeared to successfully elicit productive or reflective responses from interviewees were collated into a 'question bank'. The question bank was then used as a resource for students for their practice.

Michael felt that adding this 'practical' assessment component to the course helped the students to meet the outcomes of the course and gave him an opportunity for valid assessment of those outcomes - much more so than only a written exam. He further felt that this summative assessment task contributed to developing the learning practices students would need in their future careers as counselling psychologists.

Points to ponder:

This kind of task has the additional benefit of getting students to verbalise their learning instead of only demonstrating learning in more dominant text-based ways.

In what ways could you use oral forms of both formal and informal assessment to enable your students to apply theory to practice in discipline-relevant ways?

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[3] Counselling masters students, closely supervised by experienced psychologists, are required to work with clients in the University's Psychology Clinic

[4] The only mark that the students received was in the end of year oral and written examination (which included, but was not limited to these supervision processes).

Learning contracts to encourage students' self-efficacy

Helen taught a module on 'Ethics and Professional Responsibility' to final-year LLB students. The module, offered to a relatively small class, aimed to prepare students for legal practice through requiring them to engage at theoretical and applied levels with issues of legal ethics that simulate those students are likely to encounter in their future professional practice.

Part of preparing students for professional practice is encouraging them to take on greater responsibility for their learning. To this end, Helen's assessment strategy in this course focused on what she termed a 'learning contract assessment process' (LAP). Each student had to complete a 'learning contract' in which they outlined a proposal for a research project, which would explore an issue pertinent to practising the law in a South African context, by responding to the questions outlined in the box below. A further important part of the contract required students to consider how they would achieve their research project goals, and what evidence they would provide to demonstrate that they had achieved the aims of their project.

Students entered into their contracts with the lecturer, but there was also an expectation that they would consider personal goals in relation to the class as a whole, and part 3 of the contract asked them to consider how they could contribute to the learning of all the students in the class. After completing an initial draft of their contract and research proposal, students sent these to Helen electronically. She provided electronic formative feedback on each proposal. She also arranged face-to-face meetings if students requested or needed these. Students then revised their proposals using the feedback.

Helen Kruuse
Law

The learning contract structure:

- Conceptualise a proposal for your research project

- What are your goals for researching the chosen topic?

- What resources are available to you and what strategies will you adopt in order to achieve these goals? (Consider your contribution to the learning of the whole class here as well)

- What evidence will you produce to demonstrate that you have met the outcomes of the research project and your own goals?

Before beginning their projects, the assessment criteria for both the written and oral components of the research project were discussed with students. For the oral component students were required to share their research and learning with peers through formal seminar presentations, which were assessed as part of the final summative coursework mark. The final written projects were submitted towards the end of the semester, and the lecturer marked these. Students could use their written drafts of parts of their projects, feedback they had received and responded to, and engagement with peers formally or informally, as part of the evidence for part 4 of their contracts.

Helen felt that the LAP contributed to promoting deeper and more reflexive learning through encouraging students to undertake research, and share this with their peers through a seminar presentation. In addition, the LAP helped to develop more active, engaged and responsible students through holding them accountable for their own projects, and work progress. This learning she believed could stand them in good stead for their future professional practice.

Points to ponder:

Can you think of assessment tasks appropriate to your discipline which would encourage students to commit to their own goals and learning processes, and to be more accountable for that learning?

Encouraging self-reflection through mark negotiation

Sally's course on African Political Economy was offered to students at Honours and Masters level, and was run in a seminar format. Most of the assessment was in the form of written essays, and a significant focus of the feedback provided to students was on developing their ability to connect theory with application to problems or issues in international and African studies, and their ability to craft effective arguments. Sally was also interested in developing students' ability to critique and reflect on their own arguments and writing as they were preparing to research and write either a long honour's essay or a master's thesis.

As she was working with more senior students, Sally wanted to encourage students to be more self-reflective, and to be able to judge the quality of their own work in relation to the pre-determined criteria and standards. She was interested, for example, to find out whether they could use their own judgement to see where their writing lacked coherence or where their argument could be strengthened or better substantiated. She felt that more traditional feedback processes in which students were not given an opportunity to engage with the lecturer might not encourage them to engage in self-reflection or in making judgements about their own thinking and writing processes. Sally therefore decided to introduce an innovative step in the assessment process in which students were invited to engage with her one-on-one and to negotiate the mark to be awarded for their essays.

When Sally gave the students the essay topics she also provided a set of assessment criteria that would be used for marking the essays. She hoped that the criteria would guide their writing. Students were given an opportunity to submit drafts of their essays on which they received formative feedback against assessment criteria. This feedback was then used by students to revise their essays. She then marked the final essays, recording her comments and feedback to the students in writing. She did not write a mark on their assignments but recorded these separately.

To complete the final step in the process, students were asked to arrange a meeting with her, and ahead of this to consider what mark they would assign their own essays, taking into account the assessment criteria they were given. They were also asked to come to the meeting with some comments justifying the mark they had assigned to their essays.

Sally Matthews
Political Science

Goals of the mark negotiation component of assessment:

- To encourage students to really think about the assessment criteria and what they need to do to meet them
- To involve students more actively in assessment by encouraging reflective self-assessment
- To improve students' argumentation and writing skills.

The meeting started with the lecturer asking the student to tell her what mark they had awarded their essay, and to provide her with the reasons for selecting this mark and why they think they deserved it. Sally then 'talked back' to their reasoning, bringing in her own comments and responses to their writing, and the mark she had decided on. Although the conversation was partly about negotiating the final mark for the student it was more about guiding the student through the feedback on the essay, giving them opportunities to ask for clarification, or to challenge her comments where relevant. It was also an opportunity for Sally to ask the students questions about their writing and reasoning process. These conversations therefore involved the students in the assessment process and contributed towards changing the power dynamic between the lecturer and the students, while also ensuring that they understood why they got the marks they did.

Sally believed that, although time consuming, these one-on-one conversations had a number of benefits such as:

- She felt better able to articulate the reasons for the final marks students were awarded for their essays.

- The students were better able to see the strengths and weaknesses of their work, as well as how they had or had not met the assessment criteria.

- The processes potentially contributed towards students being able to make more realistic judgements about their own academic writing.

- Students seemed to have greater confidence in their writing and a clearer sense of what to work on going forward.

- The one-on-one meetings provided her with opportunities to get to know individual students better, to understand their strengths and weaknesses and adapt her teaching accordingly.

Points to ponder:

In what ways could you include your students in assessment processes in similarly active and reflective ways? What kinds of conversations would be possible in your context?

Is there any way in which you could adapt this idea for use in larger classes?

Brainstorming workshops to generate solutions and ideas

Brent teaches photography to third- and fourth-year Fine Art students. Working photographers often need to be able to devise their own projects and find innovative solutions to a range of problems, so Brent's aim in his teaching is to encourage and develop students' ability to generate their own creative and relevant solutions to problems, as well as their own ideas for projects. In addition they are required to work cooperatively with other people such as designers as well as the subjects they are photographing.

To achieve these aims Brent added what he called 'brainstorming workshops' to the formal assessment process in his modules. The workshops were introduced at various points in the modules, depending on where they were needed. The purpose of the workshops was for students, as a group, to generate ideas for projects. Instead of working individually from the outset, students shared their emerging thoughts and were given the opportunity to receive feedback on these from their peers as well as guidance from their lecturer. The workshops thus functioned to prepare students for summative assessment tasks.

At the start of each workshop Brent used a short task, such as an evocative image or a problem, to stimulate discussion with and amongst the students. As his groups were quite small, it was not difficult for him to ensure that each student was given an opportunity to contribute to the discussion. He modelled for students how, during group discussions, all ideas should be given due consideration and treated with respect. He also foregrounded the idea that the same topic/image/task can be interpreted in many different ways and that there are often multiple solutions to problems. From there he moved the discussion to the larger projects on which students were required to work. He ensured that he made explicit the links between the initial prompt and the brief for the students' projects.

For Brent the advantages of introducing the workshops were clear: firstly, students benefitted from the creative and innovative ideas of their peers and their lecturer for their own assessment projects; they also generated and were offered some solutions to perceived problems. Secondly, they had the opportunity to work in groups such as those in which professional photographers might be required to work. They were thus given opportunities to observe how groups function when members work collaboratively and treat each others' ideas with respect.

Brent Meistre
Fine Art

Goals of the brainstorming workshops:

- To facilitate cooperation through discussion of multiple viewpoints on the same issue
- To foster mutual respect among peers working together
- To generate ideas creatively and to learn from one another in the process
- To encourage reflexivity and self-critique.

Although the discussions in the workshops were not formally assessed, they were aligned with larger, more formal summative assessment tasks. Feedback from students showed that they were aware of the importance of these workshops as part of the summative assessment for the modules. They thus tended to contribute generously to discussions on their peers' individual projects. The workshops were an integral part of the learning and assessment processes in Brent's courses. After reflecting on the quality of the students' projects, Brent felt that the workshops had contributed considerably to developing students' ability to think more critically, reflexively and creatively about art, and art-making, thus better preparing them to work as artists in the future.

Points to ponder:

How could you use collective reasoning processes to get your students talking about their ideas, and sharing their learning and thinking with one another, and with you?

Could you incorporate visual tools, like concept mapping, to get students to plan projects, essays or portfolio tasks?

Could you introduce tasks or processes that simulate 'real'-world project work in your field?

Student designed and assessed tests

The assessment in this case formed part of a second-year course on Introduction to Integrated Environmental Systems. Students were introduced to the diversity and complexity of the problems and issues environmental researchers and professionals confront and work with at local and global levels. The assessment required students to think in interdisciplinary, creative and critical ways in order to solve problems that occur in dynamic, integrated environmental systems.

In order to achieve these goals (see highlighted block below) students were asked to design their own test questions, write the test, and then peer-assess one another's test answers. The questions for the test were short answer questions ranging from 1-10 marks each. Students were given clear guidance on the desired format of the questions, as well as what kinds of questions to design for the test. During lecture periods, students were provided with materials such as notes and textbooks, and divided into small groups to develop test questions.

The criteria required students to develop questions at a range of 'levels' in terms of, for example, Bloom's taxonomy.[5] This encouraged students to design questions that tested higher cognitive engagement rather than simply memory recall or comprehension. They designed questions which, for example, required them to make judgements by weighing up evidence or applying conceptual knowledge to a concrete problem. While the students worked in their groups Sheona moved from group to group providing input and suggestions. The process of developing the questions required students to engage with peers in debates around the wording and also the content of the test questions, as well as what the expected responses would be. Designing the questions was thus an active, formative, and challenging assessment task in itself.

Sheona Shackleton
Environmental Sciences

Goals of the peer assessment task:

- To enhance students' understanding of the work beyond simple comprehension

- To promote active and critical thinking about both the theoretical and applied aspects of the course content

- To give students a more experiental sense of what kinds of responses are acceptable and valued in terms of assessment criteria.

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[5] See Appendix 3

Once the bank of questions had been developed, all the questions were provided to students on the course site in Rhodes' Learning Management System. From the bank of questions Sheona then selected a subset of questions for the test. She also developed a memorandum to guide the peer marking. The marking of the test was a multi-step process:

1. The students wrote the test during a lecture period.

2. In a practical session after the test had been written, the lecturer distributed the tests to the students for peer marking, ensuring that no one received their own script. Students then marked each other's tests, assigned marks based on the memorandum, and provided basic feedback. Students then got their test forms back.

3. Following the practical, Sheona went through the memorandum with students in a lecture, thus giving them another opportunity to review their tests and address errors or misunderstandings.

Step 3 facilitated a space for debate and discussion about why certain answers were not acceptable or received low marks. Students had to engage critically with their peers' work and with their own through the marking of the tests. The assessment was both formative (in the process of developing and debating the test questions) and summative (the final mark contributed to their continuous assessment mark).

Actively engaging students in designing or developing assessment tasks offers lecturers the benefit of seeing what students regard as acceptable questions, and answers, in relation to the knowledge they are working with. Lecturers can also guide students towards a better understanding of the learning and assessment goals in cases where students may not necessarily understand what these are. This may have a positive impact on students' learning and engagement with assessment tasks.

Points to ponder:

In this case study students were actively and integrally involved in assessment processes. This involvement helped them to appreciate what goes into designing appropriate assessment questions in their discipline.

In what ways could you involve your students actively in assessment processes and strategies?

Creating "feedback loops" using tutorials

In this course, Ian works with first-year students in a fairly large class, introducing them to Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), including how SFL tools and critical discourse analysis are used to decode and analyse texts in specific ways. This course uses fairly complex theory and methods of textual analysis that many students find difficult to understand and master. In considering his assessment methods for the course, Ian felt that more active engagement on the part of students as well as ongoing formative feedback on progress made would be essential to ensure that students did not become overwhelmed and were able to keep pace with the teaching and learning.

However, with a large class (ranging between 130 and 200 students), it was challenging to engage students in lectures and also difficult for him to give students continuous formative feedback. To address these constraints, Ian decided to use the smaller tutorial groups. Instead of the usual model of students being required to prepare tasks for each tutorial, with the tutor marking the tasks and then discussing the answers in the tutorial sessions, he introduced what he called 'feedback loops'. One feedback loop was planned for two consecutive tutorial sessions.

Ian Siebörger
Linguistics

Goals of the tutorials within the course:

• To give students repeated opportunities to complete short assessment tasks and receive feedback

• To create interactive spaces for discussion with peers and a tutor

• To encourage students to work more consistently, practising their new abilities in reading texts more analytically using SFL and critical discourse analysis.

Formative task requirements:

• The task for formative feedback involved observing linguistic features in the text.

Summative task requirements:

• The task for summative assessment and feedback was a paragraph in which those features observed were interpreted and explained in the context of the text.

Before tutorial one, students were given a textual analysis task to prepare for discussion with peers and the tutor. This task asked them to observe certain features in the text they were given. Their informal preparatory work was shared in the tutorial, and they received feedback and advice from the tutor and from their peers on this formative task. The students were then required to use the formative feedback on this tutorial work to write a more formal paragraph critically analysing the text they had been working with, thus incorporating and developing the work done in the formative tutorial task. The students submitted the formal analyses at the second tutorial for marking by the lecturer, who summatively assessed these towards the course mark. Students would begin the next feedback loop at the second tutorial, moving onto the next tutorial topic and task in a similar manner to the first, with informal preparatory work and discussion preceding a more formal summative writing task. These 'feedback loops' were repeated fortnightly with the textual analyses becoming progressively more complex.

Ian believes that planning the tutorial sessions in this way led to qualitatively better learning, and that students felt much more supported during the course. The following factors contributed to the success of this intervention:

- The thorough preparation and training of tutors
- The careful design of each of the fortnightly textual analysis tasks

- The tasks becoming incrementally more complex
- The students receiving formative feedback from peers and the tutor on the first part of the textual analysis and feedback from the lecturer on the final version of the task
- The students having opportunities to clarify their understanding of difficult concepts taught in lectures through discussion with peers and tutors
- The students working on each task iteratively, through a formative tutorial task to a more formal, summative task that built on this, thus coming to understand writing as a process and learning more with each iteration, and each feedback loop.

The course, incorporating this intensive tutorial-led feedback process, gave students valuable opportunities to practise applying SFL and discourse analysis tools to texts in order to decode and analyse them. It also contributed to students' ability to write more competently using the required Linguistics genres or textual forms.

Points to ponder:

Tutorials can be used very effectively to create and sustain spaces for peer, self and tutor-led assessment that offer students more opportunities to practise using new knowledge and skills in formative and developmental spaces.

If you use tutorials, could you incorporate more opportunities for feedback, writing and peer assessment?

Online peer assessment in a large class

Jen teaches a course to Economics 1 students in the second semester. Her biggest challenge has been to find ways of implementing meaningful assessment methods, aligned with the course purpose and outcomes, in classes of more than 800 students. The course outcomes include students being able to apply theory to economic problems and being able to produce well-reasoned and well-written academic arguments.

In order to cope with the challenges of a large class Jen decided to experiment with an online peer assessment exercise. The exercise was designed with the central goal of improving students' writing. An online tool in Moodle[6] - *Workshop* - was used to explore the affordances of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for providing prompt feedback to a large number of students.

Jen had previously experimented with students assessing their peers' work in small tutorials, using paper and pen. However, one of the key concerns expressed by those students was the lack of anonymity and the fear that fellow students could copy their work. There were also logistical concerns around managing paper submissions from more than 800 students, especially within a tight tutorial timetable. Thus, Jen and her colleagues decided to use the *Workshop* module in Moodle to address concerns about anonymity and intellectual property, as well as the logistical issues they had encountered.

The peer assessment exercise was set up for the second essay of the semester. It was felt that by that point students would be familiar with Moodle and the tutorial system. They would also have been through an 'offline' peer assessment process in tutorials already. The task students needed to complete was set up, using the online tools, in stages:

1. The *Workshop* module was created, and students were enrolled in the online space. In classroom discussions Jen explained the rationale for using this tool, the structure of the process, and the assessment criteria and guidelines.

Jen Snowball
Economics

Goals of the peer assessment task:

- To put students in the position of assessors in order to practise giving constructive feedback

- To promote critical reflection on students' own writing, as well as in relation to the assessment criteria

- To improve students' writing by providing at least one opportunity for drafting and revision.

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[6] Moodle is the University's Learning Management System, which provides an interactive online learning space for lecturers and students. At Rhodes the system is called 'RUConnected'.

2. Students uploaded their first drafts on Moodle. Two peer assessors were assigned to each draft essay.

3. Students had two and a half days to provide feedback on the essay they were assigned. Once they had provided feedback, they had to hand a hard copy of the assessment grid they had completed to their tutor instead of the weekly tutorial exercise. All the assessment grids were then collated, and each student received at least one set of comments on their essay (not all students handed back their grids).

4. Students then had three further days to respond to the feedback they had received, and submit a final version of their essays to their tutors for final summative assessment.

The *Workshop* module was thus not used for summative assessment, but rather for a drafting and revision process ahead of the summative essay assessment by the tutors.

On reflection, the lecturers for this course noted that while many students took the task seriously, many also did not, handing in work of poor quality, or handing back feedback that was less than useful to their peers. Jen noted that most of the students who found the online peer assessment exercise useful made this comment on the basis of the feedback they had *provided* to a peer, rather than on the basis of what they had *received*. The task promoted students' critical self-reflection and highlighted points for improvement in their writing. Jen came to the conclusion that the greatest value of this intervention was what students learned while engaging with the criteria in order to give their peers feedback.

Further reading:

Mostert, M. and Snowball, J.D. (2013). 'Where Angels Fear to Tread: Online Peer-Assessment in a Large First-year Class', *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* 38(6): 674-686.

Points to ponder:

This innovative way of using a Moodle tool shows that it is possible to give large groups of students formative feedback on their writing, as well as opportunities to draft and revise their work.

Do you use ICTs in your feedback and assessment processes?

Could you see ways of using these selectively, and creatively, to suit your and your students' learning needs?

Inquiry-led fieldwork project

Susi and her colleagues taught a Botany module on plant ecology called 'Ecology and Biomes' to first-year students. It was offered towards the end of the year. The lecturers agreed that, having done some introductory Botany courses earlier in the year, it was time for students to begin appreciating what 'being a botanist' means and how botany knowledge is created. To do this they needed to experience being out in the field. The lecturers thus arranged a two-day field trip to the coast near Grahamstown for the class.

Prior to leaving on the field trip the lecturers ensured that all the logistics were planned and they also did careful preparatory work with the students. They:

- discussed the ecological background to the field exercise, the purpose and nature of fieldwork, and why fieldwork is a necessary and important part of becoming a practising botanist
- outlined exactly what was expected of students in the field (particularly in relation to data collection)
- explained and provided written instructions for the field report students would be expected to write for summative assessment purposes.

Students then went out into the field with their lecturers and demonstrators as guides and supervisors. They were required to work in groups to collect data.

Once back on campus, they worked in their groups to analyse the data they had collected. Students were then given explicit guidance on how to write scientific reports and they were given assessment criteria to guide them further. The criteria were discussed with the students to ensure a common understanding of the requirements. After each group completed the analysis of their data with the help of the lecturers and tutors, each student had to submit a draft report, which was formatively assessed by a peer from another group, using the criterion-referenced assessment grid. The aim of this exercise was to deepen their understanding of what makes scientific writing effective.

Using the feedback on the individually authored draft reports, each field group then planned and produced a final group report, which was formally assessed by the lecturers. Each student also assessed the intellectual and practical contributions made by the other members of their group. To arrive at the mark for each individual student, the final group

Susi Vetter
Botany

Formative and summative assessment aims:

- To introduce students to the practice of collecting data and working as part of project teams, which is a common practice in the sciences
- To introduce students to the rigours of data collection, analysis and report writing
- To improve the quality of students' writing.

mark was adjusted up or down based on the peer assessments of individual contributions. In this way above-average contributions were rewarded and students felt a greater sense of fairness in relation to the assessment process.

This example of inquiry-led learning and teaching provided students with an opportunity to experience what it is like to be a practising botanist. It helped students to connect theoretical knowledge to practical applications in real-world settings. Students had an opportunity to work in groups, and individually, and had opportunities to learn from peers and their lecturers. The process had the added benefit of making the learning more exciting, interesting and real for the students.

Points to ponder:

Although scientific fieldwork is a discipline-specific activity, the principle of this activity could be adapted for other disciplines.

What kinds of 'data' or information could your students collect to help them understand how knowledge is created in your discipline?

Can you incorporate an element of inquiry-led 'fieldwork' into your teaching and assessment plans?

Encouraging deeper reading and comprehension of key texts

Samantha taught a first-year Philosophy course called 'Introduction to Moral Philosophy'. In order to 'do philosophy' and learn how to develop philosophical ways of constructing written argumentation, it is essential that students engage in very specific ways with texts.

To scaffold students' learning during the course, Samantha designed an assessment task that was repeated a number of times over the semester. This task was worked on in tutorials, in small groups. The task required close reading of a specially selected text using a specific philosophical thinking 'tool' or process. During lectures Samantha carefully modelled the use of this thinking tool, which entails an *identify-explain-evaluate* process. In brief, it requires students to *identify* a proposition made by the author in the text, *explain* the author's argument using extracts from the text as evidence, and *evaluate* the validity of their argument. Students need to use this thinking tool all through their studies in this discipline, and so Samantha believed it was worthwhile and necessary to give them several opportunities to practise using it in their first year of study.

Students met each week during the course in small tutorial groups of 10-12 with a postgraduate tutor. Students were required to read a set text ahead of the tutorial and to prepare a response using the identify-explain-evaluate process. They were asked to identify one proposition or argument made by the author in the text. To do this they had to choose three short passages from the text that best captured the argument the author was making, and to quote these in their written preparation. They were then asked to explain what the author was claiming in their own words, in order to clarify that they had understood the author's claim. Thereafter they had to critically evaluate the reasons the author provided to support his or her claims. Samantha spent some time, in lectures and in the tutorial handouts, explaining clearly what critical evaluation means and giving students practical examples and guidance on how to evaluate philosophical texts critically.

These tutorial tasks were largely formative. The tutors assigned a nominal mark for the tutorial preparation tasks in order to encourage students to do the preparation work. The success of the tutorials depended on students coming to tutorials prepared to discuss their responses with a tutor and their peers, and be guided towards clearer and more appropriate responses if they had misunderstood or made errors. These tutorial tasks further prepared students for the more formal summative written assignments, and exams.

Samantha Vice
Philosophy

Formative and summative assessment aims:

- Demonstrate thinking in particular, logical and structured ways valued by the discipline of Philosophy
- Demonstrate the ability to apply moral and ethical theories to moral problems and scenarios
- Read set texts, and write assignment tasks, in discipline-appropriate ways.

Samantha's overall aims with this task were, firstly, to ensure that students read the required readings and, secondly, to ensure that students understood what they were reading and were able to use the readings to begin to make philosophical arguments or think philosophically. In this discipline, as in others, students need to develop the ability to connect different viewpoints to create and defend their arguments.

On reflection Samantha felt that these tutorial tasks did encourage students to read, gave them tools for reading and understanding philosophical texts and thus laid a strong foundation for them to be able to write and develop philosophical arguments.

Points to ponder:

A task like this identifies what is important in the discipline at a particular level (in this case reading at a first-year level in order to learn how to make particular kinds of arguments), and provides a way of modelling for students how to do this successfully.

What is important for students' learning at different stages (i.e. first year, second year, etc.), and how could you model for your students how to 'do the discipline' at different levels of learning in relevant ways?

Creating an exhibition: developing professional skills and practice

The assessment Rat designed for this second year Fine Art course was an interdisciplinary exhibition project. The course focused on developing students as 'creatives' rather than as 'artists' in a narrower sense. She believes this is important because the art world is constantly changing, and students need to be able to use a range of skills and practices both to make and market their art when they enter the world of work. This project, by giving students some experience of the various aspects of curating an exhibition, also prepared students for the fourth-year exhibition project which is a high-stakes 'capstone' project for Fine Art students.

To complete this assessment activity, the students were divided into four groups, each covering one part of the exhibition process: Curating, Fundraising, Logistics (Installation), and Marketing. Students had to work in small teams and as part of one larger team to pose and solve problems collectively on micro and macro levels, much as an exhibition team would in practice. To support the students, each group was assigned a lecturer in the department as an advisor.

As they worked in the smaller groups planning and setting up their part of the exhibition, students provided one another with formative peer feedback. Lecturers assigned to groups attended their group's meetings in an advisory capacity, also providing them with feedback on their problem-solving strategies, and so on.

As the final exhibition created and staged by the class was a public event, the students were conscious that the project needed to be of a professional standard, so they were motivated to provide one another with constructive feedback aimed at helping the whole group. This task was not a simulation, and was not just an assignment for marks. It had a tangible professional and 'real-world' significance. In Rat's words: 'In the professional world one needs to be aware of what other artists are doing in order to understand one's own

Rat Western
Fine Art

Formative and summative assessment aims:

- To connect students' earlier study in the Fine Arts with the professional world they will be joining in a tangible and manageable way

- To teach students to work across disciplines, to work collectively, and to use conceptual knowledge to tackle real problems, like designing or lighting an exhibition space

- To guide students in giving and receiving constructive peer feedback, which is an important part of working as an artist.

place in a wider context'. This assessment was designed to create this kind of awareness, as well as to give students an opportunity to work as 'creatives' and 'artists' in a more concrete way than a simulation might have encouraged.

The lecturer-advisors and students formatively assessed the process, largely though continuous peer feedback and encouragement. The formal exhibition was given a mark as part of the summative assessment requirements for completion of the course.

Post-exhibition, Rat and her colleagues facilitated a debriefing session, where lecturers and students discussed what worked and what did not, why, and what was learned. She and her colleagues met ahead of this session separately to discuss their ideas about how to facilitate the debriefing. This was valuable in ensuring that they could guide students clearly and effectively to make connections between their practical learning and the wider context of the degree work they are doing, to consolidate both their conceptual and practical learning.

On reflection, Rat commented that in this country specifically, there is very limited funding for the arts. Many graduates thus feel that they need to wait for the 'magical moment' when someone in an established position grants them an opportunity and funding to make their art. This leads to disappointment and many subsequently drop out of the field, because such opportunities are very rare. The impetus of this project, therefore, was for the students to develop skills which will serve them later in their degree, and further demonstrate how they can use these skills in the real world. If students are able to devise exhibitions and fundraise in alternative ways, the means to market their work (and increase the likelihood of being offered a more formal opportunity) can be within their grasp.

Points to ponder:

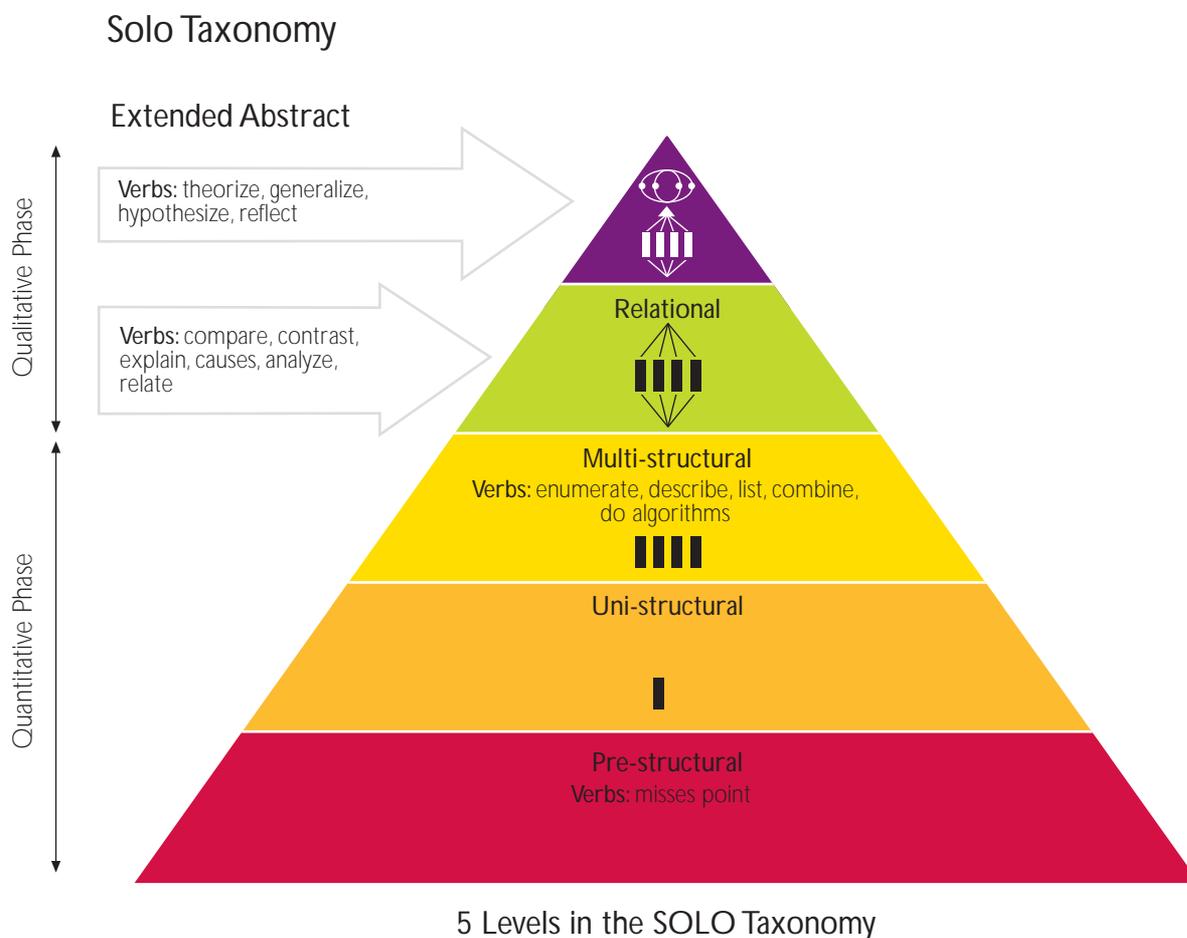In what ways could your students be encouraged to connect coursework learning with a practical or real-world application and present their solutions in different formats, such as visual, audio, online or oral presentation, rather than in only textual forms?

What kinds of solutions and formats would serve students well in terms of the limitations or requirements of the professions into which they can move?

Appendices

APPENDIX 1: SOLO TAXONOMY
image from: http://ar.cetl.hku.hk/bloom.htm

Solo Taxonomy

Extended Abstract

Qualitative Phase

Verbs: theorize, generalize, hypothesize, reflect

Verbs: compare, contrast, explain, causes, analyze, relate

Quantitative Phase

Relational

Multi-structural
Verbs: enumerate, describe, list, combine, do algorithms

Uni-structural

Pre-structural
Verbs: misses point

5 Levels in the SOLO Taxonomy

Information at each level

Students only understand the subject at the individual word level, usually miss the point and uses too simple way of thinking about it	Students' understanding focuses on only one relevant aspect of the subject	Students' understanding focuses on several relevant aspects, but is treated as independent objects and concepts	Different aspects of students' understanding have been integrated into a conherent body of knowledge	The integrated body of knowledge can be transformed into the higher level of abstraction and be generalised to a new topic of the subject

Reference: AR@HKU. (nd). 'Bloom's and SOLO taxonomy'. Assessment Resources. *Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning.* Online at: http://ar.cetl.hku.hk/bloom.htm (accessed 26 April 2015)

Adapted from: Biggs, J. (1999) 'What the Student Does: Teaching for Enhanced Learning', *Higher Education Research and Development* 18(1): 57-75.

APPENDIX 2:
Example of task question and assessment grid

COURSE ASSESSMENT

There is not test for this course. You will, however, be expected to complete an ASSIGNMENT which is due on the 05 May 2014 at 10h00. These assignments will need to be handed and signed in with Ms Kathy Wakashe at the reception area. Please note that no extension will be granted on these assignments except under exceptioonal circumstances.

ASSIGNMENT TOPIC

Using the theories you have learnt in lectures, the prescribed readings, and some research you do on your own, critically discuss your own development of a gendered identity from birth to present day. In other words, critically discuss how you came to adopt and/or perform the sex and/or gender roles you have and how these may or may not have changed as you grew up. In your assignment you need to include the following information:

- How do you identify in terms of sex and/or gender identities;
- Details on how you came to identify as a specific sex and/or gender;
  - Here you will need to demonstrate critical engagement with the theories presented to you in class as well as literature you source yourself on whether sex and/or gender is socially constructed and/or biologically based.
- Whether a sex and/or gendered identity is important to you and how it influences your lived experience;
- Critically discuss who or what influenced your development of a sex and/or gender identity.

ASSIGNMENT FORMAT

- The assignment can be presented in any format you wish (i.e. essay, DVD, PowerPoint presentation, poster, etc.);
- If any portion of the assignment is typed, it **must** be submitted through **Turnitin** to check for any plagiarism issues;
  - Any assignment which has typed portions that does not have a Turnitin report attached will have **10% deducted** from the mark;
- Typed essay-type assignments should be no longer than 6 pages in length, 1.5 spacing.

Appendices

RHODES UNIVERSITY

Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT
GENERAL PSYCHOLOGY 2
CRITICAL GENDER PSYCHOLOGY ASSESSMENT GRID

MARK:

LECTURER:	Ms. Natalie Donaldson
STUDENT NUMBER, SURNAME, INITIALS:	

Rating Scale:
1-2 = Poor; 3-4 = Less than adequate; 5-6 = Adequate; 7-8 = More than adequate; 9-10 = Excellent

NO.	CRITERIA	RATING (Out of 10)
1	Relevance	
2	Description of your sex and/or gendered identity	
3	Critical engagement with theories on sex and/or gender development	
4	Critical engagement with what it means to identify as a certain sex and/or gender	
5	Critical engagement with personal thoughts and feelings	
6	Integration of theory and concepts	
7	Logical, coherent and concise argument	
8	Acknowledgement of sources	
9	Adherence to APA 6th Edition style of referencing	
10	Inclusion of prescribed readings	
11	Evidence of **at least 4 additional academic** sources	
12	Legibility	
13	Spelling and Grammar	
14	Length	
15	Creativity in presentation	
	TOTAL OUT OF 150	
	FINAL MARK OUT OF 100 (i.e. Mark out of 150 ÷ 150 x 100; e.g. 120 ÷ 150 x 100 = 80)	

*Please turn over for a description of the mark and see comments throughout assignment.

APPENDIX 3: BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

EVALUATION
Assessing the value of ideas and knowledge; making judgements on the basis of criteria

SYNTHESIS
Bringing parts back together in different or new ways, to begin seeing new relationships

ANALYSIS
Breaking problems or scenarios down into 'parts' and the 'whole' and beginning to see the relationships between them

APPLICATION
Using information or concepts in applied scenarios or problems

COMPREHENSION
Understanding what facts, terms, concepts mean (as definitions)

KNOWLEDGE
Remembering and recalling facts, terms etc

Adapted from Bloom, B., Englehart, M. Furst, E., Hill, W., & Krathwohl, D. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals.* Handbook I: Cognitive domain. New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green.
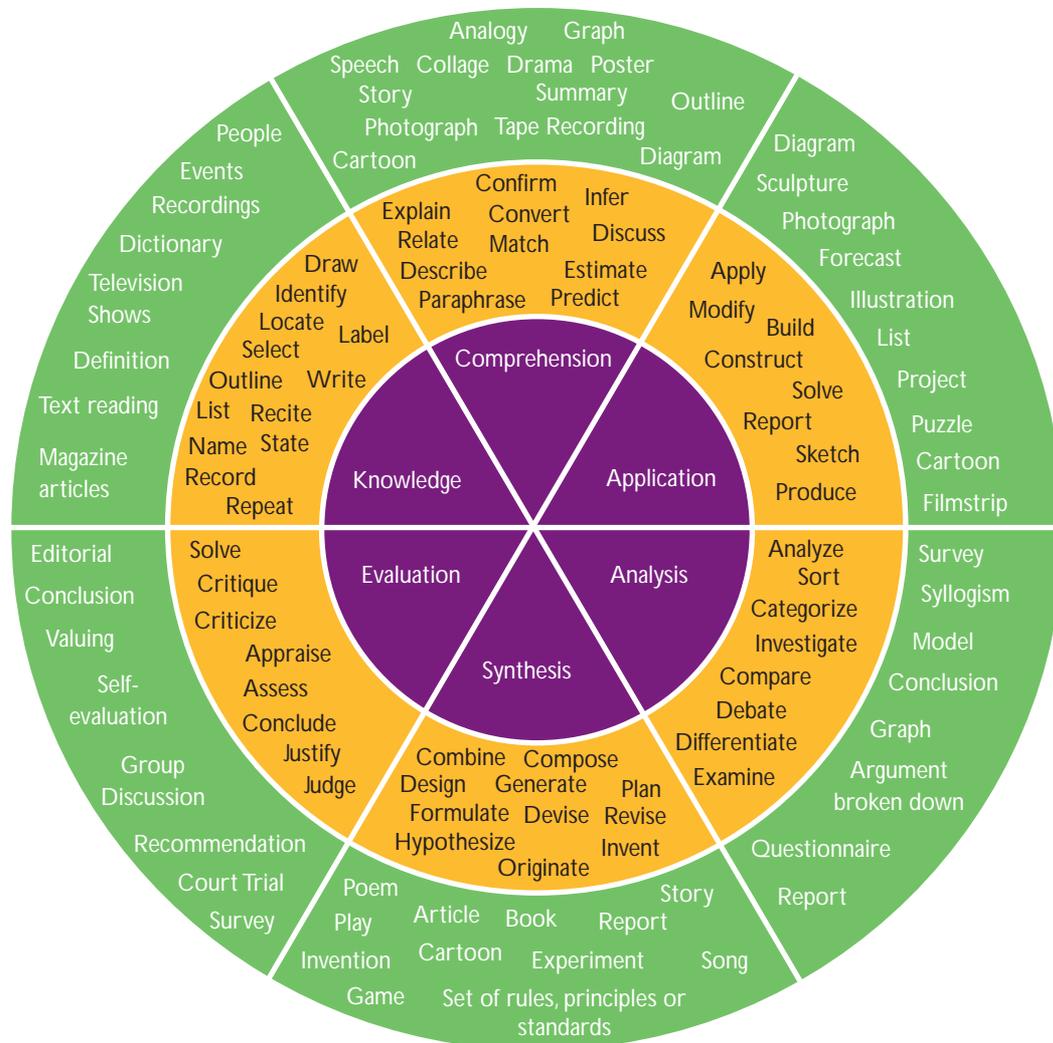
Appendices

Image from http://electriceducator.blogspot.ca/2009/11/google-proof-questioning-new-use-for.html (accessed 15 July 2015). Adapted from Bloom, B., Englehart, M. Furst, E., Hill, W., & Krathwohl, D. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals. Handbook I: Cognitive domain.* New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green.