Respect

Uncle Reg.

• From learning comes understanding. From understanding comes tolerance. And from tolerance comes harmony.

Maori Elder.

• If I bring my pick-nick, and each of you bring yours, and we share, we would not have a pick-nick: we would have a feast!
Bad news:

Assimilate and disseminate

• It’s your job to assimilate as much as possible for the rest of the day,
• Tell your colleagues what a fabulous show they missed. ;-)
• And, … when you go back to your schools and departments, to teach them everything you’ve learned.
A journey of institutional assessment reform: six years and counting.

Associate Professor Duncan D Nulty
Griffith Institute for Higher Education
A journey of institutional assessment reform: six years and counting

- Reflect on what it is that we have achieved
  - Supporting our capacity to operationalise our achievements in increasingly conscious, deliberate and purposeful ways.

- Lay a foundation for further elaboration of our understandings of what we have achieved.
  - Speaks to the heart of what it means to be a professional as an academic

© Duncan D Nulty, 2012
Heady stuff!

- Its way more than ‘just a job’
- Or, at least, it should be ;-)
2007 – 2008 Teaching Quality Indicators (TQI) Project

• GIHE, together with the DVC (A)’s office was involved in a nationally funded project with several other universities.

• One of the four identified indicators of teaching quality was *Assessment Practice*. 

© Duncan D Nulty, 2012
TQI Statements of Good Practice in Assessment

1. Assessment tasks are designed to advance student learning
2. Assessment processes and practices are clearly communicated to students to facilitate their learning
3. Assessment practices are fair, produce marks and grades that are reliable and valid, and certify students’ achievements.
4. Assessment policies and practices are planned, implemented, reviewed and improved

© Duncan D Nulty, 2012
Fundamental principle:

Assessment inevitably shapes:
• how students approach learning, including
• what they focus on, and
• how they go about learning it.
Assessment therefore mediates the quality of students learning outcomes and is pivotal in both:

• The achievement of what we regard as appropriately high academic standards.

• Demonstrating the achievement of those standards.

• I don’t think I can emphasise this enough.
Derek Rowntree, 1977

• It is our assessment of students that allows us to be informed about the standard of their learning achievement.
Are we assessing too much?

- Sadler & Cassematis, 2007

- A better question would be: “Is the assessment appropriate?”
Appropriate assessment

- *What* has to be learned, and *how* it is best to learn such things, should be key determinants of the design of assessment regimes within courses.
Key academic capabilities

Three intersecting areas of expertise:
• discipline knowledge;
• knowledge of learning theory; and,
• knowledge of good practice in assessment.

• Like a three legged stool?
Key feature of Assessment

• Variation in practice is inevitable – and desirable.
• Assessment practice has to be designed to fit it’s purpose.

• How many of you include a statement with each assessment item that explains its purpose to students?

© Duncan D Nulty, 2012
Experiences of assessment

• Alexander (2008)

• The quality and rigour of assessment and feedback practices across the university were patchy.
2008 AUQA Audit
Recommendation 7 (Urgent)

• AUQA recommends that more attention be paid by Griffith University to quality control aspects (such as moderation policy and procedures and the calibration of standards for the awarding of grades) .... (p. 25)
• …the reach, quality and performance of a nation’s higher education system will be key determinants of its economic **and social progress**.

• There are now clear signs that the **quality of the educational experience is declining**; the established mechanisms for assuring quality nationally need updating; and student-to-staff ratios are unacceptably high.

• **major reforms are recommended to the financing and regulatory frameworks for higher education.**

• …must invest … to improve the **quality** of graduates.

• … policy decisions [in other countries] place us at a great **competitive disadvantage** unless **immediate action** is taken.

• The nation **will need more well-qualified people** if it is to anticipate and meet the **demands** of a rapidly moving global economy.
Conclusion? …

- There was an imperative for improvement to assessment practices.
- There still is.
• GGLT – Promoting Good Assessment Practices.
  – Different to most projects: A systems approach
Case Study (Radbourn and Nulty)

http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/02/immersing.html

Immersing a faculty in assessment: Making an organisational cultural shift

Introduction

Enhancing assessment practices and embedding new approaches to assessment within teaching and learning practices requires more than professional development for staff — it also requires a process of organisational change and development. The case study below is an example of how processes for organisational change and professional development were married at the Queensland University of Technology’s Faculty of Business.

The QUT case study is an excellent example of how a sustained focus on assessment issues can provide the vehicle for discussion of the wider curriculum and the quality of student learning. It provides a useful blueprint for considering how a similar change process could be undertaken in other settings.

A case study of the Faculty of Business at Queensland University of Technology

Jennifer Radbourne, Assistant Dean, Faculty of Business
Duncan Nulty, Higher Education Educator, Teaching and Learning Support Services

Since 1998 the Faculty of Business at Queensland University of Technology has been achieving an organisational cultural shift in relation to teaching and learning. This shift has been driven by immersion in issues to do with the improvement of the assessment of student learning.

There have been four principal phases in this process:

- a review of the assessment policies and practices in the Faculty (1998–9);
- the adoption of a Learning and Assessment Accountability Model (2000);
- a twelve month placement of a higher education assessment consultant in the Faculty (2000); and,
- a large grant focused teaching and learning development project involving curriculum integration through a case study and significant development of student assessment techniques in the Faculty’s eight core units (2001–2).

While the outcome achieved by the Faculty due to these phases and the two projects that followed addressed...
Rome wasn’t built in a day.
Good Practice in Assessment at the Course Level


Griffith University’s Good Practices in Assessment project engages academic staff in the collaborative development of a range of resources and tools to help build capacity in the area of assessment practice.

Case studies
Case studies of good practice in assessment from a range of disciplines

- Bachelor of Popular Music:
  - Popular Music Production (PDF 117.7K)
  - Popular World Musics (PDF 42.5K)

- Bachelor of Business:
  - Foundation Studies in Tourism, Leisure, Hotel and Sport Management (PDF 39.9K)
  - International Food and Beverage Management (PDF 116.2K)
  - Strategy and Change: A Service Industry Approach (PDF 55.7K)

- Graduate Certificate in Policy Analysis
  - A programmatic review of curriculum alignment, assessment and graduate attributes (PDF 138K)

- Bachelor of Information Technology
  - Programming 2: An assessment review (PDF 61.5K)

- Bachelor of Business Administration
  - Student Assessment Literacy (PDF 39.6K)

- Bachelor of Nursing
  - Exploring Summative Written Assessment in Undergraduate Nursing (PDF 81.6K)

- School of Public Health
  - Assessing Academic Achievement Standards (PDF 193K)

Users of the site should also consider looking at case studies in peer and self assessment also available from the GIHE website.
Broad consultation
Let’s look at “primary data”

5. What is love? Don’t hurt me, don’t hurt me, baby don’t hurt me, no more.

6. How do we love God?

7. How do we love our neighbor?
Curriculum Review Tools for Good Practice in Assessment

- **Curriculum review tools for Good Practice in Assessment**
  - Review tool Part 1: A quality assurance of assessment framework (PDF 168K)
  - Review tool Part 2: A four step approach to quality assurance of assessment planning (PDF 115K)
  - Review tool Part 3: Assessment for internationalisation of the Curriculum (PDF 94K)

- **Assessment Symposia**
  - Podcasts and resources from the 2009 Good Practices in Assessment Symposium
    - Program
    - Edited Keynote Address: Moderation, grading and calibration by Professor Royce Sadler
    - Save audio file of Keynote Address (MP3 8.2MB)
  - Podcasts and resources from the 2010 Good Practice in Assessment Symposium
    - Program (PDF 201K)
    - Edited Keynote Address: "Setting Standards for Deep Learning: Promises, Pitfalls, Practical Options" by Professor Tom Angelo, La Trobe University
    - Edited Keynote Address: "Assuring Academic Achievement Standards at Griffith University" by Professor Emeritus Royce Sadler, Griffith University (PDF 163kb)
    - Save audio file of Keynote Address (Royce Sadler) (MP3 70mb)
2010

• Program level case study


– Graduate Certificate of Policy Analysis (Dr Anne Tiernan, Dr Dennis Grube with Dr Calvin Smith and Ms Lynda Davies) – (which was strategically chosen as one of the university’s flagship coursework postgraduate programs, itself a strategic area of growth for the university).
Whole of School case study

– School of Public Health


© Duncan D Nulty, 2012
What can we learn from this that will help us to come up with something we can scale up?

... ... ...
2010 Symposium Keynotes

– Professor Tom Angelo

– Professor Royce Sadler

© Duncan D Nulty, 2012
Two other initiatives:

1. Establishment of a University Assessment Committee
   - First task was to review university assessment policy

1. Systematic school consultation process throughout the university to raise awareness of assessment reform issues.
   - academics want their judgements of the standard of students’ learning outcomes to be trusted.
2011 – 2012: Quality Assurance of Assessment Standards Project funded

• Interviewed academics around the university about their approaches to ensure quality assessment standards.

Fundamental question:

How do you know that when you mark your students' work, that the standards you use are appropriate, and are consistent with others who share comparable expertise to you?
What is consensus moderation?

- Peer collaboration to benchmark and inform standards of judgement.

Examples of consensus moderation practices

- The use of an internationally recognised text in a course
- Engagement in a range of professional activities that include such things as consultancy work, attending and participating in conferences, peer review of papers and other scholarly works, engagement with professional accredited bodies
- Having worked elsewhere before being an academic at this University.

© Duncan D Nulty, 2012
Consensus Moderation: The impossible dream?

Nailing jelly to the ceiling;
Pushing water up hill;
Playing snooker with a rope;
Turning water into wine;
Pleasing everyone all the time;
40:40:20;
Herding cats;
Finding a parking space at the Gold Coast Campus;

Getting a group of academics to agree with each other;
Timeline of core academic activity

1. Program Level Planning
2. Course Level Planning
3. Consistency of Teaching
4. Marking Students’ Work
5. Grading Students’ Learning Achievements
6. Inter Course Standards (within and between institutions)
7. Consistency of Standards Over Time
Reference practices across a timeline of core academic activity

1 Course assessment planning:
- Internal peer-review of the assessment plan (e.g. by HOS/ Dean/ Discipline head / Colleagues / teaching team members)

2 Marking:
- Cross marking of samples of students work internally or externally by peers\(^1\) [NB: this can be prior to marking, during marking, after marking]

3 Grading:
- Internal or external peer-review\(^1\) of marks for all students graded at all grade boundaries

4 Inter-course consistency:
- Peer-review of samples of students’ work by other (related) course convenors (at your own institution), the discipline convenor, program convenor, or head of school [NB: this can be prior to, during or after marking/grading]

5 Consistency over time:
- Individual or peer-review\(^1\) comparing marks with exemplars of students’ work marked in previous course offerings

\(^1\) Peers may include appropriately qualified colleagues in related courses locally, nationally or internationally; HOS; Discipline Head, and/or other teaching team members

© Duncan D Nulty, 2012
Use of the framework

• Allows us to demonstrate both:
  – *how* we ensure that students achieve appropriate and consistent learning standards,
  and that;
  – they *do actually achieve them*.

• Getting the model to work depended on (at least) two more things:
  – Getting data on the consensus moderation practices used across the timeline.
  – Implementing changes to the ways Assessment Boards/Panels operated.

– I’ll talk about the first, and leave the second for others.
First, we need a data collection strategy.

- At Griffith we are adding a new section to our on-line course profile system.
- It presents course convenors with screens listing the “reference practices” and asks them to tick each of the practices they use.
- It’s quick & simple, and, since it lists practices we know people are already using, it’s also likely to be fairly well accepted.
- Accuracy? Well, we are confident of this. The approach mirrors how we collect data on other curriculum initiatives (like say “internationalisation”) and besides, it will be a lot better than doing nothing.
Immediate benefits

• We get data about what convenors are doing
  – We can report on this

• Simply collecting these data works as a educative strategy
  – Convenors get to see the kinds of things they ‘should’ be doing.

• An implicit developmental imperative is apparent
  – Convenors get to realise there is more that they could do.

• Over time, if you have a positive view of the professionalism of academics as I do, these people will engage in making improvements as ‘suggested/ implied’.
  – Which, of course, is something we can help with through provision of professional development opportunities and materials.

© Duncan D Nulty, 2012
## Participation rates – The Use of Consensus Moderation Reference Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Uni wide</th>
<th>Other wide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Course-level planning to ensure the use of appropriate assessment items and assessment regime</td>
<td>95.41%</td>
<td>92.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Setting appropriate and consistent standards for marking individual pieces of students' work</td>
<td>92.25%</td>
<td>91.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Reviewing the standard of the final course grades to ensure they are appropriate and consistent</td>
<td>91.47%</td>
<td>62.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ensuring appropriate and consistent standards between your course and other cognately similar</td>
<td>62.77%</td>
<td>71.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ensuring appropriate and consistent assessment standards over time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The story goes on …

– Assessment board reform
– Increased institutional capability to support on-line submission, marking and return of students’ work.
– Scoping of technical requirements for a repository of students’ assessed work.
– …

• You’ll hear more about some of this as the day goes on.
Take away messages?

• Created a common lexicon for thinking about and talking about the way we at Griffith assure the achievement of appropriate learning standards.

• We have a single framework to organise our practices around.

• We have systematised engagement with this framework so that we can ensure academics’ judgements are informed, appropriate, consistent, and therefore trustworthy.

• We can demonstrate that our staff engage in practices that deliver on appropriate standards of learning achievement
  – this output is evidenced by both the consensus moderation practices (a process variable),
  – and the primary data: students’ assessed work – surely, the ultimate outcome measure.

© Duncan D Nulty, 2012
“This is just the way we work here”
Me in my other shirt.

Phone: (+61-7) 3735 6813

e.mail: d.nulty@griffith.edu.au

In person: M10, Room 4.15a, Mt Gravatt

http://www.griffith.edu.au/gihe/staff/duncan-nulty

© Duncan D Nulty, 2012