Learning-orientated assessment for future-orientated learning

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Generic graduate attributes

- ‘the skills, personal attributes and values which should be acquired by all graduates regardless of their discipline or field of study. .... the central achievements of higher education as a process'
  (Higher Education Council (1992, p.20))
Employability skills

- ‘skills required not only to gain employment, but also to progress within an enterprise so as to achieve one’s potential and contribute successfully to enterprise strategic directions’ (DEST, 2002)
- Subset of graduate attributes (BIHECC, 2007)
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<th>Generic graduate attributes (Oliver, 2011)</th>
<th>Employability skills (DEST, 2002)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>written and oral communication; learning and working collaboratively</td>
<td>communication and teamwork skills</td>
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<td>problem-solving, generating ideas and innovative solutions</td>
<td>problem solving skills; initiative and enterprise skills</td>
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<td>critical and analytical thinking</td>
<td>planning and organising skills</td>
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<td>learning and working independently</td>
<td>self-management skills; life-long learning skills</td>
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<td>information literacy, often associated with technology</td>
<td>technology skills</td>
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<td>ethical and inclusive engagement with communities, cultures and nations</td>
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Policy well developed (e.g., Barrie, 2004)

Issues:
- Developed or selected?
- Mix of dispositions and attitudes, abilities, and skills
- Student awareness ‘good for us to have’

Must be included in curriculum and aligned with learning outcomes and assessment (Oliver, 2011)

Challenge for academics –> leave them out? (Hughes & Barrie, 2010)
Assessment and constructive alignment

‘Sustainable assessment’ (Boud & Falchikov, 2006)

- certification/feedback
- prepare students to assess own learning beyond the unit in which the assessment is embedded

Characteristics of sustainable assessment

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<th>Engage with standards, criteria and problem analysis</th>
<th>Emphasise context influences on learning activity</th>
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<td>working in association with others in/out institution</td>
<td>authentic representations and productions</td>
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<td>promotes transparency, including structure and purpose of the task</td>
<td>fosters reflexivity, self–monitoring and self–evaluation</td>
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<td>builds learner agency and promotes active learning</td>
<td>portrayal of learning outcomes for a range of purposes</td>
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Learning–oriented assessment
(Carless, 2007)

Figure 1. Framework for learning–oriented assessment

- Constructive alignment: objectives, content and assessment (Biggs, 1999)
- Active engagement
- Timely to allow feedforward into future work
Case study: LOA to promote acquisition of key graduate attributes

- curriculum approval documents
  - research skills;
  - problem-solving skills;
  - communication skills appropriate to a range of contexts;
  - ethical perspectives
Ratings of importance and presence of key skills in curriculum (Year 1 students, n=58)

- Research Skills
- Problem Solving Skills
- Spoken Communication
- Written Communication
- Ethics

* p < .05
Learning and Teaching Activities

- Lectures
- Interactive seminars

Unit outline presents graduate attributes and discusses each learning activity and assessment in terms of graduate attributes and key skills for the health sector.

Team-based activity: research a key health problem, including (a) evaluating interventions; (b) interviewing health professionals (>2).

Information literacy and academic writing online module.

Learning Outcomes

- Describe conceptual framework & definitions
- Understanding of biopsychosocial determinants
- Evaluate preventative and restorative interventions
- Apply principles to novel problems
- Understand teamwork and how to improve outcomes of team-based projects
- Information literacy skills
- Skills in spoken and written communication, and academic writing

Assessment

- MCQ and SA exam
- Literature review (teamwork in health) and reflection on group process
- Seminar presentation: Health problem and interviews
- Information literacy quiz and endnote library
Communication & Teamwork

Lectures
communication skills
models of communication
the health system, communication, adverse events

Seminar activities
building and managing a team
team-based project

Summative Assessment
oral presentation (reference list; meeting records; consent forms; group)
literature review and reflection (individual)

Self and Peer Assessment
use marking criteria to assess oral presentation and provide feedback
(quality of communication / audience engagement)
Lectures
links to concurrent unit in research
research presented and evaluated
evidence-based practice model

Seminar activities
information literacy module (ES; GA's; E–B practice)
team-based project

Research & Evaluation

Summative Assessment
information literacy quiz
dEndNote library
oral presentation (present and evaluate evidence)

Self and Peer Assessment
use marking criteria to assess oral presentation and provide feedback (informative and well researched)
Agreement Ratings Year 1 students standard program (n=57) and revised program (n=45)

- Learning Skills
- Intellectual Stimulation
- Communication & Inquiry
- Ethics & Perspectives

* p<.05
Ratings of importance of key skills in curriculum

All differences ns
Comments

- Assessments and learning activities aligned with learning outcomes
- Assessments ‘sustainable’
- Perception of ‘communication and inquiry’ (spoken, written/visual, engaged in R&I) and of ‘learning skills’ (problem solving, analytical skills, commitment to learning, plan own work) higher in revised program
- Evaluation data only
References


