

If we build it, will they come?

Developing an online assessment resource for educators at UNSW

Kathryn Coleman
Learning and Teaching Unit
University of New South Wales

Adele Flood
Learning and Teaching Unit
University of New South Wales

Through the Assessment AS Learning Toolkit, on the new Teaching Gateway at University of New South Wales (UNSW) educators and academics have the opportunity to find ideas, guidelines, and practical strategies on the holistic processes of designing online assessment as learning. This toolkit has been devised to collect and share resources and includes practical strategies for selecting technologies that suit the learning objectives and outcomes of courses and programs to support more effective and efficient assessment. The premise throughout this Toolkit is that assessment should focus primarily on learning and the achievement of intended learning outcomes. This poster seeks to showcase the range of online assessment practices being used at UNSW to enhance student learning.

Keywords: Technologies for assessment; professional development; blended learning; online assessment.

Building a Toolkit



In this poster we describe our experiences of developing this online resource for teaching staff as UNSW developed new strategies for assessment AS learning (See Figure 1). The online resources developed have been designed to provide support in selecting assessment with practical strategies on the holistic processes of designing online assessment while also providing discipline specific resources that focus on faculty experience. The Toolkit has included the building of professional development resources for staff and to enable them to share their own practice through short videos and video case studies and scenario video clips in situ.

Figure 1: UNSW Assessment AS Learning Toolkit

Why develop an online assessment resource for educators at UNSW?

It was found that many academics at UNSW were keen to develop more innovative and student focused assessment however, they were often in need of assistance to undertake such changes. At the same time there were others who were willing to share with their colleagues during seminars and workshops how they were integrating technology and introducing varied assessment techniques into their assessment practices. A common request was “Will you be recording this? Can I get a copy?” Concurrently with this, as well the creation of a new Teaching Gateway, the Vice Chancellor instigated a University wide review of assessment seeking to make assessment more efficient and effective. It was decided that the best way to harness the resources that were available within our own academic staff to support such changes to practice would be to develop a toolkit (modeled on Macquarie University’s toolkit) of resources fully available online to those teaching both within and beyond the University.

Selecting Technologies for Assessment

This poster focuses on the technologies for assessment resource to support technology in assessment processes.

To support educators, the toolkit offers strategies and benefits of utilising technology (See Figure 2) for assessment to help learners engage more productively and flexibly in their course learning and assessment, and can help staff manage assessment more efficiently and effectively. The Toolkit resource seeks to promote how learning can be more flexible when students can choose when and where they access content and engage in learning and assessment online. This flexibility helps students to regulate their own learning and play a role in the process. Using tools such as discussion forums and wikis, educators can record student group processes and support students more flexibly as they progress through assessment tasks. This support and ownership can aid in developing a more student-centred approach to learning and assessment and provide students with a space to learn, reflect and develop connections between knowledge ideas.

Selecting Assessment Tasks

Tags: [assessment](#)

There are many different types of assessment tasks, each with its own benefits and challenges. There can be real value in reviewing whether the assessment tasks you are accustomed to using are actually the best ones for the purpose and whether you can improve their [Design for Assessment As Learning](#).

The integration of technologies into assessment can provide opportunities to enhance student experiences and diversify the range of options available for students to learn and demonstrate their learning. Equally, technologies enable staff to reconsider learning and teaching approaches, introduce innovative assessment methods and improve efficiency.



Selecting Assessment Tasks

In this video, Dr Adele Flood from the Learning and Teaching Unit discusses selecting assessment tasks.

[See [Transcript of video](#)]

Resources include:

Selecting assessment tasks

- [Selecting Assessment Task and Activities](#)
- [Capstone Projects](#)
- [Case Studies and Scenarios](#)
- [Extended Writing](#)
- [Group Work](#)
- [Multiple Choice Questions](#)
- [Oral Presentations](#)
- [Portfolios](#)
- [Role Plays and Simulations](#)

Selecting technologies

- [Using Technologies to Support Assessment](#)
- [Blogs](#)
- [Discussion Boards](#)
- [ePortfolios](#)
- [Wikis](#)

In many cases, technology-improved efficiencies in managing assessment also benefit students educationally. For example, providing online multiple-choice quizzes with automated marking and feedback may ultimately reduce staff marking loads, as well as giving students immediate feedback on their learning performance. Other strategies from the Toolkit suggest how blending technologies with face-to-face teaching, learning and assessment can:

- enable online submission of assignments.
- enhance students' assessment-as-learning experiences.
- give students more ways to learn and to demonstrate their learning.
- enable staff to reconsider learning and teaching approaches.
- introduce innovative assessment methods
- help staff give timely and more comprehensive feedback, and
- improve teachers' efficiency in managing large volumes of marking and administration.
- support a students' learning process, through automated assignment receipts, and marking and feedback records.
- support students as they develop graduate capability skills such as communication, global citizenship and professional skills (eportfolio).

Figure 2: Selecting Assessment tasks

Have they come?

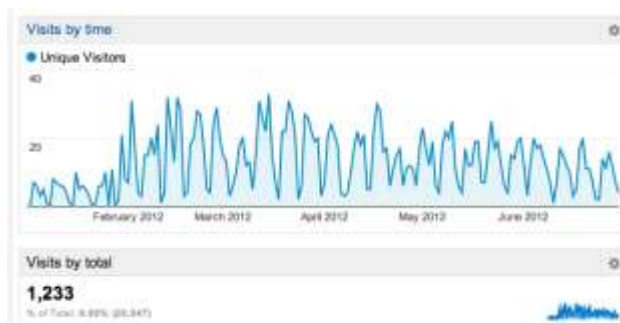


Figure 3: Jan-July 2012 Analytics from Google Analytics

The overall satisfaction of the analytics (see Figure 3) on the Toolkit pages have suggested that 1233 unique visitors in Sydney using the identifier 'assess' have accessed the Online assessment Toolkit in the last 6 months. This suggests that we have more work to do in delivering the content to faculty, however, as the Internet enables the views from outside users and externals is currently on the rise we assume that content as a professional development resource is valid and required in the field.

Will they keep coming?

The Assessment Toolkit will continue to be analysed, built upon and presented to faculty. It will also continue to be developed to present how emerging technologies can enable assessment and learning to develop digitally literate 21st century citizens. It will also continue to provide a world-class set of resources available to anyone wishing to enhance their own assessment practice within a global audience.

References

UNSW Assessment AS Learning Toolkit (2012). Learning and Teaching Unit (LTU), UNSW.
<http://teaching.unsw.edu.au/assessment-toolkit>

Author contact details:

Kathryn Coleman, kate.coleman@deakin.edu.au

Please cite as: Coleman, K., & Flood, A. (2012). If we build it, will they come? Developing an online assessment resource for educators at UNSW. In M. Brown, M. Hartnett & T. Stewart (Eds.), Future challenges, sustainable futures. Proceedings ascilite Wellington 2012. (pp.223-225).

Copyright © 2012 Kathryn Coleman and Adele Flood.

The author(s) assign to the ascilite and educational non-profit institutions, a non-exclusive licence to use this document for personal use and in courses of instruction, provided that the article is used in full and this copyright statement is reproduced. The author(s) also grant a non-exclusive licence to ascilite to publish this document on the ascilite website and in other formats for the Proceedings ascilite 2012. Any other use is prohibited without the express permission of the author(s).