In 2004 the articles for Curriculum Matters are related to particular aspects of the teaching and learning process. Articles from Edition 1 explored a range of perspectives on Inquiry Learning. In this present edition the focus is on assessment. Articles written for this edition describe classroom assessment in a variety of contexts and purposes, ranging from primary and secondary classrooms contexts to Vocational Education and Teaching (VET). The topics focus on assessment with some reference to monitoring and reporting. Monitoring and reporting are two focus areas to be considered for Curriculum Matters in 2005.

We value the opportunities for educators to ‘share practice’ and learn from one another. Curriculum Matters provides such an opportunity and we appreciate the contributions from the writers in this edition who have drawn on their rich backgrounds as teachers, education officers and consultants. These articles discuss assessment in classroom experiences, the assessment focus of the Curriculum Support Teacher (CST) network for 2004, assessment in Religious Education, CTJ directions in moderation (post assessment), and aspects of assessment in VET.

The articles provoke reflection and discussion on the purposes of assessment, and the approaches to assessment employed for a range of purposes in classroom units. The purposes for assessment are described as:

- assessment of learning – generally summative and the most common assessment observed in classrooms
- assessment for learning – generally formative and used to make judgments about learning in order to plan for the next stage, and
- assessment as learning – which involves thinking about assessment as an on-going processes regarding how we learn, and encourages students themselves to reflect on their learning, to self correct, and to learn to be effective self assessors.

The goal is to plan for a balance to complement the three purposes of classroom based assessment.

**Future Editions** - The next two editions will continue the theme of teaching and learning and include articles on the contribution of school libraries to learning; focus schools and Personal Development Education; aspects of middle years of schooling and other topics. Articles may be submitted to me for consideration for publication. If you would like assistance in the process and skills of writing an article, members of the RE and Curriculum team can provide advice. Deadlines for articles are:

- **Edition 3** – School libraries plus other areas: **Friday 16 July**
- **Edition 4** – Personal Development plus other areas: **Friday 20 August**

I trust you enjoy reading this edition.

Fran Ralston
Editor

With thanks to the Editorial Committee for Edition 2: Graeme Barry, Jane Slattery, Donna Castelli, Jane Blackburn, Michael Boyle, Bernadette Barker, Louise Hoey, Amanda Pentti.
The Changing Purposes of Assessment

by Tanya McNeill

Over the past few years I have had the privilege of not only being a member of a dynamic and progressive staff, but also a part of a fantastic learning community in the form of the CST (Curriculum Support Teachers) Network. This ever growing community, supported and directed by the BCEC curriculum team, has systematically discussed, analysed, challenged and led CST’s over the past few years to a deeper understanding of the environment and conditions needed for high quality, inclusive education.

The representation of the curriculum as a jigsaw, with its central focus on the roles of lifelong learners surrounded by the broad areas of outcomes, connected curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, visually depicts the integration, interconnection and alignment necessary to build effective teaching/learning communities at both classroom and school levels.

Most teachers are becoming familiar with using outcomes in their connected unit planning, teachers are continually trying to use pedagogy that is productive, effective, and high quality in the teaching/learning experiences they provide students. This year the CST network is exploring the quadrant of the jigsaw that focuses on: ‘Assessment.’

From the data collected by schools and analysed at the CST network meetings it became clear much frustration exists when assessment practices do not align with the school’s vision statement, current planning and pedagogy; when reporting practices do not align with changes in assessment, or when teachers are unsure of the assessment practices of their colleagues.

One of the conclusions and inferences made collectively by the group was for schools to develop a school written Assessment Policy or Framework. The process for developing the assessment framework provides for shared and agreed understandings amongst staff regarding the purposes, principles, practices and procedures for assessment in their school community. In devising such a framework a myriad of questions arise. Perhaps the biggest question is: What is ‘The Purpose of Assessment’? Why do we assess?

The meaning of the word “assessment” comes from the French word ‘assidere’ which means “to sit with or beside.” Its literal meaning describes a situation where the teacher and student spend time discussing how learning is progressing, what areas are going well, what areas need further development and what action is needed in the future. It is my belief that somewhere in formal education this original meaning seems to have been replaced with a different interpretation of the purpose of assessment.

Since the industrial revolution we have moved towards assessment being a way of ‘measuring’ achievement with an emphasis on assessment being used for accountability and reporting student achievement to various audiences. This type of assessment is referred to as ‘assessment OF learning.’ It makes a judgement about a student’s achievement, provides information about what the student knows and can do, is measured against prescribed learning outcomes and at times against other students’ achievement. Assessment of learning usually takes place at the end of a week, term, unit, or semester with its main characteristic is that it is summative and the teachers’ time is mostly spent marking students work. In most cases, effective feedback to the student is minimal and does not provide future directions. It needs to be said, that teachers do need to assess the learning of students, to see where they are on the continuum of achieving learning outcomes but is this the primary purpose of assessing students?

Judith Arter and Linda Bond (1993) highlight some of the societal and educational influences impacting on the purposes of assessment. Much traditional assessment measured facts and skills in isolation, less frequently requiring students to apply what they know and can do to real-life situations. Yet students today need to know how to access information and apply it to real-life situations. The future demands that they will have to analyse situations and apply their knowledge and skills to find workable solutions. There is an increasing emphasis on critical thinking, problem solving, meta-cognition, group collaboration, reasoning and lifelong learning. To be functional in tomorrow’s world students must draw inferences and relate current information to past information. The ‘testing’ only of knowledge and skills is insufficient. We must also test a student’s ability to know how and when to use a variety of skills collectively to accomplish a goal.

At a recent address, Lorna Earl (2004) highlighted the need for teachers to view assessment as a truly integral
part of the teaching and learning process where the focus is centred on the learner and the learning process. To counter-balance assessment of learning we must also see assessment of student learning both as ‘assessment FOR learning and ‘assessment AS learning.’ To view assessment with these lenses means the student is at the focal point of the assessment process. The student clearly knows and understands the learning outcomes that are expected; knows and understands (and may have even negotiated) the criteria for assessment tasks, and is given appropriate and effective feedback which leads to future action, i.e. ‘assessment for future learning.’ As students learn to self reflect and self correct their own learning, assessment becomes part of their learning process.

Teaching and learning experiences and assessment practices are seen as integral to the work of teachers as they come to ‘know their students’ – both the teacher and student know where the learner is at in their learning journey and what the next step is. The learner is involved in conversations about their progress so that they can genuinely take responsibility for their own learning. Assessment becomes continuous, ongoing, and effective as feedback provides information about the quality of the learning. If we acknowledge that good instruction engages students in the learning process then good assessment should reflect this knowledge about teaching and learning. In this way the students are active, engaged and critical assessors of their own learning.

Teachers, parents and students understand what is valued in education by virtue of what is assessed and how it is assessed. Therefore, philosophical discussions about what we value and why we do what we do are important to all stakeholders in school communities. A school based framework that clarifies common and agreed understandings about assessment: its purposes, principles and practices is essential for all school communities. Through the CST network, schools have been modelling a process for developing a school based framework for assessment. This assessment framework must reflect the school’s beliefs about learners, learning and learning communities, its values, its understanding of lifelong learning. This ensures that all we do in our schools and classrooms aligns with the mission and vision of our school community.

References:
Arter, Judith & L. Bond 1993 ‘Why is Assessment Changing?’ NWREL, pp.1-3
This year the curriculum support teacher (CST) network has grown to 101 members across the archdiocese. Attempting to meet the diverse needs of such a large group certainly posed quite a challenge. A decision was made to focus on “Assessment Literacy of Teachers” as the main topic, and this has proved to hit the nail on the head in terms of meeting a real need and interest.

The program for 2004 has therefore been carefully planned to answer needs of school communities as they grapple with the notion of assessment and all it entails. As a system we are building the knowledge of teachers through communities of practices to support the creation of an assessment culture.

The CST network met for the first time this year at a workshop titled “Will and Commitment”. This workshop addressed professional learning for teachers and the characteristics or principles of this within school communities. The workshop was designed to inform principals and administration teams as well as CSTs, about the program for this year. Once this was known, school communities could make a decision in terms of committing to this journey knowing where participation would take them.

Fullan suggests that, “innovative principals can develop learning enriched schools or interactive communities of practice”. In any change situation 25% is knowing what to do and 75% is the more difficult area of developing effective processes and conditions for the learning environment as there are many forces maintaining the status quo. Leadership for change requires a ‘bias for action, a sense of urgency’ and a mix of pressure and support. Fullan believes that most people do not develop new understanding until they are actually involved in the process. Ownership, in the sense of clarity and commitment, is a progressive process, one that might be undertaken and achieved on an individual basis until a ‘critical mass’ of ownership and commitment is achieved. This developmental process applies as much to an individual or a class as to a school. Educational change Fullan says is very much the ‘science of muddling through’ a process of trying things out and keeping what is best.”

( Summarised by Harry Newman from: The New Meaning Of Educational Change by Michael Fullan 2001)

The ‘Will and Commitment’ workshop provided a process of curriculum change for school communities that can be used beyond the Assessment Literacy for Teachers program. Some schools have used it to gain commitment from teachers about other programs such as literacy and numeracy projects, the implementation of the new English or Mathematics Syllabuses in focus schools or other areas of curriculum change.

We started the year by gathering data from schools about the needs of teachers in the area of assessment in four major sections: Policy and Documentation, Data Collection, Elements of Assessment Design, and Assessment Practice. Generally schools identified an Assessment Policy or Framework as their highest priority followed closely by Assessment Practices and Principles of Design. These areas will form the content for the cluster meetings this year. At each workshop CSIs were given all the materials needed to duplicate these hands on workshops back in their school communities.

So far this year we have addressed the sections: Assessment Policy or Framework and provided a model for setting up a Performance Assessment. The Assessment Framework model began with identifying Beliefs and Values about learners, learning and learning communities. It considers shared understandings of terminology, purposes and principles of assessment. Schools were encouraged to audit and evaluate current practices and after processing the research, design their own assessment framework particular to their school community.
A series of workshops in term two addressed Performance Assessment. We looked at a number of pieces of research to give a background to the topic. Teachers were able to glean definitions and characteristics of Performance Assessment from authors such as Guskey, McGrath and Sizer. A general definition we have developed from the work of others, and one which seemed to summarise much of the research is: “Assessment that generates as much learning as it measures and requires students to create answers or products that demonstrate what they know and can do”.

Four key messages from the readings included:

1. Students construct their own knowledge through Problem Based Learning
2. Links beyond the classroom – have applications beyond schooling
3. Is Metacognitive in nature – develops the Reflective Self-Directed Learner
4. Wholistic Nature – can be viewed through the lenses of teaching activity, learning experience and assessment task. This particular point was emphasised throughout the workshop and each task was viewed throughout the day through these lenses.

Out of a plethora of ideas and strategies we tackled three strategies: hot seat, journaling and Claymation.

Hot Seat
We tapped into the prior knowledge of participants about Ned Kelly’s trial and concentrated on two characters Ned and Redmond Barry (the judge at Ned Kelly’s trial). Volunteers took the hot seat while others learnt about oral questioning, a higher order thinking strategy. Teachers gained experience at using the hot seat strategy and became aware of the types of questions to use to assist the development of deep understanding and deep knowledge for students. Teachers also were able to view this strategy through the three lenses of assessment, teaching and learning.

Journaling
Journaling certainly took on a focus as a rich tool for assessment, learning and teaching. Journal Writing is perhaps the most powerful tool a student can use. When accompanied by the use of probes or specific questions, it becomes an excellent aid to student self-assessment. Teachers periodically collect the journal to view responses to probing questions and by doing this they have the opportunity to see what students have learned, what naïve concepts or misconceptions they may have about the topic under study. This provides good assessment information for feedback and material to inform reteaching. Students construct their own meaning as a result of their experiences, and when they reflect on their learning this reflection can be recorded through journal writing. The use of focus questions enable students and teachers to see a student’s ideas deepen during the learning process. A journal is not a diary and the purpose is to share the journal with others, especially the teacher as a means of assessment, therefore the use of focus questions should direct or guide the writing. It is a place to record the results of learning experiences or to take notes when involved in investigations. Guided journal writing engages students in metacognitive practices when used appropriately and allows them a vehicle to reflect on their own work and that of their peers.

Through journaling we focussed on analysing for information and challenging for rigour through two strategies (refer to figure 1 and 2).

Figure 1 - Analysing
Understanding information about a concept....

Perspective

What is the validity of your evidence?
Justify this perspective using evidence
From whose perspective are you expressing an opinion?
Compare the perspectives of two characters from different cultural perspectives
Explain how this perspective evolved over time and what influenced its development

Figure 1 shows an activity to examine a concept. This strategy is a higher order thinking (HOT) strategy used to break information into parts to explore understanding and relationships regarding the concept.

Figure 2 - Explaining Why


Figure 2 depths the idea of higher order questioning through a focus question (Why?) and associated probing questions (Who, when, what, where?).

Claymation
Claymation completed the trio of strategies with our own Cecil B DeMilles coming to the fore. Paul Shaw led the group through the construction of a Claymation movie. The design challenge here was to create a movie which showed the perspective of either Redmond Barry or Ned Kelly at the trial of Ned. Much discussion ensued about
how to view this through the three lenses of assessment, teaching and learning. Many were inspired by the antics of Harvie Krumpet in his Oscar winning performance. In order to write a high quality performance assessment task a number of steps were required. These have been summarised below:

- Be clear about what you want the student to know and be able to do
- Be clear about the standards you are looking for
- Be clear about the characteristics and key concepts, ideas and criteria for a strong performance
- Create and describe a context for the task that will make it meaningful and engaging
- Try writing a short description of the task
- Re-write the task so that it is clear and concise for the learners
- Demystify the criteria for success to the learner
- Develop a work plan or teaching sequence

- Assign the task to the learner
- Provide instruction, feedback and practice
- Provide, develop and collect work samples to illustrate what a quality performance or product “looks like”
- Assess the performance
- Evaluate the task. Refine and improve it.

The Future Plans
In term 3 the Network will focus on Portfolio Assessment which closely relates to the topic on everybody’s lips, reporting. The workshop may be a precursor to a focus for 2005.

Your Curriculum Support Teacher will have the readings and resources from these network meetings in your school community and should be able to provide further information as requested.

The CST network is a community of practice and its effectiveness relies on participation and the sharing of knowledge and experiences both at the network and with others from the school community.

>> Author Profile

**Donna Castelli**

Donna Castelli is an Education Officer Curriculum (Primary)
Donna supports primary schools with general curriculum including connected curriculum, pedagogy, outcomes and appropriate learner-centred assessment.
It is far easier to identify misalignment in the production of a tangible, inanimate product such as the design and construction of a building than it is to identify misalignment in pedagogy and learning and its impact on the learner. 2004 is designated as the ‘Year of the Built Environment’. In this article I propose to highlight and explore the importance of aligning pedagogy and assessment using the analogy of building design and construction. As a co-manager of the RE Modules Project I would like to identify the ways the RE Modules support the publication Religious Education Years 1 to 10 Learning Outcomes by assisting teachers in achieving alignment between pedagogy and assessment.

Everyone tends to be an expert when it comes to school because most people once went to school. Likewise everyone becomes an expert on building because people live, work and play in built structures every day. So it is no surprise that public critique of the Sydney Opera House was damming during its construction in the ‘60s because the ‘expert’ public believed its design and budget over-runs seemed to be misaligned with public expectation. Public and government complaint grew to the point that Jorn Utzon, the architect was sacked and he left Australia to return to Denmark disillusioned with Australia’s conservative pragmatism and lack of vision. Most Australians assessed Utzon as a failure. To the credit of a few visionaries the project continued but without its master-architect. Re-alignments took place in design and funding and one of the world’s greatest modern architectural wonders was built.

Public evaluative critique of teachers’ and schools’ ability to align assessment with pedagogy is to some degree similar, yet it is different. Everyone’s an expert, everyone’s a critic but few know how to fix the misalignments. Education systems and educators themselves are not immune from this lack of ‘know how’. After all, how does one measure what another person really knows and can do? Measuring such knowledge and skill isn’t as straightforward as many critics deem it to be. Fortunately there is design brief emerging to assist those who design pedagogy and assessment. This design brief is coming from many sources one of those being the results of the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (2001). This study suggest that there must be a close alignment between pedagogies and assessment and that effective assessment must be an integral part of the learning process so that it becomes assessment of and, for learning. The findings of the QSRSL state:

There is empirical evidence here of a practical misalignment between pedagogies and assessment tasks, with strong ‘assessment literacy’ amongst teachers needed...Until teachers as a community learn better how to engage in productive assessment, it is likely that schools will struggle to generate productive performance. (p.iv).

RE Modules are structured so that they reflect alignment of micro and macro outcomes, pedagogy and assessment and so that assessment is an integral part of learning. This implies that assessment is of and for learning. The modules incorporate a religious literacy model. They also engage productive pedagogies and productive assessment through the dimensions of intellectual quality, connectedness, supportive classroom environment and recognition of difference.

The RE Modules align the three elements - macro outcomes, micro outcomes and learning activities. Teachers can confidently choose and engage with any of the learning activities knowing that such activities, in part, or in full support students’ demonstration of the outcomes. Our confidence about such support for the demonstration of outcomes arises from the basic question each module writer asks during the writing process, “Does this learning activity feed the outcome/s in full or in part?” If the answer is yes the learning activity remains, if the answer is no the activity is not accepted.

The alignment attribute suggests that the assessment in the modules is, and must be, an integral part of the learning process. For example, an Assessment Icon is located throughout each module. The icon indicates the accompanying learning activity could be used in part, or in conjunction with other activities to assess students’ demonstration of the learning outcome. Teachers are reminded that some students may require more time and/or other contexts in which to demonstrate this learning outcome. The only time the assessment icon may not feature above a learning outcome is when the learning activity is developing students’ prior knowledge. These activities are called Preliminary Activities and deemed as such, they will not provide teachers with enough
information for assessment purposes. Each module also provides a Significant Activity based on an RE outcome that can be used and/or modified as an assessment opportunity. The table below provides examples for gathering evidence and making judgements on student performance in the form of criteria that align closely with the outcome/s, with the learning activity and assessment criteria for making judgements.

The assessment activity is found in the RE Module Church Unity and Diversity.

Alignment in pedagogy and assessment is also achieved in the RE Modules through the use of a Model for Developing Religious Literacy. The following learning activity in an RE module entitled Introducing Scripture demonstrates the Model for Developing Religious Literacy. The outcome the learning activity is feeding is from the Scripture strand S 1.2 Students gather and record information about people, places and things in scriptural text. The purpose of this learning activity is for students to symbolically represent a familiar bible story. The context suggested in the module is the Grab Bag Strategy. This strategy requires students to collect symbols that represent people, places and things within a story. Members of the class then try to guess the name of the story as symbols are drawn out of the grab bag. The purpose and context is indicated yet needs to be clarified and negotiated by the teacher and students through discussion, questioning, set criteria and/or checklists.

During the explorative phase, students access the Available Design element of the religious literacy model by using a Repertoire of Resources such as scripture stories, procedures for creating grab bags and ways to make and read symbols. The model also suggests students explore texts drawing on the Four Resources of code-breaker, meaning-maker, text user and text analyst as part of this phase.

In the designing phase students make choices about the story and symbols they will use in the grab bag. During the redesigning phase students self-correct or seek others critique to modify these choices. At every phase of the model the students are delving in and out of the Discourse of Religion element to access relevant religious, social and cultural knowledge. Using the Model for Developing Religious Literacy makes highly likely that students can successfully demonstrate the outcomes.

Finally, a predominant feature of the learning activities in the RE Modules is the incorporation and explanation of significant learning strategies that promote effective learning. Considerable time and effort has gone into developing quality learning strategies in the RE modules. Writers of the modules are encouraged to align outcomes with learning strategies that promote student engagement in the learning process. The learning strategies reflect high-level thinking, the Roles for the Lifelong Learners and the dimensions of productive pedagogies and assessment.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Gathering Evidence</th>
<th>Making Judgements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B4.3</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students describe how the structures and practices of different Church communities reflect their culture and history.</td>
<td>Students may for example: Using pictures of local churches and those of other countries, list the elements of a church building. They prepare a short summary on how cultural and historical influences have shaped the design of churches. Students form learning teams and design and create a &quot;shoebox&quot; church or part of a church e.g. altar which is suitable for the Australian cultural lifestyle and history. They may chose to design a church suitable:</td>
<td>Can students:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• For the beach</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• For rainforest regions</td>
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<td>• To reflect the indigenous people of our land</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• For outback life</td>
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<td>• For suburban life</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The teacher may use:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>• Focussed analysis</td>
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<td>• Self and peer assessment</td>
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<td>• Criteria sheet</td>
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<td>• Annotated notes</td>
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<td>• Checklist</td>
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<td>See pages 29-31 for a fuller description of this activity.</td>
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Reflection

In 2004, the designated year of the 'Built Environment' Jorn Utzon is a Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureate 2003* and the Sydney Opera House stands proud as the world’s greatest modern building. ‘Expert’ public perception has changed since the 60’s when Utzon’s challenging, boundary-breaking design was ‘before its time’ and thus considered misaligned with public expectation. In 2004 ‘expert’ public perception considers there to be misalignment between pedagogy and assessment within the education system. It may take further challenges from ‘Utzon’-type educational thinkers like those who have contributed to the discourses on outcomes-based education, productive pedagogies and assessment and multiliteracies to achieve greater alignment between the learners, their world, pedagogy and assessment. The RE Modules provide practical support materials for teachers. The RE Modules incorporate current educational thinking and support teachers in their endeavours to gain closer alignment between pedagogy and assessment.

* The Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureate is the greatest international award an architect can receive for his or architectural works.

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Author Profile

Kerry Rush

Kerry Rush is an Education Officer - Catholic Schools RE Support Team. She is a Co-manager on the modules project this year and provides professional support to schools in the North-East area.
Teaching and learning in Religious Education is in the process of change at St John Fisher College. In recent years we have jumped head-first into outcomes-based education. We have experienced major paradigm shifts in our approach to RE in the classroom. In particular, our approach to assessment is changing. By relying less on what we have done in the past and more on what we want to do in the future we have been able to turn around our approach to teaching, learning and assessment. So far, we are pleased with what has happened. Yet we know that there is more work to do!

Have you ever had the following experience? RE teachers start talking in week 4 or 5 of a term about the need to get the assessment task out to students so that they will have something to put on the reports which are due to be completed within a month!

Or what about this snippet of conversation between two RE teachers ...Hey, have you got a sheet I can use next lesson in RE? I don’t know what I’m doing!

I imagine most RE teachers can relate to these experiences! At St John Fisher College we are making good yards at eliminating these moments.

What do you want for your students in RE?

The advent of the Learning Framework and the learning outcomes for Religious Education (and their drafts) provided our staff with an opportunity to review what we wanted for our students. We kept abreast of the latest literature in order to guide us in our thinking. For example, The Roles for Lifelong Learners and the Triangle of Abstraction diagram (Curriculum Matters, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2003, p.10) provided a good framework for us to ask ‘what do we want?’ The RE Visitation process also provided us with an opportunity to survey all stakeholders in our community in an attempt to re-evaluate our RE program.

Transformational Outcomes

At St John Fisher College, we want our students:

1. to be people of faith.
2. to seek and work for justice.
3. to appreciate and know how to interpret and read Scripture.
4. to have ecumenical sensitivity.
5. to know how the Catholic Church relates to other Churches and religions.

These ‘transformational’ emphases can link easily with the Roles for Lifelong Learning. For example, if we want our students to know how to interpret Scripture, they will need to develop some skills of active investigation. These emphases then inform us about our teaching and learning using the RE core learning outcomes and they guide us in our development of units and sequencing of strands.

Transitional Outcomes

The RE core learning outcomes represent our ‘transitional outcomes’. We are able to incorporate the emphases of our transformational outcomes into our units of work and assessment because RE outcomes (transitional outcomes) can be demonstrated drawing on a variety of content within diverse contexts.

Traditional Outcomes

Whilst in recent years we have re-evaluated what we want our students to know and do, we haven’t forgotten the core traditional skills that all students need. Necessarily, our teaching and learning includes strategies that develop students’ reading, writing and communication/social skills. For example, we want our students to read fluently, to be able to structure a paragraph and to spell correctly.

Starting with the Outcome Makes Demonstrations Easy to Judge

We have made a major paradigm shift in RE. In the past we had a curriculum that was teacher focused. Sometimes our assessment was focused on the need to complete report data. It was often a re-hash of last year’s assessment. Now, our teachers start with the outcome statement and ask, ‘What do our students need to do in order to demonstrate this outcome?’ We are currently developing our skills of incorporating ‘informal’ assessment in the classroom. We want to make more of our teaching moments assessable moments. The RE modules are proving to be a godsend in that regard!

We can now see beyond the next lesson. Collectively, we know what we want for our young people. We continue to work on developing further our shared vision and common language. There is more work to do but we have made a good start.
Year 9 Xavier Catholic College students have just completed their term 1 investigation for Integrated Studies in which teams of three students worked together to solve the murder of the Deputy Principal. The deadline for the report was a Monday at 1.20pm and as the bell rang a loud “aaahhhhhahaha!” resounded throughout the middle school precinct while fingers continued feverishly typing, editing and awaiting pages to emerge from the printers… That is Integrated Studies at Xavier Catholic College.

The cross curriculum theme for Year 9, Semester One, is “The Imagined World” and in Integrated Studies for Term One, students commenced their study with an investigation of Literary Detectives, crime solving techniques and some crime solving exercises using the ABC program “Crime Team”. Skill development activities followed including work on hair, fibres, tyre prints, fingerprints and lip prints (we do indeed have photos of the boys wearing lipstick). The Science KLA which dealt with the more complex areas of forensics including chromatography supported this skill development, DNA, blood types and blood spatter analysis.

The purpose of this activity? Always at Xavier our purpose is to have the students engaged in their learning with as authentic a purpose as possible. The Roles for Lifelong Learners are key elements of our programming and this term included – Active Investigator, Leader & Collaborator and Reflective, Self-directed learner. The strands we were focusing on relate to key learning areas and other school based subjects associated with the KLAs. These included:

HPE: Enhancing Personal Development – Group cooperation & teamwork
Science: Life & Living & Natural & Processed Materials
SOSE: Systems Resources & Power
English: Speaking & Listening ,
Literacy: writing for specific purposes
Information Technology: Web site use, drawing, document publishing

In the background, work continued feverishly on the website – the lynchpin of the entire assessment task. One of the teaching team, Peter Segger, was responsible for putting together the material using some of the ideas generously shared with us by Pioneer State High School. The material was transformed into a web page and uploaded to an external website (www.teachers.ash.org.au/morrissey) to ensure students only had access after they had completed the initial detective agency formation. Links were eventually posted from the College website, where we also included the search warrant applications.

Students formed Detective Agencies and developed logos and mottos, all of which had to be submitted in order to be given the website address.

The scene was set. The Deputy Principal assembled Year 9 and demanded the return of his hat (a red herring). He disappeared to a conference for three days, and the murder was then revealed.

Students developed many skills in observation and collecting evidence at the “crime scene”, many initially missing vital clues like the Video Ezy card, the footprint, the blood and the stranger walking past them in the school grounds! The staff enjoyed dropping red herrings and real clues throughout the investigation – just a shame really that neither victim nor murderer knew much about horse racing!

The crime scene photos were revealed, and police interviews of all suspects conducted. Teams worked feverishly analysing clues, developing timelines of events from evidence provided by the suspects and looking for motives. A number of students fell into the trap of jumping to conclusions and lost valuable time. The autopsy results were released and the murder weapon was discovered with three types of blood on it, none of which belonged to the murderer.

Only three search warrants were allowed per detective agency and deciding which warrants to seek caused some disagreements within teams. With students required to operate as a team, conflict resolution skills became vital to a successful solution. Students saw a need to learn and thus developed new skills and understandings about working together.

Students were required to submit ONE report per team and an individual marking criteria sheet that was a self evaluation and reflection on their involvement in the process. Their reflections were honest, accurate and indeed they were a little harsh on themselves.

Who killed the Deputy Principal?
Engaging middle school students in authentic learning and assessment
Murderer (Mary Morrissey) and Victim (Aaron Beach)
The denouement took place on the last Monday afternoon of term, with the assistance of the local police and every student submitted all elements required (including one who was absent and emailed his results so his team would not be disadvantaged)... so they assembled in our undercover area. Teams were asked to identify the murderer and explain how the murder occurred. Our local Adopted Senior Constable arrived in a police car and arrested the APRE taking her off in handcuffs. That set “the cat among the pigeons” as most had believed her to be innocent. The team continued the denouement and the APRE was returned and declared innocent. The police then arrested the murderer and took her off in handcuffs.

The final details of the denouement were revealed and then students completed their own evaluations. The student evaluations are part of the process of curriculum negotiation in which we engage at Xavier. Students were asked to identify:

- Their enjoyment and interest in the work
- Whether we should use this unit next year
- How we could improve it

These evaluations are becoming quite sophisticated and extremely useful elements of curriculum planning for us as a sample of the responses below indicates.

- It was hard working in these teams of three because we felt one person was being left out.
- It would have been better to have had the information on the website earlier. (We had some difficulties in uploading material because we didn’t understand some of the parameters of web design. We do now and we have explained that)
- If we could actually search the places for our search warrants instead of just getting the results.

- I learnt in the process how to use forensic science to match shoe prints, tyre prints, pen ink and fingerprints. I enjoyed writing the report
- It was fun compared to just writing up an assignment about forensics. It was good to do things first hand
- It was good that we were able to work in groups
- It was good examining the actual crime scene
- Having real suspects, real evidence and murder weapons made it interesting
- I really liked this subject. For one of the first times I looked forward to IS. I liked how we worked in groups and you gave us hard clues that we had to work out. I have nothing bad to say on the subject of ‘Who Killed Mr Beach?’ because all of it was absolutely great fun and I can’t wait until we do another subject.

So, next term it is Virtual Cookbooks, Design your kitchen, analyse chocolate, organise a Rugby fundraising dinner, prepare the week’s menus for a group of four housemates, analyse the food at the canteen.... all tasks designed using a Multiple Intelligences and Bloom’s taxonomy grid. We will also be focusing on time management to avoid the “aahhhhaahha” when a deadline approaches.

The writer of this article is Mary Morrissey. Mary is the Teacher in Charge of Curriculum at Xavier Catholic College, Eli Waters.
To engage students in learning it is necessary to ensure that learning experiences are student centred and situated in some context which is relevant to students, allows knowledge and skills to be applied and outcomes/competencies achieved. The context could relate to a project/class activity based on a theme, a simulation, enterprise venture or work placement. It is through such activities that evidence is gathered that enables a teacher to make an assessment decision.

Current work programmes do not reflect the cyclic nature of learning, teaching, assessing competencies and gathering evidence for making assessment decisions related to achievement of outcomes. They encourage topics to be taught in isolation and competencies or outcomes to be assessed via a single assessment instrument. Competency decisions require evidence to be gathered over a period of time and in a range of settings and conditions. Some of the evidence that is gathered can also be used to determine levels of achievement in relation to knowledge and understanding, practical skills, applied processes etc.

DEFINITIONS

"Assessment is the purposeful, systematic and ongoing collection of evidence and its use in making judgements about learners’ demonstrations of learning outcomes." (Queensland School Curriculum Council 2002).

"Assessment is the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on the nature and extent of progress towards the performance requirements set out in a standard or a learning outcome, and, at the appropriate point, making the judgement as to whether the competency has been achieved." VEETAC 1993.

"Competency is the specification of knowledge and skill and the application of that knowledge and skill within an occupation or industry level, to the standard of performance required in employment. The broad concept of competency covers all aspects of work performance and includes the following dimensions of competency:

Task skills – being able to perform certain tasks. The knowledge and skills needed to perform the task. They are usually described in the performance criteria.

Task management skills – being able to manage a number of tasks eg. organising, co-ordinating skills.

Contingency management skills – being able to solve problems that arise such as changes in routines, breakdowns.

Job role environment skills – skills needed to perform as expected in particular job position and location eg. being able to work with others" (National Training Board 1992)

Key competencies should be developed through the learning and assessment context selected for each project or activity. The seven key competencies are:

KC1: collecting, analysing and organising information
KC2: communicating ideas and information
KC3: planning and organising activities
KC4: working with others and in teams
KC5: using mathematical ideas and techniques
KC6: solving problems
KC7: using technology

The Employability Skills Framework identifies the following skills and personal attributes as contributing to the overall employability of young people:

- communication skills
- team work skills
- problem solving skills
- initiative and enterprise skills
- planning and organising skills
- self-management skills
- learning skills
- technology skills
- personal attributes

loyalty commitment honesty and integrity
enthusiasm reliability personal presentation
common sense motivation positive self esteem
sense of humour adaptability ability to deal with pressure

Syllabuses used for junior curriculum incorporate the cross curriculum priorities of literacy, numeracy, life skills, a futures perspective, and work education. These are also outlined in senior syllabus documents in global aim statements and general objectives.
PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT
* To provide feedback to the learner on their progress towards the achievement of the learning outcome or unit of competency (Formative)
* To help learners determine their education and training needs (Diagnostic)
* To determine if a learning outcome or unit of competency has been achieved and to report on this achievement (Summative)
* To determine credit for a course in recognition or prior learning (RPL)
* To inform decisions related to future learning pathways

PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT
Valid  evidence collected is relevant to the activity and demonstrations that performance criteria have been met. Sufficient range of evidence is collected and is linked to workplace performance.
Reliable  criteria for judgement of competence must be stated clearly, evidence must be collected from a number of different assessment methods, over a period of time and in a variety of contexts.
Fair  assessment will not disadvantage any person and reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate the characteristics of the person being assessed. A participatory approach is used when assessing and opportunities for reassessment are provided.
Flexible  the assessment process needs to be flexible (the standard does not change) and should be appropriate to the context, the task and the person being assessed.

ASSESSMENT CONTEXT
- in the classroom
- in the workplace
- with another training provider

GATHERING EVIDENCE
Activities provide rich and varied evidence of a range of competencies and learning outcomes being achieved and provide sufficient evidence for making a decision related to exit level of achievement. Learners should be provided with multiple opportunities in a variety of contexts to demonstrate learning outcomes. Evidence can then be gathered and recorded over a period of time using a variety of assessment techniques and recording instruments in order to accommodate different learning styles. Assessment decisions should be based on a range of evidence which is rich, relevant and collected in a systematic way. A student’s portfolio should provide a valid, fair and informative picture of a student achieving competency.

Assessment provides students with an opportunity to receive feedback, act on feedback and to demonstrate an improvement in their knowledge and skills. Many elements of competency can be revisited through activities, thus providing students with an opportunity to gain competency. It is possible to negotiate with students about the amount of evidence required before making a decision.

Evidence needs to be:
Valid  cover knowledge, skills and application
Sufficient  evidence provided in relation to all elements and performance criteria
Current  recency of evidence
Authentic  the learner’s own work

SOURCES OF EVIDENCE
observation checklist  workplace report  oral questioning
video of performance  anecdotal records  journal
photographs  reflective diary  project
self assessment  peer assessment  oral presentation
demonstration  role play  written report
test  case study  simulation
assignment  portfolio  computer based training
guest speaker  excursion  discussion group
workbooks  exercises  investigation

PLANNING FOR ASSESSMENT
- units of competency, elements and performance criteria or learning outcomes are defined in relation to the activity, theme or topic. Competency standards need to be analysed in order to identify all dimensions of competency – task skills, task management skills, contingency skills and job role environment skills. These dimensions of competency need not be present in all assessment tasks.
- context is determined.
- underpinning knowledge and skills needed to participate in activity are defined and learning activities developed and sequenced.
- purpose of assessment is determined.
- evidence to be gathered is documented (some may be mandatory and some negotiable).
- task sheets and assessment instruments/tools are designed. These must state explicitly what students are expected to know and to do.
FORMAT OF ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT
The following information needs to be present on all assessment instruments/tools:

- Subject
- Certificate – code, name and level
- Student’s name
- Teacher’s name
- Date handed out
- Date of draft and due date
- Criteria statement (A-E)
- Competency statement (Sat or Unsat)
- Feedback/comments
- Teacher’s signature and date
- Date created
- Evidence towards which outcomes

CONDUCTING ASSESSMENT
Evidence is collected and a decision is made as to whether the outcome/s have been met. Feedback is provided and successful achievement of outcome/s is recorded. If a student has not demonstrated competency then they may need to provide further evidence or they may be provided with more assessment opportunities. Students are able to participate in reassessment and/or use the appeals process in place at the school or college.

RECORDING, REPORTING AND REVIEWING ASSESSMENT
A master student record book or an assessment matrix can be used to indicate that all elements are covered more than once. Remember to keep a copy of all assessment instruments for a period of seven years and indicate the date they were created to show continual improvement over a period of time.

Use your IQR procedures to have assessment instruments validated by industry and conduct some form of evaluation of each activity with your students. Assessment processes, assessment tools, assessment judgements and examples of the evidence gathered to make assessment decisions all require validation. Some examples of validation approaches include:

- assessment panels
- assessment tool bank
- assessor networks
- benchmarking
- student evaluation
- independent validator
- internal audit
- moderation meetings
- peer reviews/team assessment

Feedback proforms need to be filed for a period of twelve months, so colour code these for ease of location in the student portfolio.

Useful sources for further information:

- Competency Framework www.ntis.gov.au
- Level Descriptors www.qsa.qld.edu.au (follow the pathway through VET)
- Samples www.anta.gov.au
- Competency Profiles www.assessit.net
- A free publication (a how to kit) from ANTA “Learning and Assessment Strategies” relates to the Australian Quality Training Framework (www.anta.gov.au Go to Publications and type in Learning and Assessment Strategies in the Search Tool)

>> Author Profile
Sandra Harrington

Sandra was until end of 2002, the VET Curriculum Head of Department at Nudgee College.
She now undertakes some lecturing at ACU and works with schools in relation to VET.
by Anne George
St Peter’s School, Rochedale

There has been much debate, both in the press and amongst politicians and educationalists, with regard to assessing and reporting in an outcomes approach to education. It certainly has been a great discussion starter in our school and has left many of us "scratching our heads" for an answer!!!! I have been grappling with the topic for some time now and this article represents my personal reflections. A focus is placed on assessing the roles for lifelong learners (Learning Framework, Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane).

When planning a Connected Curriculum Module, we identify the focus (rationale), the roles for lifelong learners that will be the focus for development, the clustered outcomes that could be demonstrated by the students and the significant task or tasks that will be the culmination of the learning.

Out of this process emerge two important aspects. Firstly, the students will be demonstrating a number of core learning outcomes either throughout the module or through the significant tasks. Secondly, the students will be given opportunities to develop some or all of the roles of lifelong learners.

With regards to the demonstration of outcomes, students either demonstrate the outcome or do not demonstrate it. You cannot grade or rate the outcome. In our school context, we do not report individual outcomes to parents. What is important in this area is that careful monitoring takes place.

I believe that there are two parts to the monitoring. Firstly, the Curriculum Support Teacher and/or Classroom Teacher needs to ensure that students are being given opportunities to demonstrate the core learning outcomes as identified in the nine syllabus documents.

Secondly, using a spreadsheet or RM, the outcomes identified in each module can be listed and tracked. Specialist teachers assist by identifying the outcomes they are getting the students to demonstrate, and teachers need to identify the outcomes that are embedded in the day-to-day happenings in the learning environment. Individually, teachers need to track the outcomes that students have demonstrated.

Assessing the Performance for the Roles for Lifelong Learners

In our school, the codes (emerging, developing and proficient) are used to indicate to the students/parents how the individual has met the challenges of the roles for lifelong learning through the tasks performed. Our staff has chosen three codes and we have developed criteria sheets to assist with the assessment of the tasks.

Two types of Criteria Sheets are used in our school— one to indicate overall performance of the task within the module and the second for the individual activities associated with each task. Indicating to the students what is expected clearly and concisely gives them the scaffolding needed to perform efficiently the designated tasks.

The criteria sheets make very clear what was expected and how each student has performed as per the roles for lifelong learners. When used for reporting, parents will have a clear indication of how their child has performed in completing the tasks and will also be aware of the areas that need further development. Teachers use the opportunity to discuss with parents the assistance that is required for further development.

Finally, I believe it is important we recognise the performance of the individual students in how they are developing within the roles for lifelong learners. One of the ways of doing this is to indicate on a continuum (whether it be with three, five or whatever codes) how the student has completed the tasks that have been planned to provide opportunities to demonstrate this development.

(To obtain an example of the criteria sheets for assessing performance in the roles for lifelong learners from the module “I’ve got something to say”, please contact Anne by email ageorge@bne.catholic.edu.au)
Teachers in Brisbane Catholic Education schools have been engaging in Consistency of Teacher Judgement (CTJ) processes for many years. CTJ is the ongoing process where teachers develop common understandings about (Years 1 to 10) learning outcomes as they make decisions based on student demonstrations. The process includes a variety of strategies that we have classified as Pre Assessment Dialogue and Activities, and Post Assessment Dialogue and Activities.

PRE ASSESSMENT DIALOGUE AND ACTIVITIES include:
- Sharing understandings about the core learning outcomes and their developmental sequences;
- Collaborative planning using an outcomes approach within and across Key Learning Areas (KLAs);
- Developing assessment tasks; and

POST ASSESSMENT DIALOGUE AND ACTIVITIES include:
- Engaging in moderation processes.

The CTJ process also enhances the climate of collegiality and professionalism within and between schools.

In the evaluation of the CTJ process in 2003, a number of responses from schools indicated that moderation in certain KLAs was now complete and there was a need to move to other activities. Moderation however is part of the ongoing CTJ process and consideration may need to be given to choosing appropriate KLAs each year as well as appropriate strategies and activities.

The comments collated from the moderation section on the 2003 Evaluation Forms also indicated that there was a need for further development and clarification regarding expectations of this consistency strategy. Therefore, the 2004 CTJ Information Kit for Brisbane Catholic Education schools provides more detailed guidance for the moderation consistency strategy.

So what is moderation about?

Maxwell (2002: 16) explains:

Moderation...is concerned with the consistency, comparability and equity of professional judgements about performance levels demonstrated by students

Maxwell also defines two basic forms of moderation: Moderation for accountability and Moderation for improvement.

Moderation for accountability is for official confirmation of these assessments, whether for individuals or for cohorts of students. It involves some external control or validation requirement. This form of moderation is emphasised in Years 11 and 12.

Moderation for improvement develops in teachers the capability to carry out appropriate assessments and make comparable and consistent judgements about students’ performance on tasks. This form of moderation does not involve an external control mechanism or validation requirement as does Moderation for accountability, but it involves instead collaborative processes that support teacher professional development. Moderation for improvement is the main form of moderation utilised in Years 1 to 10 and happens to a certain extent as a result of Years 11 and 12 moderation. Additionally, moderation is concerned with teachers sharing understandings about the range of evidence that is required for a student to be judged as having demonstrated the outcome(s) and the range of contexts in which a student should be required to demonstrate the core learning outcome(s).

In Years 1 to 10, the moderation consistency strategy can involve teachers meeting to:
- Compare samples of student work to discuss and compare the judgements that have already been made about student demonstration(s) of core learning outcomes (i.e. after the completion of assessment); and
- Develop shared understandings about the range of evidence required for a student to be judged as having demonstrated -
  - core learning outcome(s), or
  - a level within the strand(s) of a particular Key Learning Area.

This process occurs initially at the intraschool level and then at interschool level. At the intraschool level, teachers generally tend to compare larger numbers of samples of student work (e.g. samples from a whole class). At the interschool level, teachers tend to focus on discussions about a smaller number of student samples (e.g. 1 or 2 samples from 2 students at one level or samples of work from 1 or 2 students across levels).

Engaging in the moderation process may be particularly valuable for teachers who have previously effectively engaged in dialogue and activities related to pre
assessment and assessment strategies. (i.e. Sharing understandings about core learning outcomes and their developmental sequences, collaborative planning of outcome based units of work within and across KLAs and the collaborative development of assessment tasks).

Before the moderation process (post-assessment dialogue) can occur at either the intraschool or interschool level, teachers need to identify:

- The KLA, KLA strand and/or core learning outcomes that will be the focus for discussion;
- The type of student work that will be compared (e.g. student responses to selected assessment tasks, complete student folios, student folios including representative student work); and
- The sample of student work that would be brought to the meeting (e.g. all student work from a particular class, a set number of examples where the students had demonstrated core learning outcomes at particular levels, any student work where the teacher was uncertain of their judgements).

Engaging in the moderation process (post-assessment dialogue and activity) could involve teachers in comparing samples of student work, discussing and comparing the judgements that have already been made about student demonstration(s) of core learning outcomes by:

- Contextualising the student demonstration of learning (e.g. the context of the unit; how the students were provided with a range of opportunities to show what they know and can do; what a particular assessment task required of the student; and the criteria used for judging student responses)
- Showing the samples of student work and explaining why certain judgements have been made (e.g. why the teacher believes that a student's response to a particular assessment activity has met the required criteria for a particular level)
- Comparing and discussing the judgements that have been made about each sample of student work (e.g. Does a particular assessment task relate to the core learning outcomes and provide adequate opportunities for students to show what they know and can do? Does the response from the student meet the identified criteria for a particular level?)
- Discussing and reaching consensus about student work that was difficult to judge
- Confirming or modifying judgements about student responses to tasks in response to sharing understandings
- Considering why judgements were the same or different, to better align teacher judgement within and across schools.

Moderation is also about developing shared understandings about the range of evidence required for a student to be judged as having demonstrated the core learning outcome(s) at a particular level within the strand(s) of a particular Key Learning Area. Teachers could achieve this by:

- Showing the complete folio of student work and explaining why certain judgements have been made about the level demonstrated by the student (e.g. Why the teacher believes that the student folio provides a range of evidence that a student has demonstrated the core learning outcomes at a level within the strand(s) of a particular Key Learning Area)
- Comparing and discussing the judgements that have been made about samples of student work (e.g. Does a student folio contain adequate evidence for the demonstration of the core learning outcome(s) at a level within the strand(s) of a particular Key Learning Area?)
- Discussing and reaching consensus about student folio work that was difficult to judge (e.g. What is the range of evidence required in a portfolio to judge that a student has demonstrated a level within the strand(s) of a particular Key Learning Area?)
- Considering why judgements about the amount of evidence required for students to have demonstrated the core learning outcome(s) for a level within the strand(s) of a particular Key Learning Area were the same or different, to better align teacher judgement within and across schools.

The above steps were developed from a number of sources ranging from Queensland research reports on CTJ to teacher professional development materials. The suggested steps reflect a synthesis of information about moderation processes and will provide more guidance for schools as they engage in this strategy of the CTJ process in 2004.

REFERENCES


Assessing and Reporting for English as a Second Language (ESL) students

by Bernadette Barker

Who are our ESL Learners?

English as Second Language (ESL) students are defined as students who first learnt another language other than English in childhood. A more correct term to describe these students is Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) students because for many, English may be the third, fourth or fifth language they have learnt.

The most obvious group of ESL Learners are children who have recently arrived from another country and do not speak any or a very minimal amount of English. These children be refugees or migrants, or be Australian born and have returned after a long absence living in another country for the greater part of their life.

A less visible group are students who were born in Australia and lived here all their life. The amount of English these children speak will vary enormously among individuals. Some students have had little contact with English speakers outside their community and will have little or no English. Others may have mastered social English and whilst they give the impression of being competent English users, in reality use a limited vocabulary learnt in the classroom or playground.

For these students, academic language in the classroom presents real challenges. They may find extended teacher talk overwhelming with the use of large amount of unknown English vocabulary. In such cases students will simply tune out after listening for a while or if the experience is an oft-repeated one, not bother listening at all.

There are however ESL students who whilst operating primarily in another language at home, have little difficulty coping with the academic demands of the curriculum and are able to communicate fluently and accurately in English.

The length of time taken to become a fluent English user and attain native language like proficiency is debateable. The process may take between 5 to 8 years. Thus ESL learners may be in the process of learning English throughout their primary school years which in turn will affect attainment of outcomes in all key learning areas.

Teachers Assessing ESL Learners

The writing task will often provide the first indication for a teacher that a student is not completely fluent in English. The student may find it difficult to begin the writing task or use the same writing formula week after week. Writing may be short and lack depth of ideas.

There may be errors in tense or missed and incorrect articles. Students who show these characteristics in writing will need extra help in oral language and concept development so their writing will develop. They will also need explicit teaching of the language and the structures to be used in a writing task, and provided with a framework in order that they are not guessing what they have to do.

Teachers of early years may observe that a child does not understand instructions and instead watches and follows other children when directions are given, or copies the work of other students. The child may avoid oral language presentations such as morning talk because they don’t have enough English language to express their ideas or feel self-conscious about speaking aloud to a large group.

Reporting for ESL Learners

Classroom teachers may find that the standard reporting format used at their school is inappropriate for the ESL Learners in their class, particularly for those students who are new to English. A standard report card may describe a learner as attaining low achievement or experiencing difficulty in all key learning areas. Whilst this is accurate when a comparison is made with other class members, the report card may not adequately reflect any progress made in English language acquisition and other gains in the key learning areas as a result of this progress. The ESL student will be reported as underachieving, whereas in reality they may have achieved a great deal in the time they have been exposed to English in the classroom.

Systems of Reporting

The NLLIA ESL Bandscales provide descriptions of ESL Learner progress at junior primary, middles/upper primary and secondary age levels. For most newly arrived students, using this framework for assessing and reporting may be the only appropriate form of assessment and reporting that teachers can use. For students who are further along the continuum of learning English, the NLLIA ESL Bandscales can provide additional indicators about English language acquisition that can be used for comments in reports and to clarify areas of achievement and potential growth.

ESL Teachers use the NLLIA ESL Bandscales as a basis for assessing ESL learners and planning for their needs. This publication is used for reporting to classroom teachers and parents on the progress of ESL students.
The reporting by schools in July of each year for the ESL component of the Commonwealth Targeted Programs uses NLLIA ESL Bandscales levels to assess all ESL students in school communities. This information informs BCEC of the needs of school communities in terms of assistance required for ESL Learners.

Assessing ESL students who may have a learning difficulty
The lack of fluency in English with ESL learners makes identification of a learning difficulty a complex process – in fact there is no one single valid test that can be used for this purpose. This lack of fluency interferes with the validity of any test or evaluation given in English if the learner speaks another language at home. Similarly, once a test is given or data obtained it is hard to determine to what degree the outcomes are skewed due to lack of fluency in English. Research has shown that both verbal and non-verbal tests showed social and cultural bias. (Cline & Frederickson: 1996) For these reasons, it is important that data for assessment of a learning difficulty is collected over a long period of time extending over six months or more.

ESL Teachers who are familiar with cultural differences and sequences of English language learning and who work closely with students in small groups, are able to inform the data gatherer about any atypical behaviour or learning patterns. Often a speech, language or cognitive test in a child’s first or main language using an interpreter can inform the data gatherer if there are problems in the first language. Care must be taken to ensure the interpreter does not make judgements that are inappropriate based on their expectations or bias. Also, care must be taken to ensure that the dialect and language used is the same as used in the home. For example, Spanish language in Spain will be quite different to the Spanish spoken in El Salvador. Similarly the Spanish spoken by people from in El Salvador will vary from that spoken in Chile.

Assessment and reporting for ESL students is not the sole responsibility of the ESL Teacher or the classroom teacher, “No one teacher can answer all the language needs of bilingual children alone. There is no such thing as a magic language ‘fix’ which will suddenly turn a child into a fluent English speaker. The language development of bilingual children needs to be seen as a whole school responsibility, and a school’s response to their language needs should be reflected in its policy and planning.’ (Gibbons, 1991, p110)

References
Cline T, and Frederickson, N (1996) Curriculum Related Assessment, Cummins and Bilingual Children, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon

Department of Employment, Education and Training (1993) NLLIA ESL Development Project, The National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia, Canberra


Bernadette Barker is an ESL teacher and advisor who is currently an Education Officer for ESL in Brisbane Catholic Education.
Recording Assessment In RM
Curriculum Manager: User Defined Monitoring Sheets

by Eileen Goghil
Siena Primary School

RM Curriculum Manager has found a home on many of the servers in BCE schools. It has lived on the server at Siena for just over twelve months and the teachers are visiting RM on a regular basis. These visits have largely been successful but sometimes they are thwarted with emotions and at times we part company on not so good terms. Like any relationship you get out of it only what you are prepared to put into it. With this in mind we continue to revisit RM to try and reconcile our differences and learn a little more about the new kid on the server.

Being an open and adventurous crew we decided to delve into as many aspects of RM as we could. Using the planning module was quite a successful experience because having this new toy brought a heightened sense of interest amongst teachers who have worked collaboratively to plan innovative units of work. In addition we were able to access the knowledge and skills of teachers from other schools who had been down the road before us. We were soon exposed to Derek’s holiday snaps and the Monitoring Module. The module provided us with an electronic way of tracking students’ demonstrations of outcomes; this only encouraged us to further our journey with staff. We took a little detour down the track of Utilities, which proved to be both interesting and beneficial.

Entering Utilities allowed us to investigate the creation of User Defined Monitoring Sheets. This was helpful as at that point in time we were looking for tools that would assist us in establishing consistency in our portfolios across year levels. Discovering User Defined Monitoring Sheets and playing with these during planning sessions has enabled us to take another step closer to achieving greater consistency in the language and format used for recording criteria and reporting successful demonstration of the outcomes. Preparing the User Defined Monitoring Sheet prior to the writing of the teaching and learning sequence gives a well-defined focus to the concept of explicit teaching.

Many schools are already producing quality criteria for the demonstration of learning and placing these in a consistent format that uses a familiar language will support professional dialogue at Consistency of Teacher Judgement days. As many schools are now working towards the development of folios as a means of reporting to parents it is good to know that there is a tool in RM that will help with the consistent and systematic approach to reporting in this way. This will no doubt be beneficial for parents as they make the transition from one reporting system to another.

This element of RM is not difficult to use and is clearly explained in the RM Resource Manual. User Defined Monitoring is one of those elements of RM that is being reviewed. Only when there are more teachers involved in using this valuable tool will it be able to be refined to meet our specific needs.
There are a variety of ways teachers assess student work. In Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs, teachers develop or adapt criteria matrixes in order to make judgments about competencies a student might demonstrate from their participation in the assessment task(s).

Frank Torrissi from Marist College Rosalie has provided the following information which forms part of his development on the module – Workplace Health and Safety (GENOHS201)

**Workplace Health and Safety Project**
(School Environment)

MARIST COLLEGE ROSALIE

Students Name: ____________________

Date Handed Out: 1st September 2003  Due Date: 1st October 2003

Certificate Name: Certificate II in Workplace Practices

Unit of competency: GENOHS201: “Work safely According to OH&S Principles and Procedures”

**PROJECT**

- Work in pairs and undertake a safety audit on one area of the College. Make sure you clearly identify what safety procedures/standards are required for the area that you are auditing.
- Undertake a risk assessment.
- Document the hazards on the appropriate forms.
- Suggest risk control measures and develop a possible rectification plan
- Prepare a written report, together with the use of electronic equipment to present your findings

**Conditions of Implementation**

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<tr>
<th>Working in Pairs</th>
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<td>Time 4 weeks</td>
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<td>Written report including</td>
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<td>• Photos</td>
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<td>• Video evidence</td>
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Comments: ____________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

Date ___________________________  Assessor’s Signature ________________

This task provides evidence towards competency GENOHS201
Frank Torrisi is Year 11 and 12 Coordinator at Marist College Rosalie. He is also a leader in VET studies at the College.

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<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Performance Criteria</th>
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<td>1. Project</td>
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<td>2. OHS safety induction course</td>
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<td>3. Workbook</td>
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<td>4. Fire and safety Certificate</td>
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<td>5. Basic First Aid Certificate (including CPR)</td>
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<td>6. Oral presentation</td>
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<td>7. Written Reference (workplace)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Two mandatory aspects are only required for Performance criteria

### Component skills for GENOHS201

**Work safely according to OHS principles and procedures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>SKILL</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of hazards in the workplace</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Workbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to report hazards</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Project/oral Written Reference (workplace)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to recognise safety signs and symbols</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Workbook/OHS safety induction course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to follow workplace instruction and procedures for controlling risks and for dealing with accidents, fire and emergencies</td>
<td>ENV</td>
<td>Fire/Safety Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to explain responsibilities of employer and employees</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Workbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to report OHS issues and contribute to OHS discussions</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Project/Oral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to recognise emergency first aid situations</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Basic First Aid Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to assess level of risk and suggest risk control measures</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Project/oral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to determine first aid priorities</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Basic First Aid Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to improvise in a first aid situation</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Project/oral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to relate OHS knowledge to a new industry area or school setting</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Project/oral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>