SYDNEY TEACHING COLLOQUIUM 2014

Symposium
Assessment: engaging with communication standards

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Abstract
Communication is a key component of higher education, professional standards and accreditation requirements. In this symposium, members of the curriculum embedded communication and language development (CECLD) scholars’ network highlight three examples in which assessment is the leverage point within curriculum to simultaneously build students’ communication capacities and improve learning in ways that are relevant to specific disciplinary and professional contexts. We draw on literature concerning models of communication as well as the higher education standards framework, related OLT projects, and those specific standards that guide our professions. We will present three examples:

Communication as barrier assessment
Annie Chan, Robyn Johnson & Natalie Pollard, Health Sciences
The health sciences have barrier assessments enabling students to understand and develop their professional communication skills in a safe learning environment, whilst facilitating their development as beginning reflective practitioners.

Building staff capacity to improve student communication
Debra Shirley, Health Sciences
The health sciences have developed strategies for staff to improve their capacity to provide early preparation in communication skills and health literacy for their students.

Becoming the reflective education practitioner
Minkang Kim & Marie Stevenson; Education & Social Work; Arlene Harvey, Bronwyn James & Eszter Szenes, Learning Centre
This example from the education undergraduate program involves a curriculum that scaffolds students’ understanding of what it means to be a reflective practitioner within the discipline, and the ways in which this can be successfully evidenced within a critical reflective report.

While each presentation is discipline specific, the common thread drawing them together is that communication standards are developed and assessed as an integral part of the curriculum design. We propose that by focusing on the communication principles embedded in assessments we can improve students’ understanding of the knowledge bases of their disciplines and the ways in which they can evidence this understanding in their assessment tasks. In this symposium, CECLD members will invite and facilitate participants to experiment with/share examples of designing curricula to build communication within their own disciplinary contexts.

Theme
Assessment that engages students in learning that is relevant to the disciplinary, professional and community contexts (theme 1)

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