Evidence Summary 3.3.6

I use two main processes for evaluating the quality of my assessment practices. First, I adjust my assessment strategies from the direct experience of teaching my units and in response to feedback from students in the moment so to speak. For example, when students in a workshop request a modification to the word count of an assignment, or ask for additional assignment scaffolding, I am able discuss, evaluate and perhaps negotiate change, so long as it meets university policy guidelines. Nonetheless, I am restricted in my capacity to make major adjustments to assessment items once unit outlines are finalised. An exception was an assignment for unit 9893 S1 2024, where unique unforeseen circumstances meant I had no choice but to replace this assessment item, with a new version co-constructed with my students. One of my students commented in the provided feedback that they liked the 'options of the medium for the assignment'. In other words, they liked how the new replacement assignment allowed them the choice of a written response or a presentation.

The second and probably more conventional approach I use, is from student end of unit satisfaction feedback. Specifically, I review student comments and then adjust assessment instruments where change is warranted, and where I believe modification will lead to some kind of improvement. For example, many students made comments in the feedback extracts I have provided for this section, about wanting exams to be replaced by quizzes. The reasons students provided were justifiable and consequently I instigated this change across all my units where exams originally existed. Other changes I have made based on student feedback, are adjustments to assessment weighting, and including a variety of methods to respond beyond more traditional essay style assignments. That said, I still feel there is a need for extended response assessments in my teaching and learning, as a main way for assessing knowledge informed by the evidence-based resources I provide. As such these kinds of assignments have their place in my assessment 'toolbox', despite some students not necessarily agreeing with my perspective. For example, the student who stated 'I feel that there are more relevant avenues to engage with data driven research than one essay especially for those going into a profession where they will not be required to do any writing like this as a part of their job description'.

Sometimes students provide feedback requesting changes to assessment strategies lacking justification or accuracy. This feedback can be contradictory to other student comments and statements in unit satisfaction feedback. For example, in some of the extracts I have provided, like 'the teacher (John) is very biased when grading assessments', 'if you do not agree with exactly what he (John) has taught us in the assessment task you are destined to fail, so to pass the unit it feels like you are forced to agree with a certain perspective' and 'the sport study assessment was challenging to follow regarding expectations of us as students'. The first two comments are subjective and perhaps reflect those students not achieving grades they expected. The latter comment was about an assessment that had been used successfully for several years, and on review I was satisfied it was still fit for purpose, and effective for analysing unit learning outcomes.

An approach I use when students are seemingly unnecessarily critical, is to visit the Canvas site for the given unit to see how many hours they have spent engaging with the site. For example, when students make comments like 'I struggled to find quality references to use for the assignment so I think this would help guide us in the right direction' or 'assignment is not explained well, was very confused on what need to be done,' I investigate student levels of engagement in Canvas sites. I do this especially when I feel I have provided plenty of information and when other students have corroborated this assertion in their feedback.

Regarding the comments where students seem somewhat disgruntled, I often feel a tension between making assignments challenging enough and being 'pushed' towards making them too easy. As a way of dealing with this situation, I consider how I can engage those students to better understand the purpose of assignments to assess understanding, and that I must maintain minimum standards. This year, I had the highest failure rate in unit 9916 S1 I have encountered in eight years of delivery. It is possible some of the negative student feedback comments I have provided reflect this failure rate. To re-engage those students who failed with my teaching and learning approaches

and teaching philosophy, I directly emailed them, inviting them to a community of practice awards event, where they could meet and connect with some high performing local teachers. Evidence of this initiative is provided in UC Uncover Figurational Sociology Article (the same article I refer to in my 'Point of Difference' in the Introductory section) which on the final page reports a 'speed friending' component. Unfortunately, none of those I invited attended and did not RSVP. I will, however, not give up trying to re-connect those students and will consider alternative ideas and approaches.

Other ways I evaluate the quality of my assessment practices, is through unit moderation from a colleague prior to a teaching semester commencing, and through regular Health and Physical Education team meetings during teaching semesters, where we share ideas and critically review our teaching and assessment practices. While the process we use is informal, we find it useful to discuss as necessary and as required the approaches we use, inviting contributions and feedback from each other, and about new assessments in particular.