



Victoria University

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<i>Vignette title and details</i>	Assessment support: a suite of manager interviews (some bi-lingual) on DVD to model and develop Learning in the Workplace skills.
<i>Discipline</i>	Business: Management and Organisation Behaviour, a compulsory first year unit in all VU Bachelor of Business Degrees.
<i>Employment sector</i>	Multi-sector
<i>Student numbers</i>	1000 per semester (approx 2000 per year) based in Melbourne, Beijing, Kuala Lumpur, Johor Bahru, Beijing.
<i>Optional/compulsory</i>	The unit is study within which this task takes place is credit bearing.
<i>Credit bearing</i>	The assessment task is 20% of the unit's mark.
<i>Assessment</i>	Formal report: Students are required to work in groups to produce a written report; they must interview a manager and then compare management theory to the manager's practice.
<i>Payment</i>	Nil
<i>Number of staff involved</i>	3 of the teaching team have been critical to the development of the DVD resource of interviews of managers; all 16 teaching team members will use the resource.
<i>Weblink</i>	The DVD will be available at a cost recovery price from the VU Bookshop.
<i>Key Words</i>	Curriculum; assessment

Overview

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) has been explored extensively at VU and a university-wide target of 25% or all assessment in all courses has been set. In this exploration of WIL at VU a continuum of WIL activities has been posited. At the one end of the continuum is the cooperative education style employment experience formally integrated within a credit bearing unit of study with reflective assessment tasks. At the other end, the introductory end, of the continuum are assessment tasks which take place in, and require the student to engage with, workplaces outside of their immediate university experience (outside of the "classroom"). Moving along the continuum from the introductory WIL experience to the comprehensive cooperative education experience is a process of scaffolding and developing the necessary skills, knowledge and abilities that will support student learning.

This vignette describes an assessment task at the introductory end of the continuum of WIL activities and focuses on the nexus between theory and praxis within the discipline of management.

A major assessment task within the Bachelor Business Core unit, BMO1102 Management and Organisation Behaviour (M&OB), requires students to conduct a WIL and Community based research project entailing an interview with a manager. This project requires relatively sophisticated communication skills, the ability to access and utilise social and community networks and an understanding of the etiquette and protocols of the broader business community. To support the assessment we have created a rich multimedia DVD of structured interviews with managers from a diverse range of national backgrounds, business and cultural settings which models interview techniques, presents alternative cultural approaches to universal business management issues and provides multi-layered support to the assessment task for M&OB students.

Structure of program

The need for this type of support material emerges out of research undertaken as evaluation of a Language Across the Curriculum (LAC) grant project conducted by Alan McWilliams (FoBL) and Fiona Henderson (TLS). The evaluation pointed to the difficulties with this assessment task faced by students from a Non English Speaking Background (NESB), international students, from both onshore and offshore, students from Low Socio-Economic Status (Low SES) regions of Melbourne and students who are First in Family to reach tertiary level education. Similarly, feedback from onshore and offshore teaching staff in M&OB points to the difficulties faced by students in these categories who, for cultural reasons or from lack of access to a suitable network of contacts, are unable to negotiate time with a manager to conduct the interview. Findings from the LAC project evaluation also highlight that when students in these categories do secure an interview with a manager they are unable to conduct the interview effectively.

The rich multimedia DVD of manager interviews is intended to overcome these issues by providing a range of 'model interviews' that students can use for the analysis required to complete the assessment task. This assessment task is designed to be a precursor to later year, more comprehensive Learning in the Workplace and Community models (Commitment 2).

Special features

The DVD of manager interviews will also benefit students in M&OB who are not from the above at risk categories. The interviews with managers from China and Malaysia will present alternative approaches to universal business management issues and model cross-cultural values to students who have limited contact with alternative cultural perspectives of business; hence supporting Internationalisation and Making VU an International University.

Future work

This assessment task is constructively aligned with the learning objectives of the unit of study and B.Bus degree. The academic skills, knowledge and abilities developed by students as they undertake this assessment task provide scaffolding for the development of the more sophisticated academic skills that these students will need to be successful in later year units of study.

The cultural insights available by comparing different manager's responses to the same questions is a valuable component that is not currently explicitly in the assessment marking criteria.

Additional Insights

The use of constructively aligned assessment tasks which are intended to scaffold the skills, knowledge and abilities that students will need to be successful in a cooperative education style employment experience, and ultimately in their future employment, is a strength of this approach. Aligning assessment tasks and experiences across the curriculum acts to strengthen the view that the transition from academic study to workplace experience should be seamless. This first-year unit of study assessment task highlights to students that their studies are grounded in workplace experience and that theory and praxis are closely related.