

## Teaching and learning: personal preference and corporate culture

University teaching and learning is being stretched, with lecturers under pressure to deliver more, often to more students and often under reduced budgets. In consequence, the style of teaching and learning is becoming more institutional, defined by processes and infrastructure, with different models being promoted according to who takes the institutional lead.

Academics who wish to take control of their own teaching within this environment, need to develop their own overarching strategy and then find ways to interpret it within the institutional structures.

The ideas to be presented were developed within a particular framework and will work best where:

- (a) Learning Outcomes are foundational to defining the modules and to its assessment. It is possible to use Learning Outcomes to satisfy bureaucratic ends, rather than educational ones: that is not the aim here.
- (b) The teaching, learning and assessment are all integrated with the Learning Outcomes.
- (c) The assessment seeks to stratify students into several grade bands (ideally fewer than 15) and that it is expected that two independent assessors would make the same grade allocation for the same performance more than half of the time, and not vary by more than one band in more than 5% of cases.

### Pedagogic model

There are 4 elements to this model:

- (i) Content learning. Most learning involves a degree of rote learning where the student simply needs to absorb the material. In many ways, it does not matter how this is done, but it is probably best that this be driven by the student. Mastering the basic material is the student's problem.
- (ii) Discursive and interactive learning. The ability to process information and to think in a manner characteristic of a given discipline usually requires much more than simply book work or facts. This learning requires discussing, problem solving, and interaction with peers and tutor.
- (iii) Stretching assessment that reflects the Learning Outcomes. In this model, assessment is part of the learning process as well as the means by which students are graded. It must be designed to help students engage with the material. Ideally, it will represent a real-world scenario and require the application of appropriate thinking in that context.
- (iv) Assessment that enables students to demonstrate their competence up to the level of their grading and that shows clearly why they cannot be graded more highly.

I could probably speak on two of these topics in an hour.