An Evaluation of Assessment Changes in Year Three of a Bachelor of Nursing Programme

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Year 3 Research Team

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School of Nursing UCOL
Background

- Originally students enrolled in the UCOL Bachelor of Nursing (BN) programme were entitled to one automatic resubmission of every written assessment that did not achieve a pass mark.
Background

• Resubmission option for Year 3 students completely removed.
Purpose of the study

• To explore the impact of the new assessment policy on staff and students during the 2005 academic year.
Design

• Student questionnaires.
• Computer mediated focus groups with Year Three teaching staff
• Survey of Nursing Schools in New Zealand
How **did** we compare with the rest of the nursing schools in New Zealand?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No re-sit</td>
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<td>No re-sit but can pass if cumulative mark of 50%</td>
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<td>Up to three resubmissions in Year 3</td>
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<td>Resubmission for 1st written assignment in Year 3 only</td>
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<td>One resubmission per assessment</td>
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<td>One resubmit in Semester 5 of BN, nil in Semester 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>50% of written assessments can be resubmitted</td>
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Survey of new year 3 students

- X students responded to our first survey
- 42 had required a resubmission the previous year
- 35 resubmitted between 1-3 assessments.
- 5 resubmitted between 4-6 assessments.
How would you rate the overall anticipated impact of the assessment changes on your progress through Year Three?
Positive impact of the change for students

- “I became more thorough in my assessments and worked harder”.

- “I spent more time organising myself with planning etc”.

- “I put my best work forward first time”.
Student perspective

- “Yes, it felt like I was ringing or emailing the poor lecturers every week asking about assignments and exams”.

- “A lot more 1:1 time with lecturers leading up to exam dates and assessment due dates to gain feedback”.
Student perspective

• “Even though I have never had to re-sit it is a scary thought knowing re-sits are not there to fall back on”.

• “By the time I realised I could not re-sit, I had already paid and invested thousands of dollars in fees and hours of study”.

Student perspective

• “Absolutely agree with no re-sit policy. If you don’t know your professional expectations and levels of knowledge, then I don’t want you to nurse my family or myself”. 
The lecturers perspective

• “Many attempts, lots of money, loss of face, frustration”.
The lecturers perspective

“Could have a reputation for being difficult to succeed here...we may lose some students and have less ‘bums on seats’ but probably better nurses so I think that is positive”.
The lecturers perspective

- “Distressed and angry students. Informing the few students that they have not been successful as that is not easy”.
Lessons learned

• An unintentional by-product...served to heighten our reflections on other aspects of the educator role.
Lessons learned

• The best interests of the school may clash with the vested interests of the few, and what constitutes fairness is a perception.
Lessons learned

• The closer the relationship we have with our students, the more personal anxieties lecturers report when changing the parameters for student success.
Postscript 1

- Our results suggests the change has been positive for both staff and students.
Postscript 2

- Modification to the policy...
  ...allows students one automatic resubmission opportunity.
Postscript 3

- Students spending more time on quality work.
Postscript 4

- Tracking student progress is now easier in the final stages of the programme.
Postscript 5

• Finally, no student appealed to the Board of Studies on the grounds of being unfairly treated because of the policy change.
Was it more a case of mind over matter?

• The anxieties of both staff and students prior to the assessment changes may have been misplaced.
So we pose to you...

- If we consider students and staff as part of the same academic community, to what extent should the students be involved in policy change that directly effects the student?
Question 2

- *To what extent do you consider students to be consumers of education and as such have consumer rights?*
Question 3

- *Were we right to change the policy in the first place, or should all students get at least one chance to resubmit everything?*
Question 4

• *How do we balance the need to consult when making quality improvements?*
Question 5

• So what do you think about resubmissions?
Question 6

• Should applied degrees should be treated differently than more theoretical ones?