

The UECA integrated assessment grant project: Cross-institutional action research for sector capacity-building

Dr Pamela Humphreys, Macquarie University College
Professor Thomas Roche, SCU College



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Celebrating 40 years of quality and innovation in ELICOS

UECA

- UNIVERSITY
- ENGLISH
- CENTRES
- AUSTRALIA

About UECA

- Established over 20 years ago
- Represents the majority of English language centres in Australian universities
- Led and managed by a Committee; 10 members from 10 institutions
- Our members make university education accessible for tens of thousands of international students through English language and pathway programs
- Foster networking, sharing of best practice and evidence-based continuous improvement

UECA's key initiatives

PD Fest

The UECA PD Fests are a one day, professional development event for teachers by teachers. They provide an opportunity for teachers to share ideas and teaching techniques and strategies to build an engaging curriculum. They also explore issues facing the industry and discuss opportunities for career development.

Assessment Symposium

Building on the approach used in UECA PD Fests, an annual Assessment Symposium is held which provides workshops and seminar sessions building the knowledge and capacity of teachers in the crucial area of assessment.

Peer Exchange and Research

UECA provides a forum for national peer exchange on aspects of the ELICOS National Standards as well as key issues in international education. This collaborative research contributes to a national understanding of issues of relevance to University based English language centres as well as providing professional opportunities for centre staff.

Networking and Collaboration

UECA centres and staff are connected with opportunities for networking with other members. Strong collaboration with other relevant industry bodies including NEAS and English Australia are promoted.

Integrated Assessment Grant Project

- Offered grants of up to \$8,000 for up to 5 Projects
- Case Studies; Literature Review; Analysis of benefits/drawbacks; Best Practice; Benchmarking; Quality Assurance
- Cross-institutional
- Deadline for application 1 August 2022
- <https://ueca.edu.au/integrated-assessment-projects>

Integrated Assessment Grant Project

Criteria

- The originality of the proposal
- Evidence of the potential benefits to UECA members
- Potential for further dissemination and exploitation of the outputs
- Achievability

Accepted

- 4 projects involving 9 UECA member colleges

Overview: Integrated Assessment

- **What is it?** Discrete testing of macro-skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) vs Integrated assessment in which two or more macro skills are combined (Plakans, 2022; Yu, 2013)
- **What are the options?** Most commonly involves reading-to-writing or listening-to-writing (Plakans, 2015) or stimulus for the writing or speaking output is provided by a reading or listening text (Chan et al., 2015; Haug, 2021).

Overview: Integrated Assessment

What does the literature say?

Key benefits:

- authenticity - there are few situations where a single macro-skill is used in isolation (Cumming, 2013; Yu, 2013). Washback effect: Learn to produce unique responses to source materials rather than select an answer from pre-existing choices – cf. discrete item tests (Hidri, 2020; Sotiriado, 2020).
- potential to reduce the likelihood of academic integrity breaches through this inherent focus on mediation (Roche, 2021).

Overview: Integrated Assessment

What does the literature say?

Key issues:

- task design, validity and reliability of scoring processes (Plakans, 2022).
- the very possible impact of a students' receptive skills impacting a productive skill result (Frost et al., 2020; Uludag, 2021).

Project 1

Project leads	Louise Noell, UON; Zhanna Hunter, UON; Lisa Mangion, UOW College
Project title	Developing multiple literacies in an EAP direct-entry program through integrated assessment.
Description	<p>This project will investigate the utility of integrated assessments in relation to EAP direct-entry programs informed by a multi-literacies framework. Following a scoping review of relevant literature, the project aims to develop an outline and assessment rubric for an integrated assessment task suitable for a direct-entry EAP program. The integrated assessment task and attendant rubric will include an explicit focus on the multiple literacies required for success within a university context.</p> <p>To heighten the relevance of the project to students, the integrated task will focus on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.</p>
List of outputs	<p>Scoping review of literature on multiliteracies within an Australian university context and integrated assessment literature within an EAP context. The completed review would be submitted to the English Australia Journal for consideration.</p> <p>Creation of task outline and assessment rubric for an integrated assessment task informed by a pedagogy of multiliteracies. The assessment rubric would be reviewed by a panel of expert peers.</p>

Project 2

Project leads	Angela Windsor, UniSQ College; Zoe Hancock; Southern Cross University College
Project title	Toward person-centred and authentic assessments: Enmeshing employability skills in EAL/D direct entry university integrated assessment tasks.
Description	<p>Investigate strategies for enhancing the authenticity and person-centredness of integrated assessment by integrating employability skills development within EAL/D integrated assessment tasks in university pathway programs.</p> <p>Our plan is to conduct desktop research following Xiao and Watson's (2019) eight stage literature review process. We will use Covidence software to collaborate and enact our review protocol to ensure the review is reliable, valid, and replicable. From our systematic literature review, we expect to produce a set of recommendations for embedding employability skills development within integrated assessment tasks in DE pathway programs.</p>
List of outputs	<p>Develop a set of recommendations for UECA members embedding employability skills development within EAL/D integrated assessment tasks in direct entry programs.</p> <p>Prepare a publishable systematic review of the literature that addresses the following central research question: How can integrated assessment in university ELICOS Direct Entry Program contexts support the development of employability skills, beyond the development of communicative competence?</p> <p>To disseminate our findings, we will focus on three areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Presentations: UECA Assessment Symposium Oct 2022; SCU College & USQ College; recommendations to UECA members at UECA event 2023.2. Social media3. Publication in a journal.

Project 3

Project leads	Brooke Donnelly, Project Lead, UNSW Global; Maria Naidoo, UNSW Global; Stephen Walker, Reviewer, UQ College; Philip Godber, Reviewer, UTS College
Project title	Developing an Integrated Assessment Blueprint
Description	<p>Developing a peer-reviewed Blueprint for an integrated assessment that is a product-oriented integrated reading into writing assessment aimed at students at B+ to C level on the CEFR. The Blueprint would include theoretical background, construct specification (and its different dimensions), task specifications (text length, difficulty and metrics, time allowed, question types etc), scoring and measurement tools and guidelines, guidelines for administration, overview of target test takers and so forth. Work on the blueprint will be reviewed at key stages by assessment specialists at cooperating UECA institutions and the feedback incorporated into the final blueprint.</p> <p>The blueprint will provide detailed technical information to guide decision makers and test writers in the development of an integrated reading to writing assessment. While contextual parameters may differ at different institutions the blueprint template can be used by other institutions in order to guide integrated assessment development specifically for their own context.</p>
List of outputs	<p>An article including a literature review on developing a Blueprint for developing integrated tests and assessments</p> <p>A comprehensive Blueprint for an integrated assessment</p> <p>Reflection and learning on the process of developing an assessment</p> <p>Presentations and workshops for UECA members on developing a Blueprint and assessment building using a Blueprint</p>

Project 4

Project leads	Cara Dinneen, Lead, Macquarie University College; Jeremy Koay; Alejandra Vazquez; Philip Radmall (MQUC); John Gardiner; Mohammed Sameer; Sharon Cullen; Tony Hickey; Mariela Mazzei (CET USYD)
Project title	A Tale of Two Centres: Conceptualising and Operationalising the Construct of Integrated Language Tests at CET and MQUC
Description	<p>This project will investigate the utility of integrated assessments in relation to EAP direct-entry programs informed by a multi-literacies framework. Miller (2012) notes “... six literacy domains necessary for successful transition and success in the university context.” Following a scoping review of relevant literature, the project aims to develop an outline and assessment rubric for an integrated assessment task suitable for a direct-entry EAP program. The integrated assessment task and attendant rubric will include an explicit focus on the multiple literacies required for success within a university context.</p> <p>The development of these items would emerge from collaborative workshops between participants from UOW College and the University of Newcastle Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre. To heighten the relevance of the project to students enrolled at both participating institutions and the broader UECA membership, the integrated task will focus on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals is prominent for both the University of Wollongong and the University of Newcastle contexts with Wollongong a signatory to the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Higher Education Commitment, & Newcastle threading commitment to this framework throughout the 2020 – 2025 Looking Ahead Strategic Plan.</p>
List of outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* A three-part report on the project for UECA* An article on Direct Entry Programs and Assessment the Use of Integrated Assessment in Direct Entry Programs for publication in English Australia Journal*UECA Assessment Symposium Presentation

Next steps and outputs

- UECA Assessment Symposium; Melbourne, 23 Sept
- English Australia Journal publication, June 2024

Benefits of collaborative approach/ learnings

- Enhance UECA members' capacity to offer continued excellence in teaching.
- Support our members to demonstrate their value to their parent universities and their capacity to recruit and prepare international students to study successfully at their universities.
- Foster networking, sharing of best practice and evidence-based continuous improvement.
- Build research capacity, teacher training and ongoing professional development to the global TESOL community.

Questions