



# Examples of assessment design for learner responsibility from my teaching at the Australian National University

Richard Baker  
Deputy Dean  
College of Science  
Australian National University

A small number of examples from each level of my teaching are given below (note you can look at examples of student completed assessment items for each form of assessment mentioned below on my webpage [http://sres-people.anu.edu.au/richard\\_baker/examples.html](http://sres-people.anu.edu.au/richard_baker/examples.html) ):

## In all my courses

- explicit assessment criteria are provided for every piece of assessment;
- there is some form of oral presentation on which I provide detailed feedback;
- learning portfolios are used and assessed to encourage student reflection;
- everyone attending a tutorial is required to come prepared with a one page summary to enable everyone to actively participate in the tutorial. The one page summaries are assessed at the end of the course as part of learning portfolios and in 3<sup>rd</sup> year course they are also placed in the Library reserve collection to allow peer learning.
- I use field trips to provide students with rich independent learning environments and numerous opportunities to have contact with me to get feedback on learning tasks.

## In my first year class - “Resources, Environment and Society” - see [http://sres-people.anu.edu.au/richard\\_baker/2007-1001/SRES1001/index.html](http://sres-people.anu.edu.au/richard_baker/2007-1001/SRES1001/index.html)

- students are required to form pairs (with someone they don't know) in week 2 to encourage them to build friendships and supportive learning groups. They work together on ‘webographies’ which are critical reviews of webpages relevant to their essay topics. Each pair of students’ webographies go on the course webpage to allow peer learning (see [http://sres-people.anu.edu.au/richard\\_baker/examples/webographys/index.html](http://sres-people.anu.edu.au/richard_baker/examples/webographys/index.html) ). The ‘webographies’ are assessed against clearly stated criteria in week 3 of the course to give students early formative feedback.
- all students give end of course PowerPoint presentations (see [http://sres-people.anu.edu.au/richard\\_baker/examples/ppt/index.html](http://sres-people.anu.edu.au/richard_baker/examples/ppt/index.html) ) on what they learnt both about learning and about natural resource management - these are all put up on the course webpage that the students continue to have access to (and many make great use of) after they have completed the course. Students are assessed against stated criteria for both their verbal and visual presentations.

In my 3<sup>rd</sup> year class “Environmental Policy and Planning” -with the aid of a two hour workshop the week before they have to run the tutorial, student facilitators gain the skills and confidence to run tutorials for themselves. I call these workshops ‘supertutorials’ see [http://sres-people.anu.edu.au/richard\\_baker/teaching/webpapers/supertut/index.html](http://sres-people.anu.edu.au/richard_baker/teaching/webpapers/supertut/index.html) . They are assessed against criteria that they have helped develop. At the end of each tutorial each student gives feedback to the facilitators on how well the class was run and I return this feedback to the facilitators typed up to maintain anonymity. Students’ independent learning is further enhanced by a task for their learning portfolios where they reflect on what they learnt about both the topic and about facilitating.



- students are required in their last tutorials to give real world policy briefings. They role-play the person who wrote the brief and I role-play the person they are giving it to. Students get written feedback on both their oral and written briefs. Every student is required in their learning portfolios to analyse what were the characteristics of the best briefing they have heard. Examples of briefs given are at [http://sres-people.anu.edu.au/richard\\_baker/examples/briefing/index.html](http://sres-people.anu.edu.au/richard_baker/examples/briefing/index.html) . Students respond enthusiastically to this approach “a fantastic experience”, “What a great assignment!”. Students have also contacted me to tell me how useful this assessment item has been in the workplace (email 3.2.06) and one student’s brief (email 11.10.02) has attracted senior political interest.

In my 2nd year Viet Nam Field School course - see [http://sres-people.anu.edu.au/richard\\_baker/teaching/SRES2017/index.htm](http://sres-people.anu.edu.au/richard_baker/teaching/SRES2017/index.htm)

- Students are required to develop a learning goal statement before we leave for Viet Nam that outlines their learning goals and also requires them to develop online resources to be used by the rest of the class. Students are required online to provide feedback to each other in a task that helps them get to know each other’s particular research interests before they are required to work together in the field in small research teams.

#### Master’s course work students

- students (mainly from overseas) give a short PowerPoint presentation see - [http://sres-people.anu.edu.au/richard\\_baker/SRES3028/postgrad\\_info.html](http://sres-people.anu.edu.au/richard_baker/SRES3028/postgrad_info.html) that goes on the course webpage analysing an environmental policy that works in their country and explaining what aspects of the policy can and cannot be applied elsewhere. Students are given written feedback on both their oral and written presentations and are required to reflect in their learning portfolios on each other’s presentations.

My students also have a say in assessment criteria. For example the first tutorials in 3<sup>rd</sup> year class focus around workshopping what makes a tutorial work well and the students are required to develop criteria for assessing their subsequent tutorial facilitations. This approach forces the class to consciously engage deeply with a range of issues including what makes a good tutorial facilitation, the meaning of the criteria and with what helps them learn most.

Please contact me if you would like any more details about any of the above  
Richard.Baker@anu.edu.au



This work has been made available as part of the REAP International Online Conference 29-31 May 2007 and is released under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike 3.0 License. For acceptable use guidelines, see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

Please reference as:

Baker, R. (2007). Examples of Assessment Design for Learner Responsibility from my Teaching at the Australian National University. *From the REAP International Online Conference on Assessment Design for Learner Responsibility, 29th-31st May, 2007.* Available at <http://ewds.strath.ac.uk/REAP07>

Re-Engineering Assessment Practices in Scottish Higher Education (REAP) is funded by the Scottish Funding Council under its e-Learning Transformation initiative. Further information about REAP can be found at <http://www.reap.ac.uk>

---