Slide 1

Assessment for the development of professional competence

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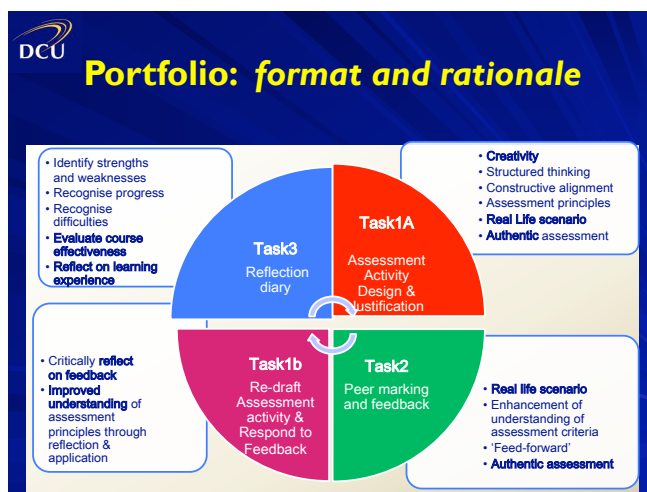
Kilkenny, 4th April 2009

Slide 2

The context

BSc in Education and Training
Module: Curriculum Assessment
5 ECTS Credits @ 12 week
(ES204 Fulltime Students / ES222 Part time Students)

Full time Students (ES204)

- Large group (**75** students)
- Mostly traditional undergraduate
- Full-time
- Background theoretical knowledge
- No assessment design experience

Part time Students (ES222)

- Small group (28 students)
- Mature students
- Part-time
- Professional experience
- Limited background theoretical knowledge
- Little design experience *(some administered assessment)*

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Portfolio: *format and rationale*

- Identify strengths and weaknesses
- Recognise progress
- Recognise difficulties
- **Evaluate course effectiveness**
- **Reflect on learning experience**

Task3
Reflection diary

Task1A
Assessment Activity Design & Justification

- **Creativity**
- Structured thinking
- Constructive alignment
- Assessment principles
- **Real Life scenario**
- **Authentic** assessment

- Critically **reflect** on feedback
- **Improved understanding** of assessment principles through reflection & application

Task1b
Re-draft Assessment activity & Respond to Feedback

Task2
Peer marking and feedback

- **Real life scenario**
- Enhancement of understanding of assessment criteria
- 'Feed-forward'
- **Authentic assessment**

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Research Questions

- Our portfolio assessment: pros and cons
- Does it suit different student groups?

Key questions

- Does our assessment portfolio foster development of professional competence?
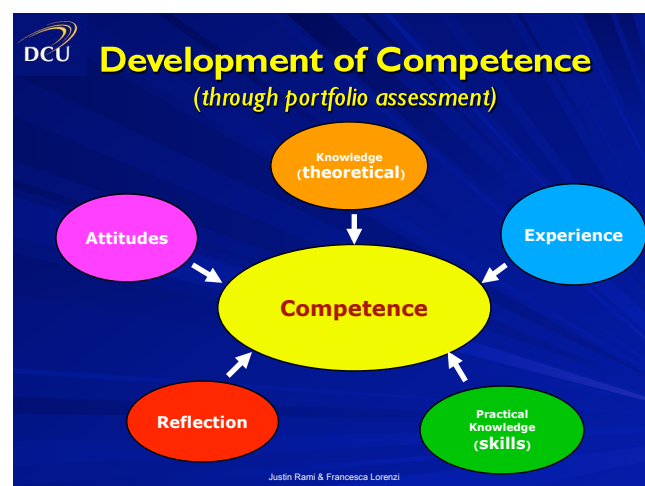- Does our assessment portfolio enable professional development?
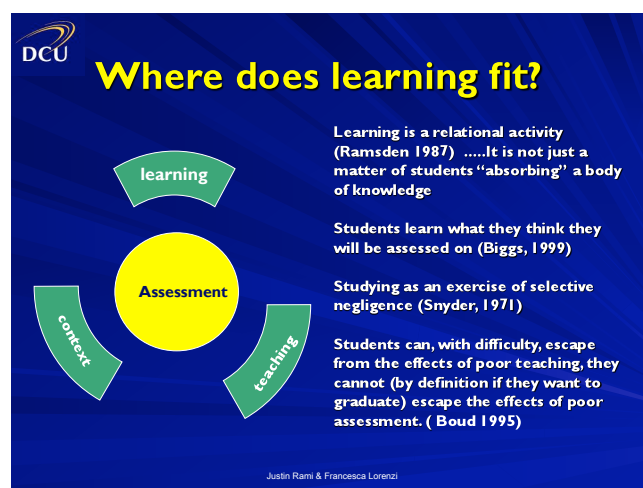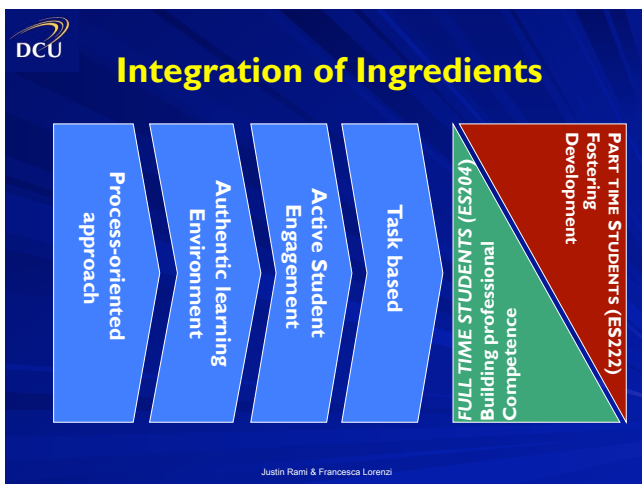
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Multiple definitions of Competence?

- Competence is knowledge in action
- Competence is contextualised
- Experience is necessary to build on knowledge to achieve competence
- Reflection is necessary to build on knowledge to achieve competence
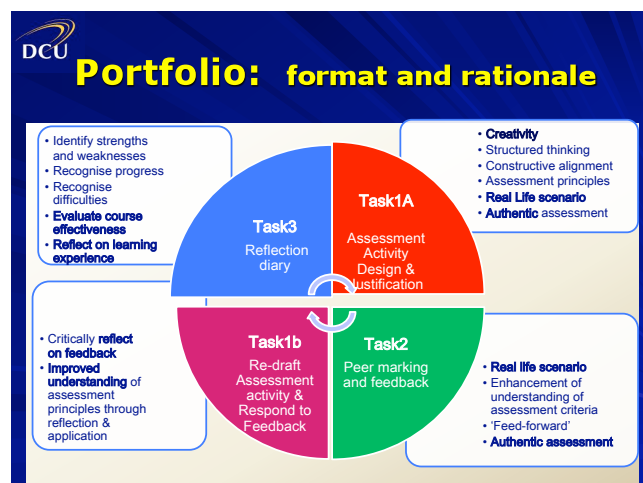- "Being competent" is a value judgment

Source: *Lemaitre et al., 2006*

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Development of Competence
(through portfolio assessment)

Knowledge (**theoretical**)

Attitudes

Experience

Competence

Reflection

Practical Knowledge (**skills**)

Integration of Ingredients

Process-oriented approach

Authentic learning Environment

Active Student Engagement

Task based

FULL TIME STUDENTS (ES204) Building professional Competence

PART TIME STUDENTS (ES222) Fostering Development

Where does learning fit?

learning

context

Assessment

teaching

Learning is a relational activity (Ramsden 1987) .....It is not just a matter of students "absorbing" a body of knowledge

Students learn what they think they will be assessed on (Biggs, 1999)

Studying as an exercise of selective negligence (Snyder, 1971)

Students can, with difficulty, escape from the effects of poor teaching, they cannot (by definition if they want to graduate) escape the effects of poor assessment. (Boud 1995)
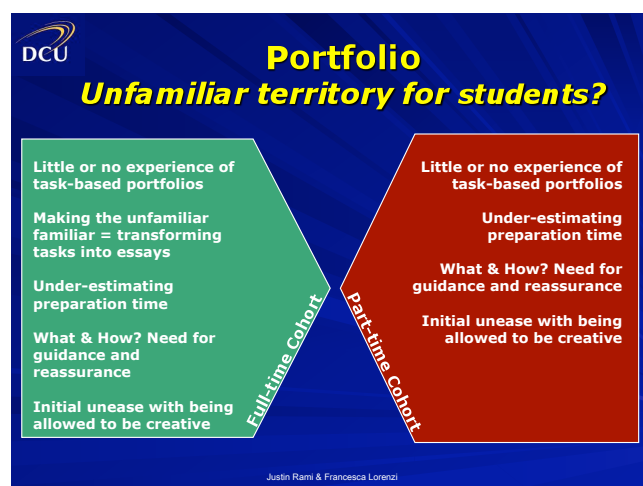

Why portfolio assessment?

- Scaffolded learning & emphasis on gradual development
- Meaningful "whole learning" task based approach (Noordman et al 2006)
- Integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes
- Sequenced learning activities
- More opportunities for "work in progress" feedback – adopting a dialogical feedback approach
- Increase relevance of assessment to development of professional competence

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Portfolio: format and rationale

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Task3 Reflection diary

Task1A Assessment Activity Design & Justification

- Creativity
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Task1b Re-draft Assessment activity & Respond to Feedback

Task2 Peer marking and feedback

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- 'Feed-forward'
- Authentic assessment

Research results: stage 1

Portfolio
Unfamiliar territory for students?

Little or no experience of task-based portfolios

Making the unfamiliar familiar = transforming tasks into essays

Under-estimating preparation time

What & How? Need for guidance and reassurance

Initial unease with being allowed to be creative

Full-time Cohort

Little or no experience of task-based portfolios

Under-estimating preparation time

What & How? Need for guidance and reassurance

Initial unease with being allowed to be creative

Part-time Cohort

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Portfolio
Less familiar territory for lecturers?

- Pre-empting & planning
- The challenge of large groups
- Work-in-progress & constant reminders
- Building confidence & working together with students
- Fostering creativity: research-like supervision?
- Dealing with contingencies
- (late & partial submissions of interlinked tasks)

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Evaluating pedagogical effectiveness

- Reflective diaries (included in the portfolio)

- Analysis of performance patterns

- Online questionnaire

- Lecturer observation of learning behaviours

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Outcomes
Assessment Performance

Full-time Cohort
- 71 out of 75 students successfully completed the portfolio (94.7% completion rate)
- 60% of the students improved the mark on their Activity design (Task1a & Task1b)
- Bell Curve overall mark distribution
- Low peer marking reliability (Task 2)
- Low reflectivity (Task3)

Part-time Cohort
- 25 out 28 students successfully completed the portfolio (89.2% completion rate)
- 89% of the students improved the mark on their Activity design (Task1a & Task1b)
- Narrow/ high overall marks range
- High peer marking reliability (Task2)
- High reflectivity (Task3)

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Student Voices
Positive Experiences

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Full-time
- I learned how to create an assessment
- I have learned about how much time goes into designing assessment
- I learned to apply other elements of my learning from other modules into this assignment
- I learned how to give clearer instructions in assessment design
- I have learned how to take feedback (good or bad). It gives an insight into how others see your work.
- My understanding of assessment and feedback are greatly improved.
- I have learned to link theory to practice.

Part-time
- have found this module very relevant to my work
- I have gained practical experience in designing assessment
- I had the opportunity to apply what I had learnt from lectures
- I have experienced the whole Kolb's cycle
- With this module I have experienced Bloom's higher levels
- This module was a case of experiential learning
- The learning outcomes for this module were fully met

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Student Voices
Negative Experiences

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Full-time
- Deciding on a task was hard
- I found it difficult to be both the teacher and the student.
- Matching learning activities to the assessment was difficult
- Linking theory to practice is difficult
- Finding the time (and energy) to correct was hard
- Find the right level (too strict /too generous) to mark at was hard
- I felt I was not qualified to mark fellow classmates work
- Taking feedback (even if constructive) was (is) difficult
- I would have preferred the lecturer to mark instead of peer marking

Part-time
- Initially very daunting
- Information overload Task1a too early in the module
- Uneasy with marking fellow student
- Too much jargon/language initially difficult for first-timer
- Very time consuming/ underestimated the preparation tim
- I would have preferred feedback from the lecturer on Task1a
- I would have liked more guidance on marking
- I would have liked more guidance on the reflection component

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- Does our assessment portfolio foster **development of professional competence**?

- Does our assessment portfolio enable **professional development**?

The lecturer facilitated the transition

From student to teacher

Empathise with assessors

Appreciation of complexity of teacher's role in assessment

Appreciation of complexity of assessment design

Fostering openness to new assessment forms

Full-time

Teacher Competence

Part-time

From teacher to student

Empathise with students

Enhanced understanding of feedback as learning tool

Evaluating of one own practice

Appreciation of complexity of assessment design

Fostering openness to new assessment forms
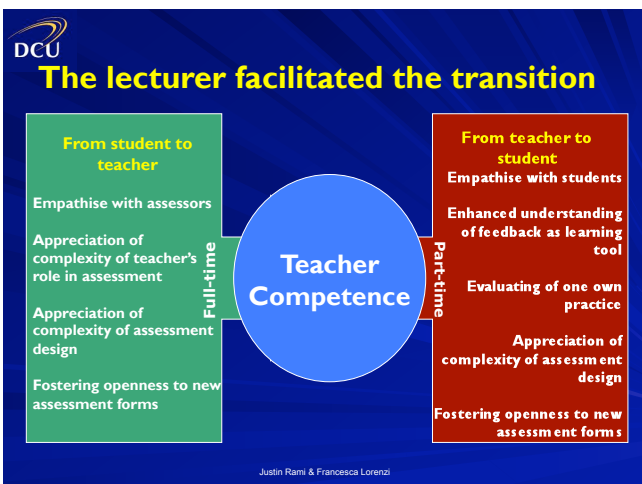
Where from here?

- Online Survey
- More analysis
- Examining practical implementation
- Promoting a similar model
- Transferability
- Sustainability of the learning
  (ie: further research?)

Efficiency and effectiveness:

can we strike a balance?

Thank you

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