**Leanne Compton** - - Hello, my name is Leanne Compton, I'm the Curriculum Manager, for Design and Technologies at the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. With me in this video, is the outgoing state reviewer for VCE Systems Engineering, Colin Chapman and the incoming state reviewer for VCE Systems Engineering, Chris Simpson. This video is one in a series of videos that the VCAA is developing to support teachers in the delivery of VCE Systems Engineering. This particular video, will focus in on the VCE assessment principles. Over to you Colin, thank you.

**Colin Chapman** - Thank you Leanne. The VCE assessment principles are a progressive set of principles that allow us to get the broadest range of responses from the entire cohort that we work with. It allows us to personalise our stimulus material and the possibilities of response that just really build on the strengths of the students with whom we work. We shouldn't expect school-based assessment to be a static document that applies to all schools and all contexts, it's really a material that we developed for our particular cohort in a particular year that we're working with them. VCE assessment principles support the identification of opportunities for further learning and description of student achievement and the articulation and maintenance of standards. The identification of opportunities for further learning is particularly important. School-based assessment is an integral part of our learning and teaching activities. And we should use the opportunities we have with our students to develop skills and knowledge, to allow us to build stimulus materials and response possibilities that are personalised to the students that we're working with.

So it means that we need to use the work with our students to identify opportunities, to build on the strengths that the students in our cohort have so that they can demonstrate to the best of their ability certain competencies. The assessment principles provide opportunities for the demonstration of the achievement of outcomes, and those outcomes should be specified in designed rubrics. And those rubrics should allow students to respond across the range of responses from simple listing activities, to discussion and explanation activities towards justification and creation. They allow us to develop a reasonable judgement and the reporting of a level of achievement for school-based assessment. And if it's associated with a rubric that is well specified with indicators and criteria, that response should be able to be arrived at from multiple assessors in a process of moderation.

The assessment principles provide a system for assessing the progress and achievement of students. And this assessing of progress and achievement must be accessible, all students in your cohort. It must be effective allowing for a response that builds on the strengths of the cohort. Must be equitable, reasonable and transparent. First principle is that assessment should be valid and reasonable. The curriculum content to be assessed should be explicit for each study design and also rely on related VCAA documents. The assessment instruments should not assess learning that is outside the scope of the study design.

So if the responses to the stimulus material invites students to perhaps provide a multimedia presentation, you can assess them on the rubric that is looking at the outcomes that are specified in the study design, but you can't assess them on such things as presentation or grammar and those sorts of things. Because that closes down the ability of some students to respond the same as others. So we need to make sure that we're assessing what needs to be assessed and not those things which are beyond the study design itself.

Assessment should be equitable, it shouldn't privilege nor disadvantage students or exclude them based on gender, culture, physical disability, socioeconomic status, or geographical location. So we need to allow students to respond in a broad range of manners that do not privilege any particular student nor disadvantage them.

**Chris Simpson** - Our assessment with this is not a one size fits all, and you can tailor things to specific students within your cohort, but as Colin has said there, it can't disadvantage them when it comes to their assessment.

**Colin Chapman** - And the way that you can determine whether the assessment is equitable is to engage in co-design activities with the cohort itself so that you can test ideas for what responses are possible with the stimulus material that you are providing.

Assessment should be balanced. This means that there might be more than one way to respond to the stimulus material that you are providing for the School-assessed Coursework. So it should provide a range of opportunities to demonstrate in different contexts and modes, the knowledge, skills, and understanding, and their capacity set out in the curriculum. So to provide a single context is insufficient, we need to provide multiple contexts. Because in our classrooms, our students come from multiple backgrounds and multiple experiences. We need to allow those multiple backgrounds and experiences to show our response to stimulus material. We need also to make sure that there is an ability to demonstrate different levels of achievement.

So the design of criteria, descriptors, rubrics, and marking schemes must be supported. It should be emphasised here that moderation processes aren't processes that happen only at the end of the assessment. Moderation process as we're working with colleagues, either within our school or across schools should inform how we design our SACs, not just assess the responses that come in. So making sure that we moderate our design processes is just as important as moderating the judgement that we might come to for particular responses to the assessment itself.

**Chris Simpson** - So Colin, the thing that I love that you highlight there, is that co-design so if we can start involving other schools and creating our SACs, obviously specific to our schools that we would work and that's a really good way to try and even out of that balance, isn't it?

**Colin Chapman** - And it makes, also when we co-design with students, our assessments that gives a buy-in to the assessment itself to then it becomes an important process for the students. It's not something that's just purely imposed but something, if they have helped us work on to make sure we get the best out of them.

Assessment should be efficient. So the study design does set out minimum assessments for teachers so that you're able to still make a robust judgement about their progress and their learning. We need to keep in mind, however that we can't assess to the nth degree. So although we want to be as precise as we can with regard to the things that we're assessing and the detail that we're assessing at, we need to also keep in mind that there's a question of efficiency here in that we need to balance the time taking in our learning and teaching programme of which school-based assessment is an integral part with the other demands for our learning and teaching programme.

So school-based assessment is an opportunity to design learning and teaching activities for your cohort of students, with an assessment that's personalised for the Systems Engineering students with whom you work in any particular year. The assessment principles inform a design mindset with regard to learning and teaching activities and assessment. And we need to keep that in mind. And as with the Systems Engineering study design and the SAT where we develop an intention, and then we carry out the intention and evaluate at the end, we can use moderation processes in our own professional practise to allow us to design effective school-based assessment. The assessment should have an intention and that intention should be informed by the assessment principles. We carry out the assessment and then the evaluation should really be looking at how well did our assessment process match what was intended? And do we need to make some changes?

**Chris Simpson** - And again, that's where we can get the buy-in from the students as well if we personalise those who that are involved in it.

**Colin Chapman** - That's right. So each school is different and there are different contexts of students operating. And we need to recognise that those contexts give different students in different schools, different strengths. And we want to design our assessment to use those strengths to allow the students to respond to stimulus in a broad manner. There are different circumstances that we go through in different schools. Students will have different strengths, different talents, and different resources available to them, and we need to design our assessment that allows the students no advantage because of access to resources. But if there is common access that we utilise those resources to get a unique response for our cohort, to the stimulus materials that we are providing.

The design of learning and teaching activities should reflect this in support of effective assessment of your students. And again, this is the purpose of moderation to see how well we have gone through the process of designing an assessment and it's the response to it and how well we've addressed the contexts and strengths that allow our students to respond in the best possible way.

**Chris Simpson** - I might answer that as well. That's interesting point number four, it says the students have different strengths. You'll also find that different teachers will have different strengths and different areas of interests. So, you know, if you can make things relevant to your areas of interest, you'll have a passion for that, and that will come across in your classroom as well. So do not think about the strengths and backgrounds that you bring into your classroom as well.

**Colin Chapman** - So central to school-based assessment is understanding that you know your students best, you know the best ways to collect evidence in terms of their achievement. And this is a key idea here. We are collecting evidence of responses to stimulus, and that evidence should be as broad as is necessary for your cohort, and your rubrics should allow you to be able to see the broadness and richness of possibilities of response for your particular cohort. You know your students best, co-design with your students and colleagues, and you'll be able to design an effective assessment and appropriate rubrics. Key to school-based assessment is to allow the VCAA the richness of your experience of working with your students, through learning and teaching activities that are relevant to them.

So personalised to your concerns and the context that you work within. Now, we need to make a clear distinction between satisfactory completion and level of achievement. They are two different things. Satisfactory completion is asking with the assessments that you're using, whether a student has engaged meaningfully with the outcomes through the learning and teaching activities that have been designed?

It's not based upon a pass mark. It's not based upon a minimum percentage. It's based upon a rubric that you have designed, which allows a broad range of responses from listing and recall, memory-type activities, responses, right through to justification and creation responses. If a student is anywhere along that rubric then that is the definition of satisfactory completion. The determination of level of achievement is a ranking activity. It's separate to satisfactory completion.

The level of achievement takes student responses to learning and teaching activities and the assessments and tries to determine where the student lies with respect to the indicators in the SAT's or SAC's criteria, and the SAC's marking scheme. So satisfactory completion is asking whether the student has meaningfully engaged with the activity, no matter what the level of achievement is. The level of achievement is then the ranking activity after you have determined satisfactory completion.

**Chris Simpson** - So, yeah, Colin, so that is one really good thing to make sure that we are clear with. So it's that whole concept of a pass mark. A student can demonstrate that they've got some level of understanding or knowledge in that and that would constitute satisfactory. Whereas then it would just depend on that scale as to where they would sit with that ranking. So it's placing the students in an order in your class.

**Colin Chapman** - That's right, and if a student is asking where they are with regard to level of achievement, you should be able to point to the particular skill that the student has demonstrated. So if a student has been able to demonstrate effective discussion of a particular concern with regard to the stimulus material, that's what you should be able to state. If the student has been able to justify a response to the stimulus material, then that's what you would respond. You certainly wouldn't be talking about a mark or a percentage. And this means also that students know where to go to next. If you've got an effective rubric, they know that if there is an explanation that level that they'll be able to ask very specific questions about what they need to do to be able to go to justification or creation.

**Chris Simpson** - And yeah, that's actually a really good discussion point with your students as well, early on in your Systems Engineering course, to explain that to them as well.

**Colin Chapman** - So this is personal to your school and your circumstances and your context, and also the strengths, talents of your students. That means you can personalise your determination of level of achievement for your cohort without consideration to what other schools are doing in this regard. It is your ranking of your cohort using the knowledge that only you have, of the students that you're working with in any particular year.

There will be a Q and A webinar, and those dates will be promoted through the usual channels from the VCAA in the February Bulletin, and include details on how to register.

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