

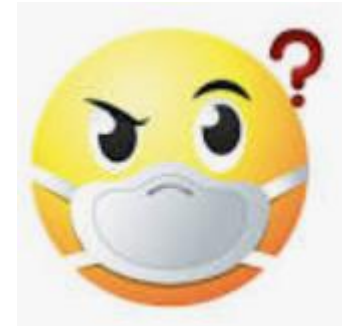
Impact of COVID-19 on students' high stakes assessment in NZ: thrive, survive or dive?

▶ **Nau mai, haere mai. Afio mai. Welcome**

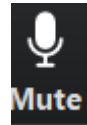
Webinar based on research by NZAI President, Associate Professor Jenny Poskitt

▶ While you are waiting, think about:

▶ *COVID impact on your assessment thinking or practice?
What about for ākonga (learners) and their whānau?*



▶ During the webinar please mute your sound:



▶ We plan to record the session. Go to www.nzai.org.nz later this week.

Session overview



A/Prof Jenny Poskitt Massey University, and NZAI President. March 2022

- ▶ What are/have been your experiences of learning and assessing during the COVID pandemic?
- ▶ What were the assessment challenges in other countries?
- ▶ How did NZ seek to mitigate COVID challenges?
- ▶ What were teachers and students' experiences?
- ▶ What are the takeaway messages for assessment?

What have been your experiences of learning and assessing during COVID?



What happened for you/your students or your organization?



What challenges arose?



What adaptations or surprises occurred?



What were the assessment challenges in other countries? (OECD, 2020).

- ▶ School closures resulted in learning gaps for students, reduced coverage of school curriculum and achievement
- ▶ Delayed or cancelled exams created political/public angst
- ▶ Standardized assessments were too rigid for the pandemic
- ▶ Questions raised about credibility of qualification systems, equitable opportunities for entry to tertiary study
- ▶ Some nations ill-equipped for pivot to teacher derived grades
- ▶ Inequitable achievement

Characteristics of high stakes assessment




Results have important consequences

- ▶ Perceived to be reliable, dependable and fair in terms of reward for merit
- ▶ Open/shut doors to educational pathways and employment
- ▶ Often with competitive selection

- ▶ But risk narrowing the curriculum, diverting attention from learning to test/assessment taking skills
- ▶ Don't provide rich information about learner's uniqueness, capabilities...

A/Prof Jenny Poskitt Massey University, and NZAI President. March 2022

New Zealand's collective educational response

- ▶ Focus on wellbeing and equity
 - ▶ Desire to not disadvantage students for future pathways
 - ▶ Minimize disruptions and additional workload for students and teachers
 - ▶ Support teachers and students with additional resources
 - ▶ Respect teachers' expertise
 - ▶ Collaborative across sector/inter-agency discussions and problem-solving
 - ▶ Retain integrity of the NCEA qualification while leveraging its inherent flexibility
-  ▶ Delayed external exams; LRCs (Learning Recognition Credits)

Effects of COVID adjustments on NCEA national attainment

Table 1. New Zealand NCEA Attainment Data 2018-2020

Ethnicity	NCEA Level 1			NCEA Level 2			NCEA Level 3		
	2018 %	2019 %	2020 %	2018 %	2019 %	2020 %	2018 %	2019 %	2020 %
Asian	76.9	73.9	73.1	77.3	78.3	80.0	70.5	71.3	76.5
European	78.0	76.0	75.8	81.5	81.1	83.2	69.9	70.8	74.6
Māori	58.4	57.7	60.8	68.6	68.9	71.9	52.9	55.1	60.7
Pacific Peoples	62.8	61.8	68.2	72.1	71.3	77.1	58.9	60.3	68.9

Teachers and students' experiences of assessing and learning during COVID

Difficulties	Opportunities
No/limited access to internet, or devices	Developing/extending digital techniques in learning, teaching and assessing
Challenging life circumstances - redundancies, essential workers, caring for siblings or older relatives	Adapting and experimenting with 'when' and 'how' to teach/learn
Variable skills/experiences with online learning	Deepening relationships in new ways
Wellbeing and anxiety issues	Prioritizing wellbeing/socio-emotional learning and 'what really matters'



Illustrative student interview extracts

- ▶ “My mother lost her job so we couldn’t afford internet. I couldn’t access school stuff to learn or do assessments”. (S13)
- ▶ “Dad was made redundant, so I got a job as an essential worker at the supermarket. It was hard finding time for learning, and I got so tired. (S8)
- ▶ “I was looking after the other kids and Nan so my parents could go to work”. (S14)
- ▶ “Having choices about what to learn, when I felt like it and how I wanted was fire [awesome]. I loved learning from home without time wasted by teachers repeating instructions or moving on to something else.” (S10)



Teacher interview extracts

- ▶ “Some students had no device or were sharing devices amongst family members and had no quiet space to learn”. (T5)
- ▶ “We had a more relaxed approach to assessment -gave students more time and directed coaching.” (T9).
- ▶ “High levels of anxiety by some students so assessments were reduced”. (T8)
- ▶ “We learnt how to teach online and enjoyed experimenting with pre-recorded mini videos, students enjoyed the more flexible time frame [early mornings/evenings] and being more active learners”. (T12)
- ▶ “About a third of our students have done better than previously, a third have got on with things and doing about the same, and about a third have struggled or ‘bombed out’”. (T1)



Learning and assessing strategies for students who ‘dived’, ‘survived’ or ‘thrived’

‘Dived’	‘Survived’	‘Thrived’
Be available to connect, ‘check in’, listen	Focus on strengths - when and how they learn	Build strong relationships & connectedness
Prioritize socio-emotional and relational learning; relevant, real-life learning	Chunk learning & assessing, explicit guidance, visible indicators of success	Arouse curiosity, interest, optimal challenge, choices
Adapt digital alternatives, flexible time, tasks, approaches	Coach self & peer assessment -> review, clarify, deepen learning	Mentor independent & collaborative learning & assessment capability

Teaching approaches for SRL (Peel, 2020, p. 276)



Building capability in learning and assessing

Matthewman et al., (2018)

Reciprocal peer coaching to build capabilities in learning and assessing

Process of RPC	Develop goals, communication skills, strengthen connections, foster coaching skills/characteristics
Learning process	Teach inquiry skills - cycles of learning, reflecting, planning...
Cognitive developments	Peers exchange/co-construct knowledge, grow self-efficacy and confidence, build reflexivity & skills in leadership, self-management and resilience
Assessment capability	Model & instil students' understanding about where at, where going, what it looks like, analysing current work in relation to desired state

Takeaway messages for learning and assessing

- ▶ Whakawhanaunga and manaakitanga
- ▶ **Ako** - reciprocal, mutual learning related to what matters to ākonga and whānau - listen and learn about their interests, their 'world/lives'
- ▶ **Arataki** - guide, mentor and scaffold learning
- ▶ **Mana-enhancing experiences**

References

- ▶ Matthewman, L., Nowlan, J., & Hyvonen, K. (2018). Reciprocal peer coaching: A constructivist methodology for enhancing formative assessment strategy in tertiary education. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 13 (1), 35-47.
- ▶ NZQA. (2020a). *Annual Report NCEA, University Entrance and NZ Scholarship Data and Statistics*. New Zealand Qualifications Authority. Retrieved July, 15, 2021
- ▶ OECD. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 on student equity and inclusion: Supporting vulnerable students during school closures and school re-openings. *Tackling Coronavirus (COVID-19): Contributing to a global effort*. OECD. Retrieved 19 Nov, 2020 from <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-student-equity-and-inclusion-supporting-vulnerable-students-during-school-closures-and-school-re-openings-d593b5c8/>
- ▶ Peel, K. (2020). Everyday classroom teaching practices for self-regulated learning. *Issues in Educational Research*, 30 (1), 260-282. <http://www.iier.org.au/iier30/peelpdf>.