Video transcript

School-based Assessment – Valid and reasonable

Louise Macfarlane: When I'm producing a SAC I look at the workshops that I've been to, articles I might have read, the equipment that my school's actually got and I use all of that to develop a SAC that I think the kids are really going to enjoy doing and that they're going to be challenged by, but that is unique.

So it's really important that it be unique, because we know that so many facts are passed out by siblings, there are questions that are available on the internet and sometimes really good students will actually sell their SAC on, and so it's not fair if some students are getting an advantage because they've got more money.

When I’m preparing a SAC, I'll usually get my lab techs to just trial it first to make sure that it's clear. They'll always give me feedback and then I can make improvements. I'll give it to another teacher to do so that then they can tell me if there's any questions that aren’t clear, so by the time the students get it it's a fair task.

I also make sure that when I'm writing the questions that I've got something really simple, so like name and label, and then some that are a bit more complicated, like describe and then I come down to justify and so by having that range of questions it means that I'm going to be able to get a nice range of results and I'm going to be able to separate my students which is really important.

I also have to be really careful that I'm considering my students’ needs, so if I've got a student that's colour blind it's not fair if they need to be able to make an observation of something that's got a red colour. I need to make sure that if they've been given any adjustments, granted any adjustments by VCAA, that I'm taking into account their adjustments. If there are different classes that are sitting in the same task, they're all having the same conditions so I don't have one class that's sitting over lunchtime and having a ball bounced off the outer wall.

I have to make sure that everybody knows what the task is going to be and that I've told them in plenty of time, so they know what it is that they're going to bring and what it is that they can't bring, and sometimes I might have a new piece of equipment that they haven't seen before, so I make sure in advance everybody's had a chance to handle it and understand what the equipment does and that way nobody gets a surprise on the day.

The questions might not have been interpreted the way we intended and we have to be open to going back and re-marking in a fair way so that everyone's marked with the same expectation. Sometimes there's a valid reason that a student might not have been able to sit the original SAC, so then when I give them a makeup SAC I have to make sure that it's equivalent but different, so that there's no possibility of them having an advantage by sitting at that little bit later.