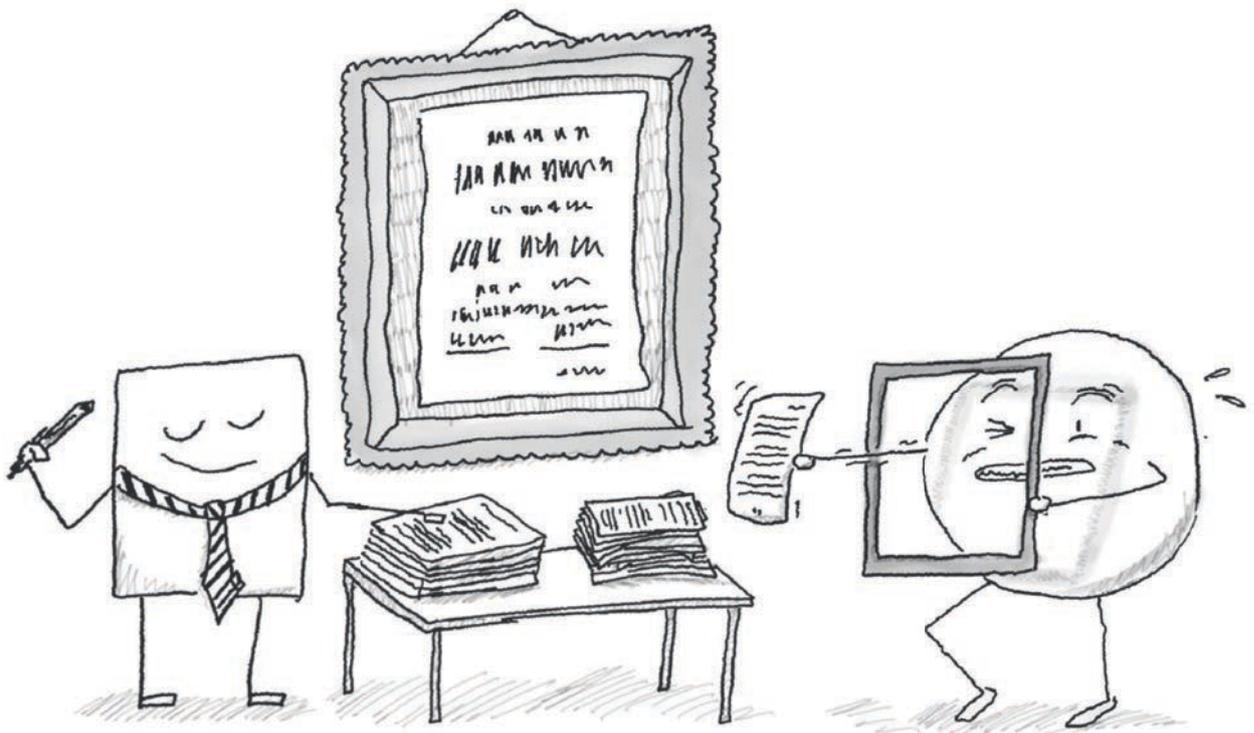
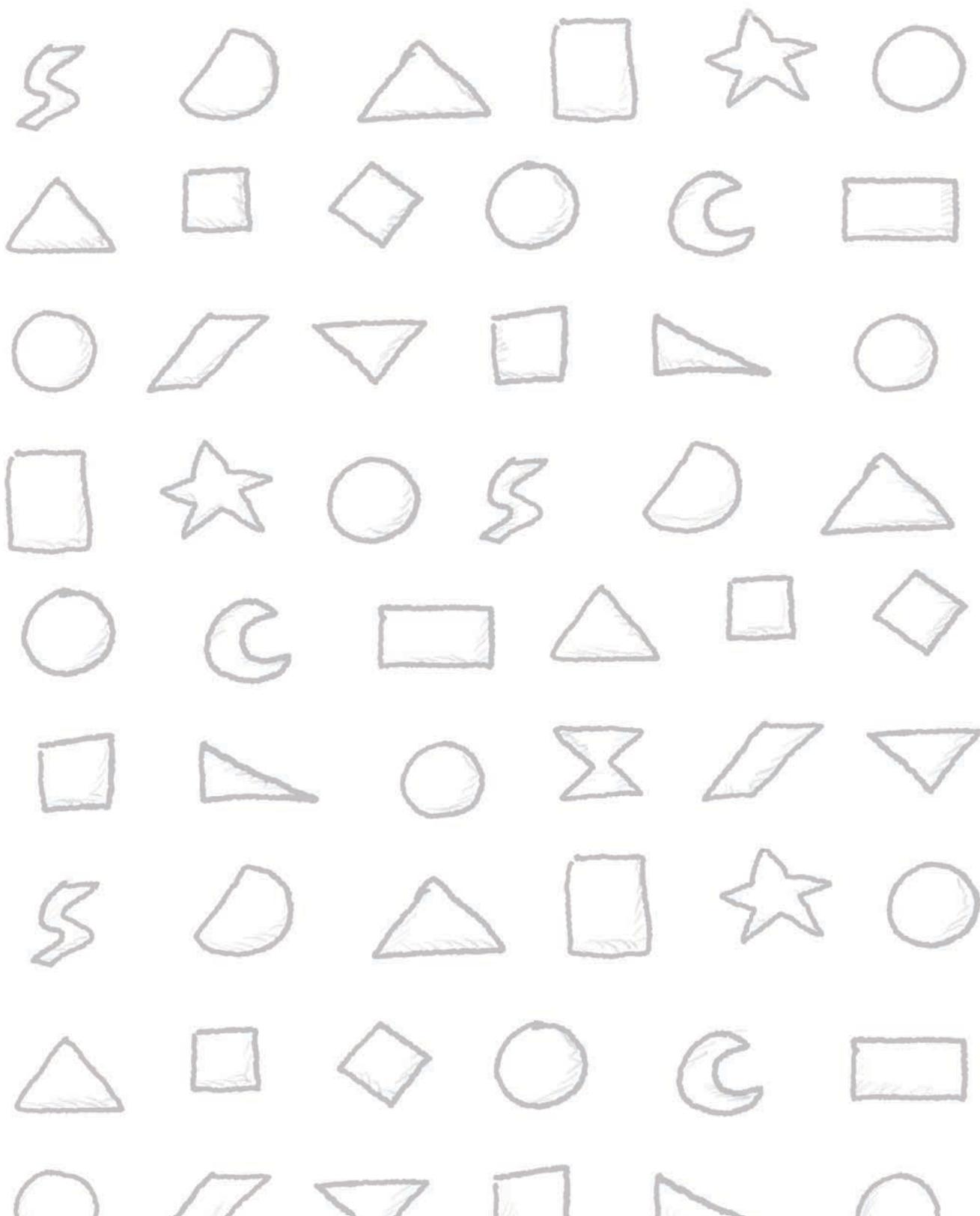


# **Circles through Square Holes:**

## **Assessment and Feedback in a Diverse University Community**



**A DITCOP comic**  
**By Aaron Humphrey**



First draft, July 2018

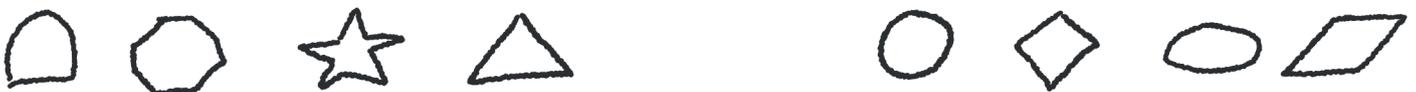
# THE SHAPES OF LEARNING, ASSESSMENT and FEEDBACK

Our students come in many shapes and sizes and they take many different paths to enter the University. They will need a range of skills when embarking on graduate employment.

How do we address student diversity in the classroom when setting assessment? How can students be involved in setting assessment? How can we give feedback that recognises and responds to student diversity?

The Diversity and Inclusion in Teaching Community of Practice (DITCOP) is a group of staff from across the University who have been grappling with these challenges. These comics present some of our ideas, informed by our draft framework, for diversity and inclusion.

We hope to engage you in this ongoing conversation. Contact us at [ditcop@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:ditcop@adelaide.edu.au).



Developed by the Diversity and Inclusion in Teaching Community of Practice at the University of Adelaide, February - June 2018.

Designed and drawn by Dr. Aaron Humphrey, University of Adelaide Department of Media

## Table of contents

1. Circles through Square Holes ..... pg 4
2. Diversity and Inclusion in Assessment ..... pg 7
3. Diversity and Inclusion in Class Groups ..... pg 9
4. Diversity and Inclusion in Feedback ..... pg 11
5. Diversity and Inclusion in Course Reviews ..... pg 13
6. The Shapes of Diversity and Inclusion ..... pg 15

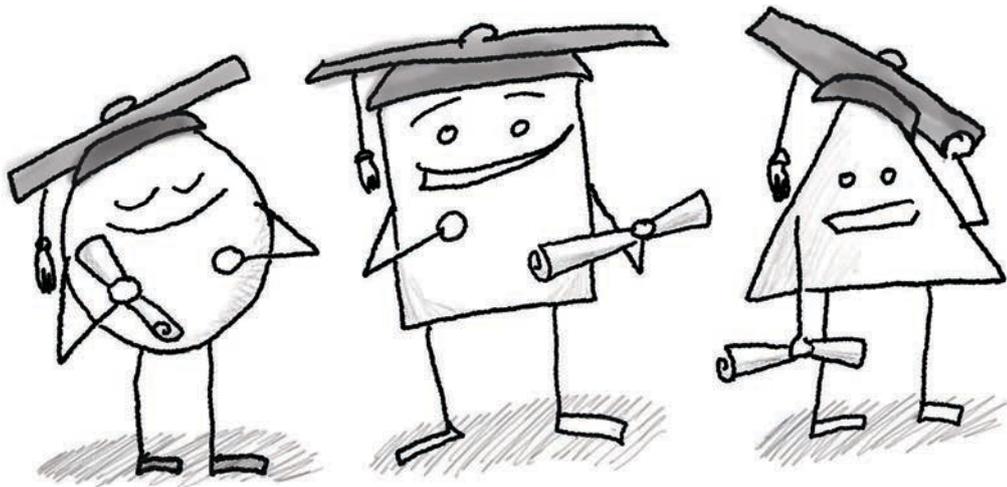


# Circles through Square Holes:

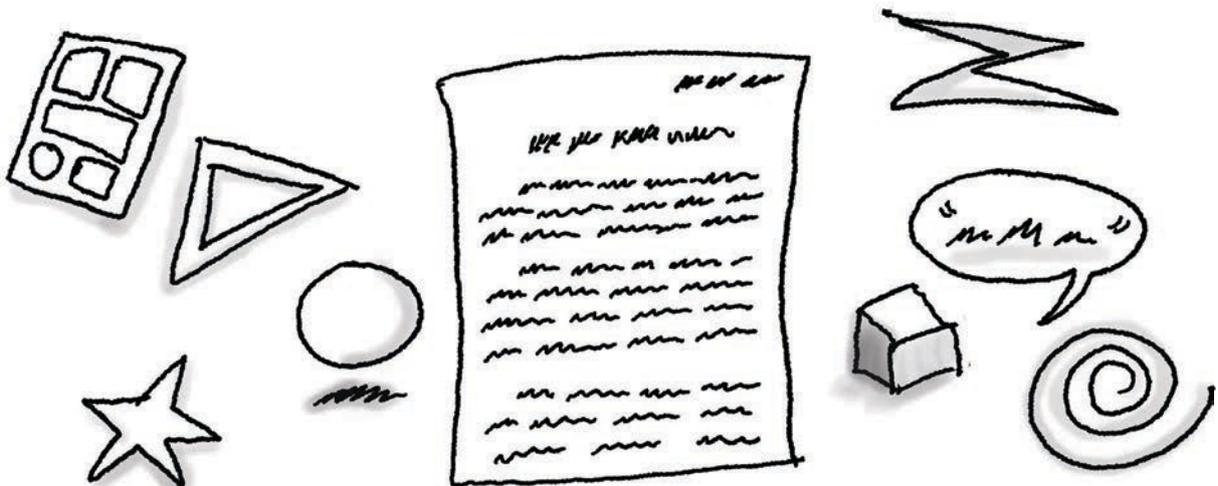
## Assessment and Feedback in a Diverse University Community



All our graduates leave with a degree and a square hat, but beneath the hat, they're a diverse bunch, with many different backgrounds, ambitions, cultures and career paths.

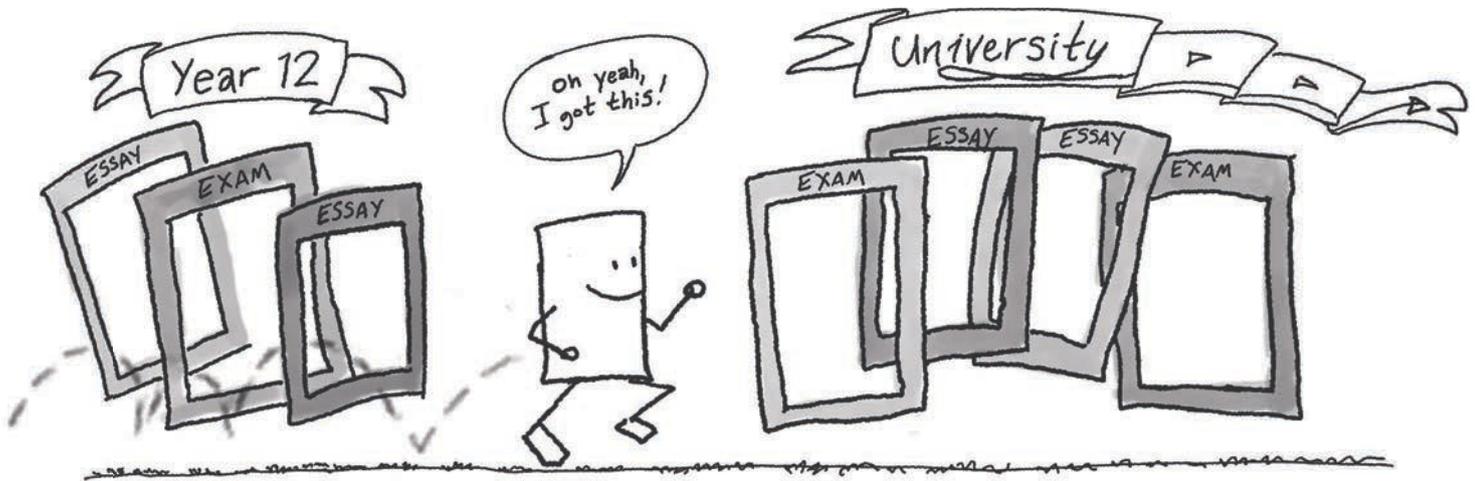


Our mortar boards may be square, but our students come in many shapes and sizes. Teaching and learning needs to reflect that diversity.

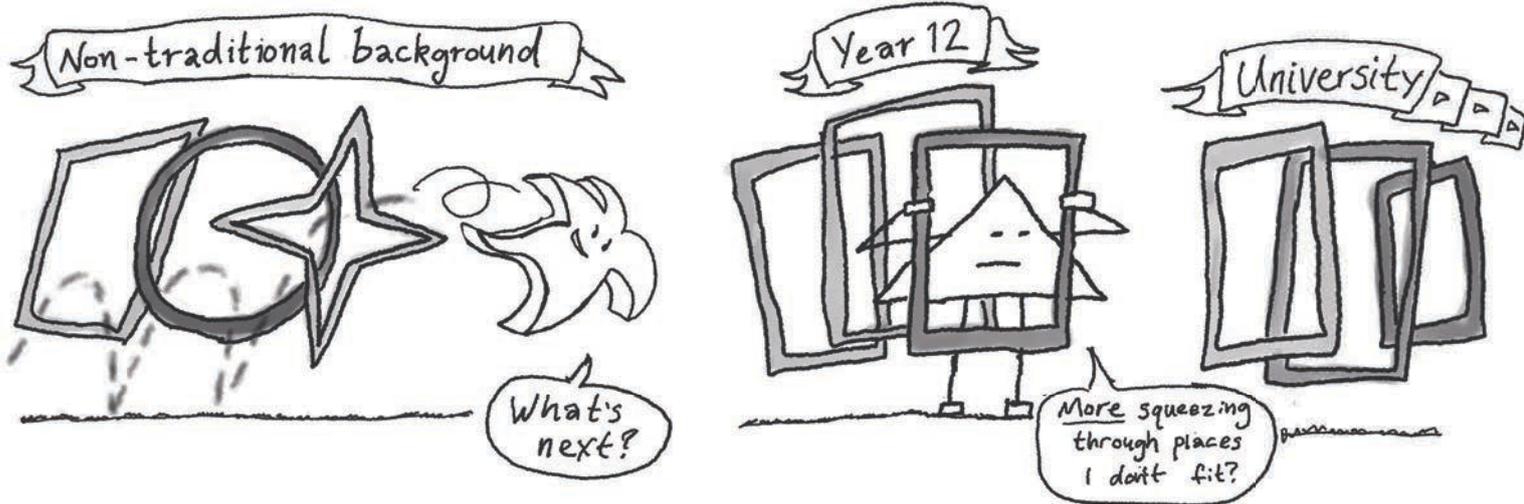


Just like there's no uniform kind of uni student, there doesn't need to be a universal model for university assessment. Diverse teaching, learning and assessment strategies can strengthen student experiences and improve learning outcomes.

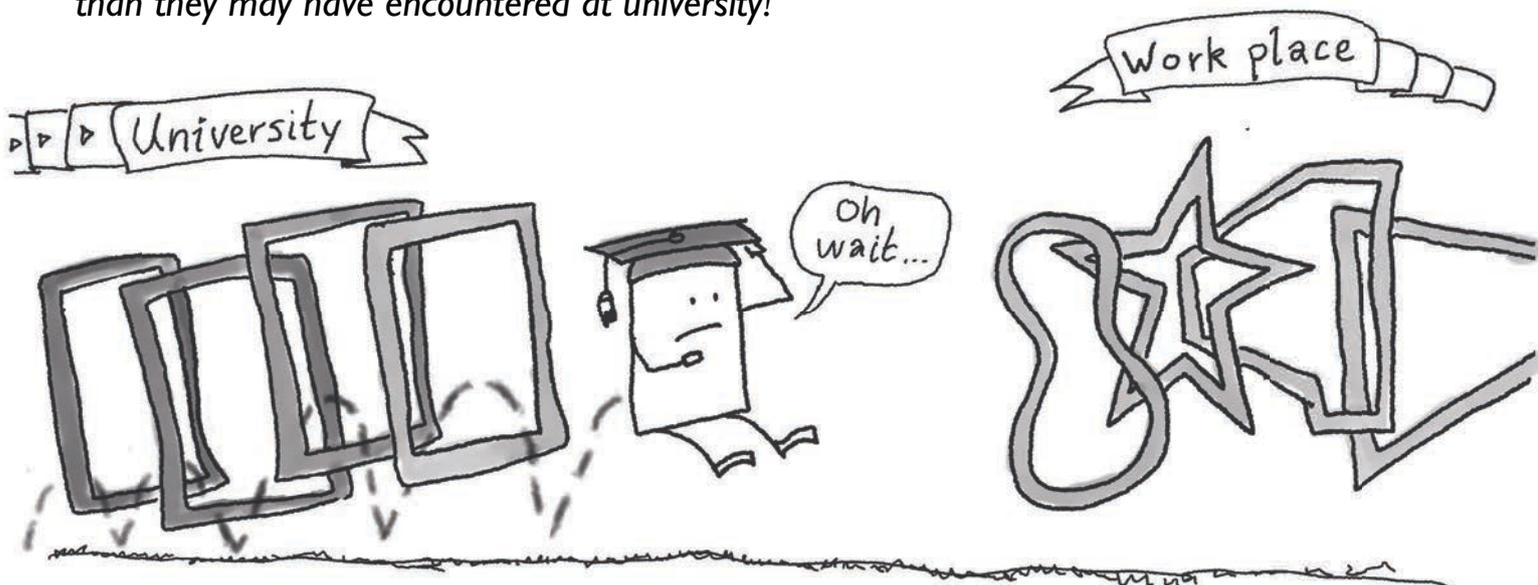
Some students have been well groomed for the way education has traditionally been framed, and are prepared to jump through the expected standardised hoops — essays, exams and quizzes, for example.



Other students have backgrounds or personal learning styles that do not mesh as easily with the standardised university assessment.



And on the paths our students will take after university, knowledge, learning and expertise are frequently framed in more diverse ways than they may have encountered at university!

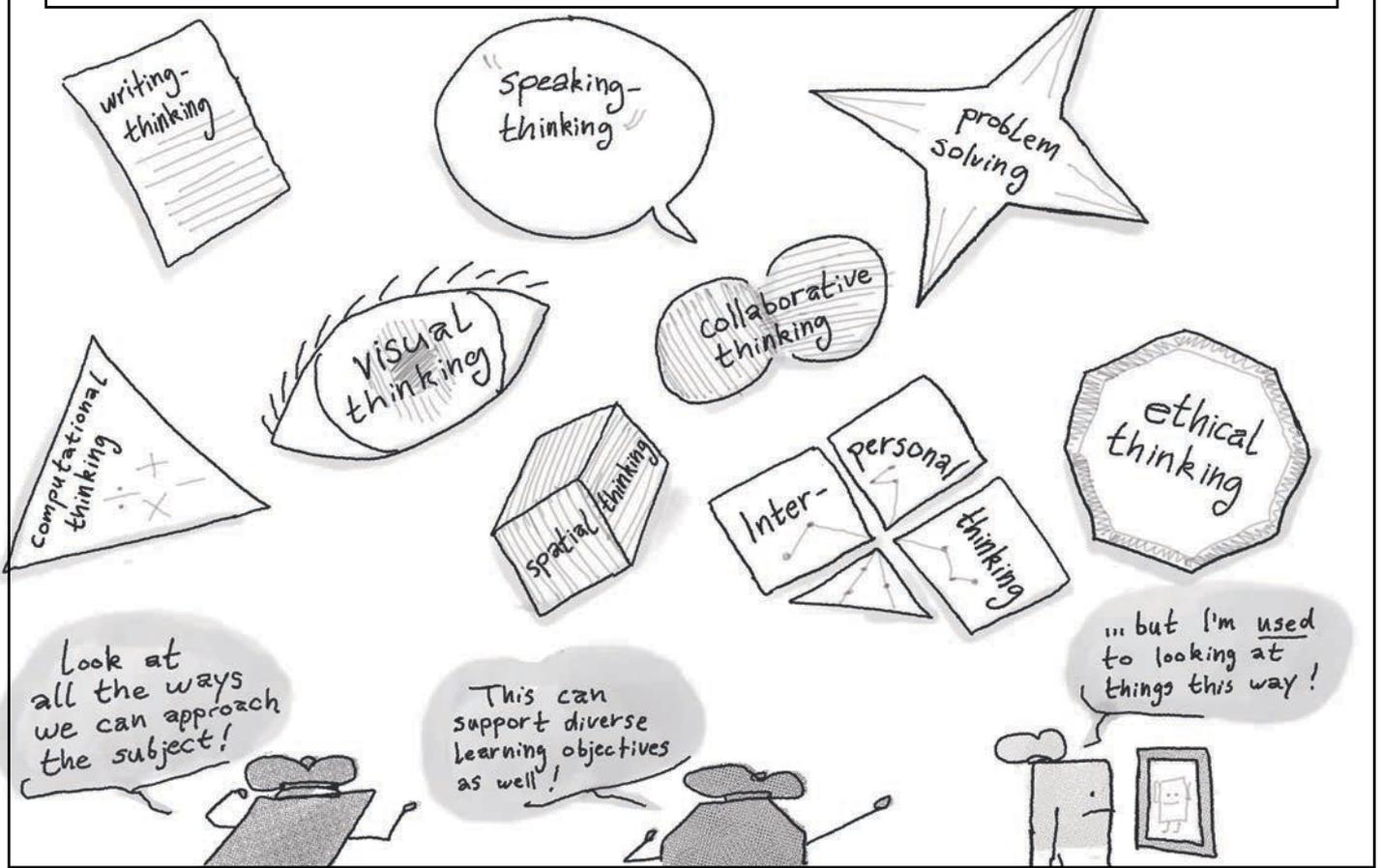


As employees of the university, we are often very comfortable with traditional forms of learning and knowledge — otherwise we wouldn't be working here!



However, it's important that we consider the diversity of our students' learning styles and experience.

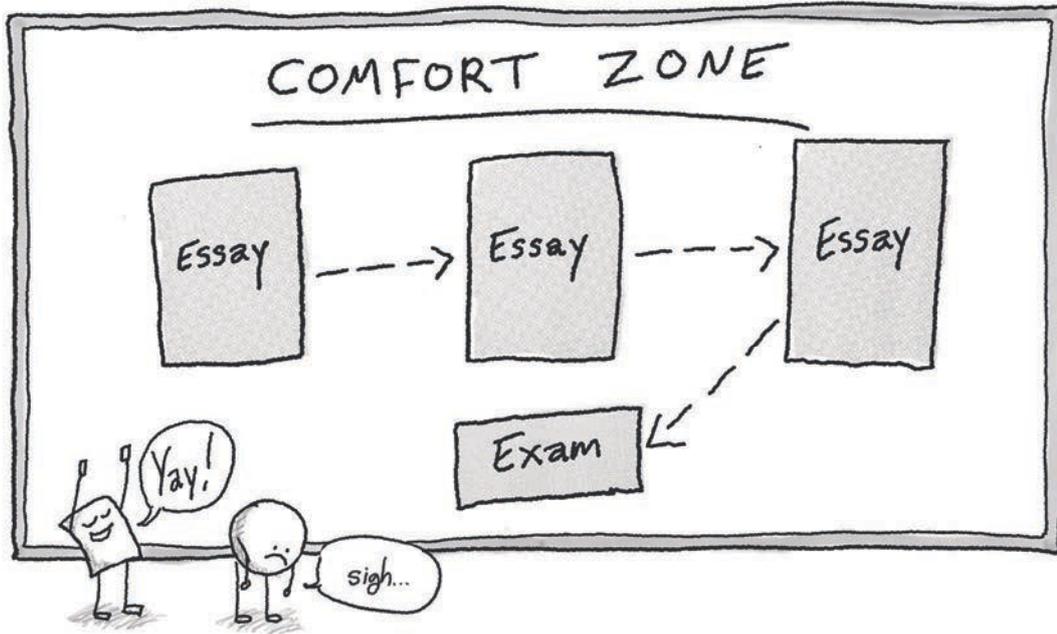
Setting diverse modes of assessment is an important way of recognizing and respecting the wide range of students' comfort zones and experiences, as well as the different kinds of learning we do in universities.



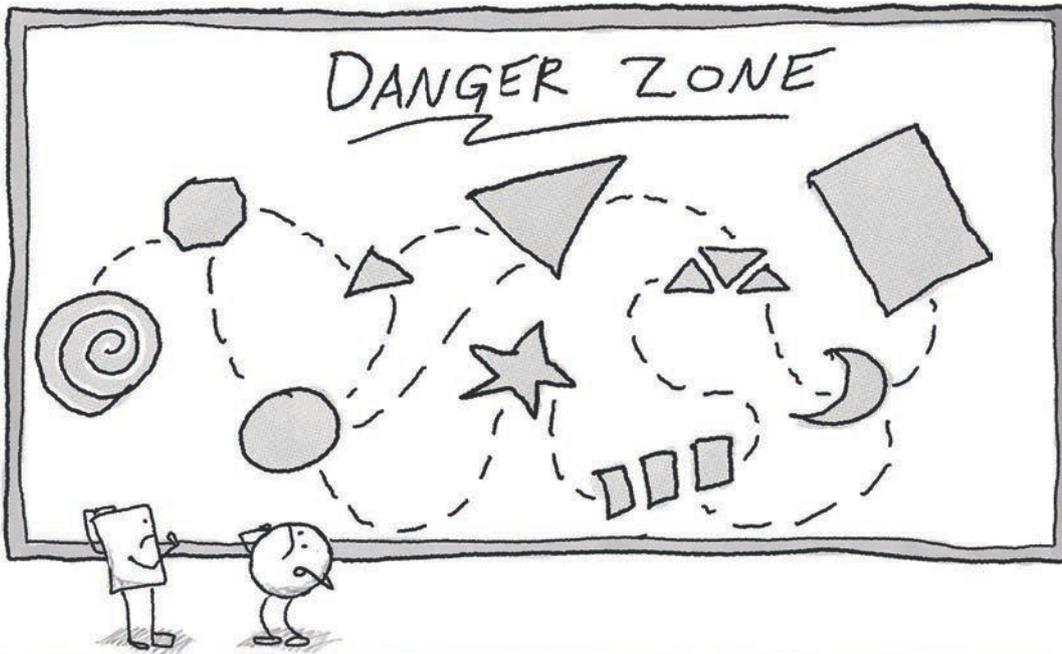
In addition, diverse assessment can be a way of encouraging students to develop a wide range of perspectives and capacities for knowledge.



# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN ASSESSMENT



A traditional assessment structure is something that teachers and certain kinds of students are very familiar with. However, how well does it prepare students for their diverse futures outside of university?



On the other hand, a widely diverse range of assessment modes can be confusing for students and teaching staff alike, especially if the assessment modes don't clearly align with the course's learning objectives and activities.

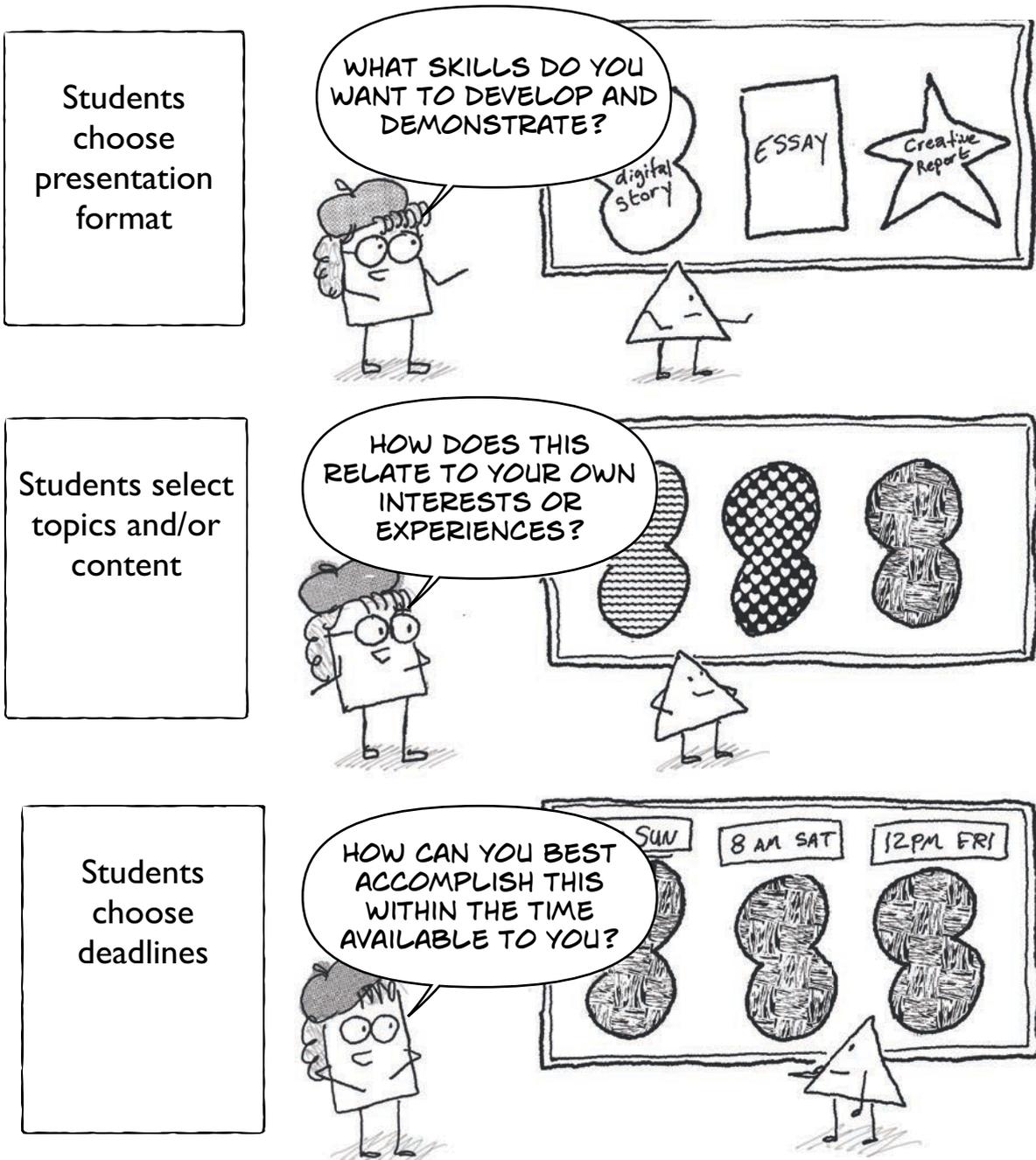


An ideal assessment structure uses diverse modes of assessment in a strategic way to build upon each other. The structure should support the course's learning objectives.

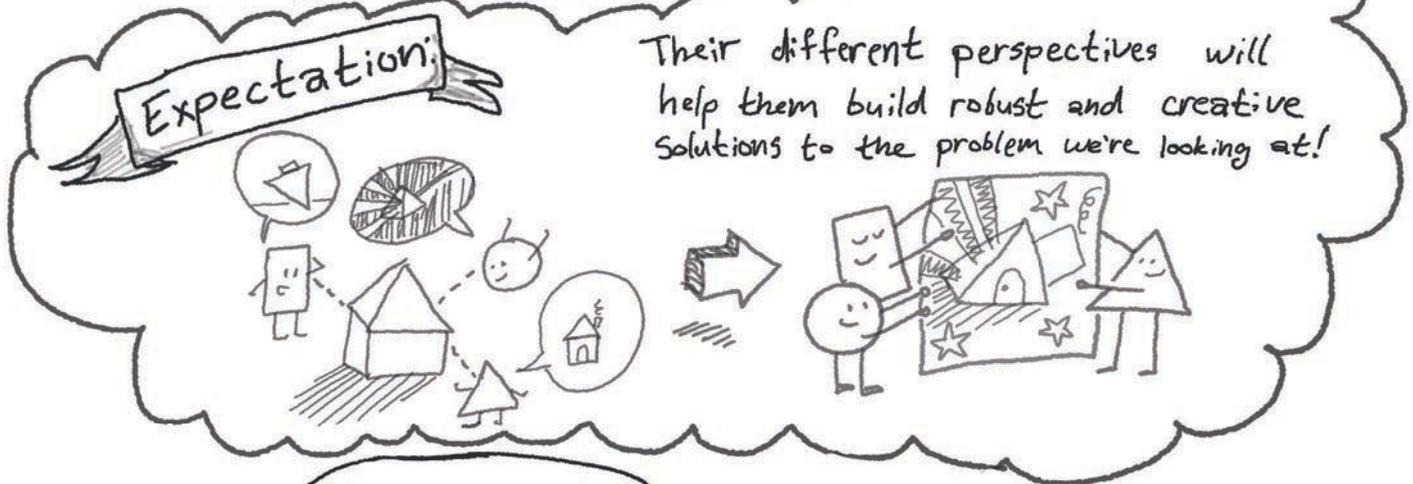
# Assessment should be....



Diversify assessment by including students in how tasks and assignments are set. For example, "This assignment needs to assess your writing skills and is worth 30% ... what do you want to do?"



# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN CLASS GROUPS



Empowering diverse co-creation within student teams is important, but can be a struggle! Numbering off student groups so that they don't self-select into homogenous groups can be a good strategy.

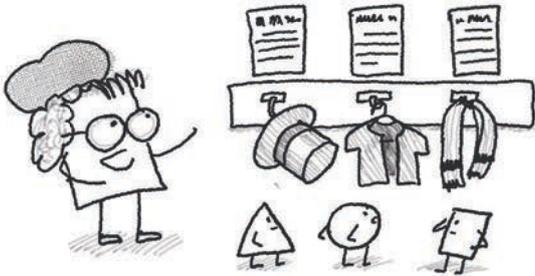
Working in groups outside of their immediate comfort zones can help students to learn to:

- work well with others.
- respect opinions.
- value diversity

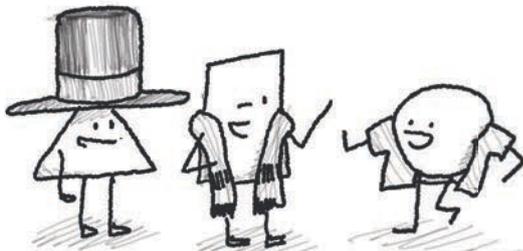
HOWEVER, it can also isolate and confuse students, especially if you don't explicitly teach the ways you want the groups to work.

## Strategies for encouraging diverse and inclusive ad-hoc groups

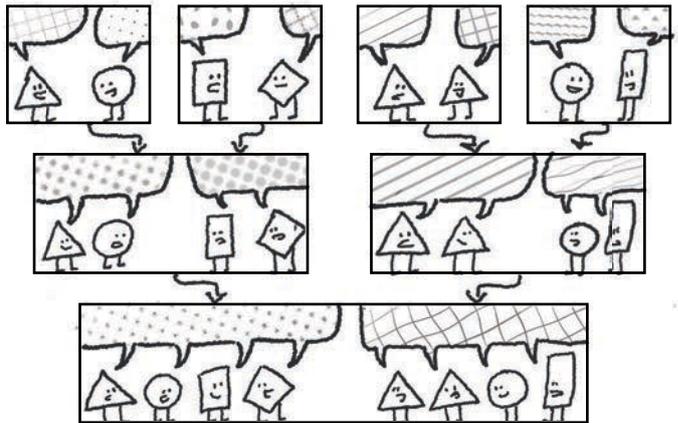
Provide distinct roles and descriptions of what each role should do in the group...



... and allow students to self-select what roles they will play.



Consensus building: a discussion activity that begins with discussions between groups of two. After a set period of time, each group merges with another, into a group of four. Next, they become a group of eight.



Keep merging until the entire class is involved!

## Strategies for encouraging diverse and inclusive longer-term project

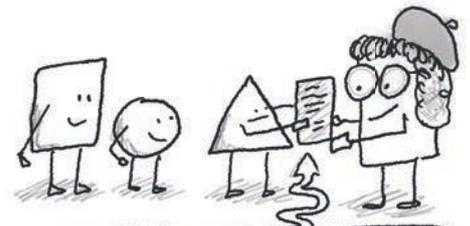
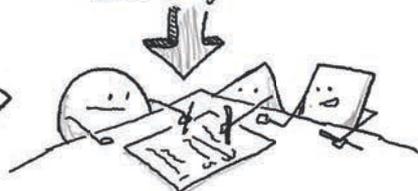
Have students go out somewhere and send photos of their trip.

Require groups to develop constitutions to agree on how they will work together.

Have students formally agree on to how they will report and track their progress.



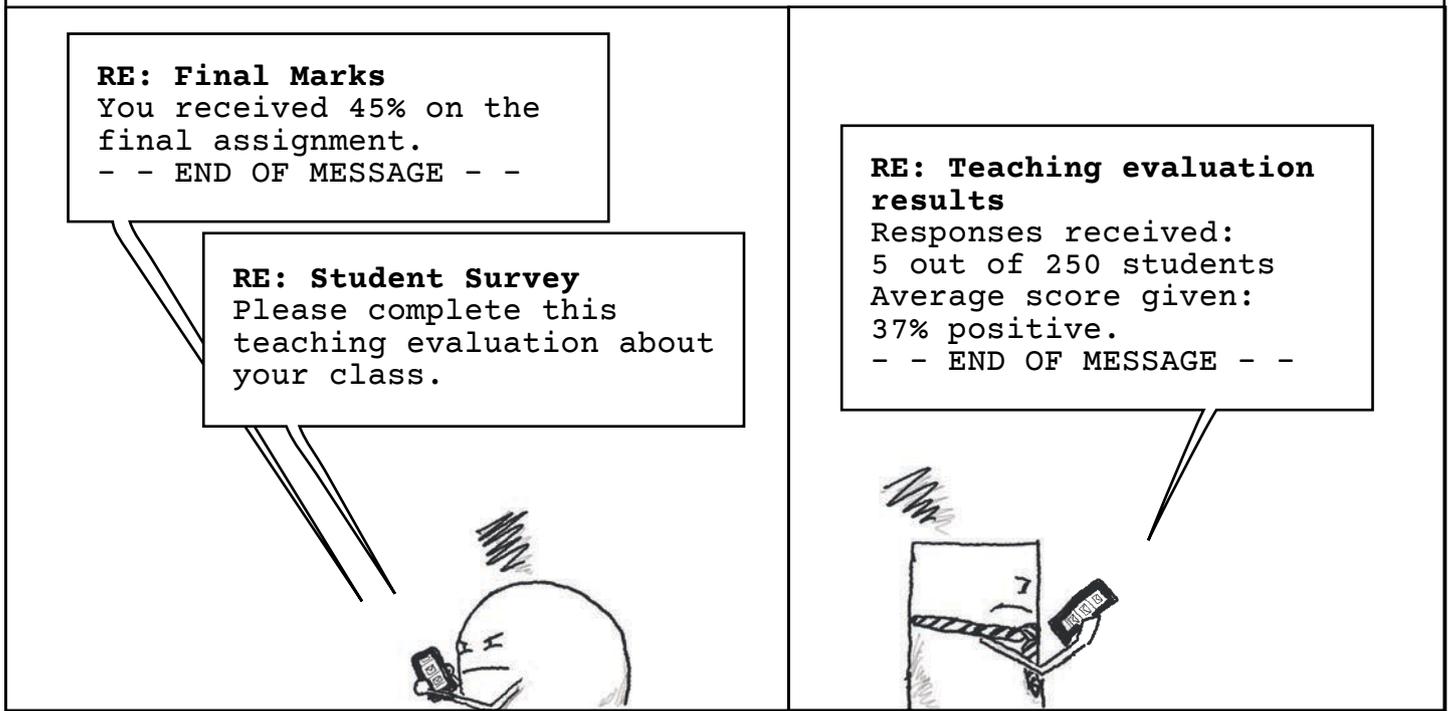
- Expectations for group and individual members.
- Agreement on which platforms will be used for communication.
- Who brings snacks.



- Group minutes?
- Social media posts?
- Collaborative diaries?
- Shared spreadsheets?

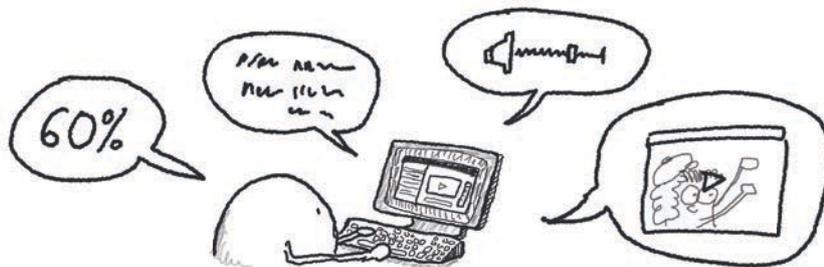
# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN FEEDBACK

Assessment and feedback are important to students, as well as to teachers and course coordinators. Consider the ways that you currently provide feedback to students, and the ways that you receive feedback from them. For efficiency, assessment is often reduced to a number or percentage, but that isn't always what we need to know.



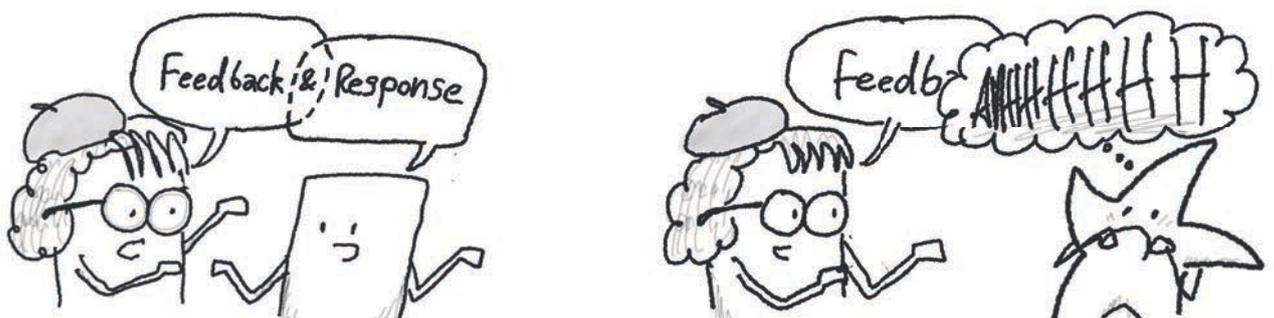
Feedback to students should take diverse learning styles into account.

For example, it's possible to provide written feedback in many different ways, but technology also makes it easy to record feedback as an audio or video file for the student to refer to.



Sometimes the best ways to give feedback is in person. For some students this can be comforting, but for others it can be terrifying! Allowing students options in how they access and receive feedback ensure that they can listen in a way that suits them best.

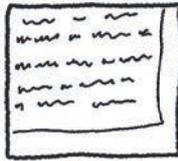
This may be difficult to do with every assignment, but you can use different feedback modalities for each assignment to provide variety diversity in assessment across an entire course.



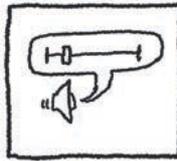
## Feedback Modalities



In-text comments



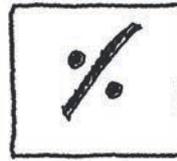
Written Summaries



Audio Recordings



Video Recordings



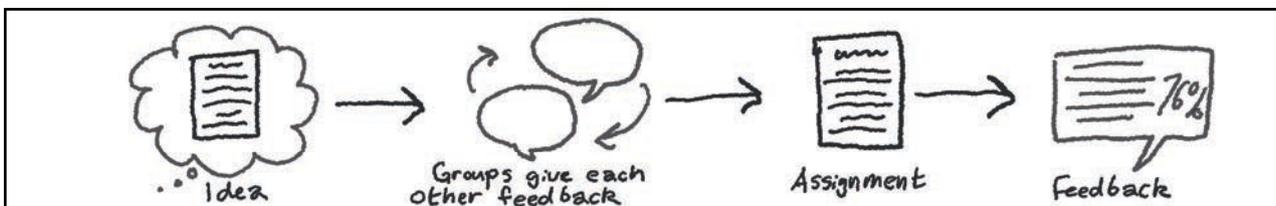
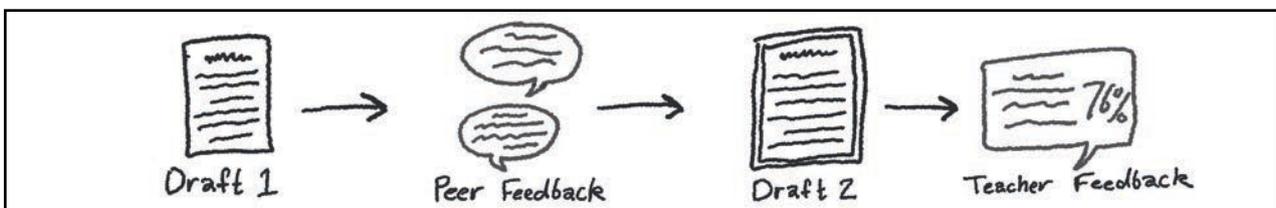
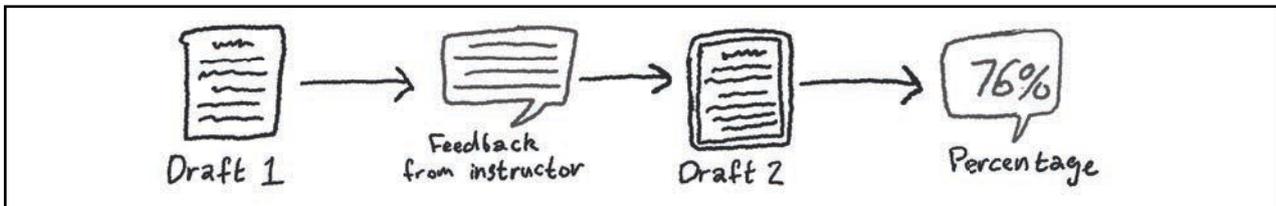
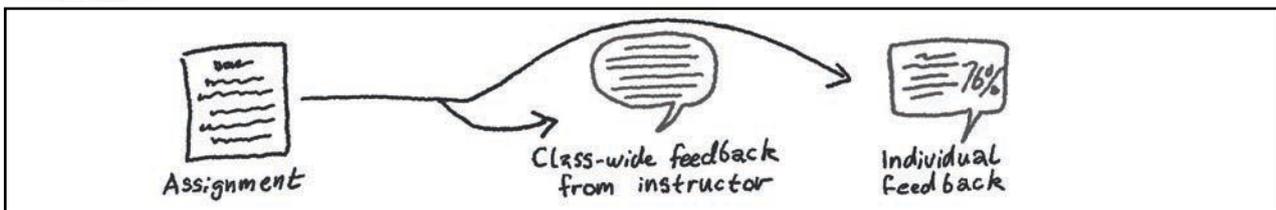
Percentages



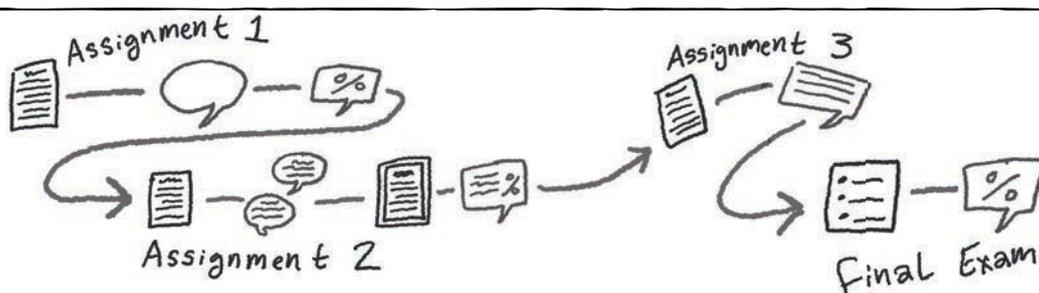
Face-to-Face

We usually can't do all of these at once! However, you might be able to employ different modalities on different assignments, taking into account what kind of feedback best matches student needs and learning outcomes.

### Diverse timelines for providing feedback



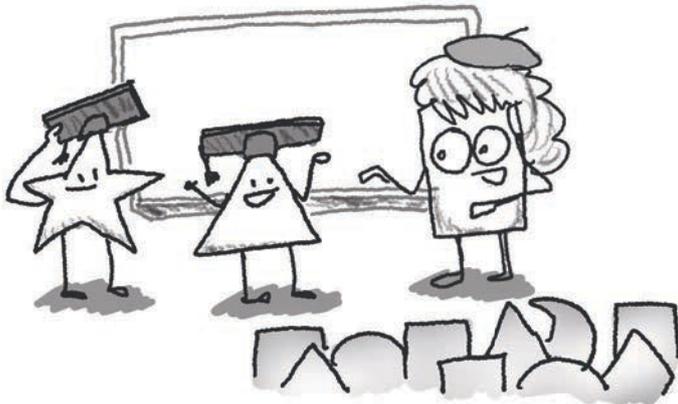
Assessments should link together, moving learning forwards and building toward whatever is coming next.



# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN COURSE REVIEWS

In order to receive student feedback, it's best to start at the beginning of the year. For example, invite previous students to talk about their experiences, and how feedback you received from them helped to shape the course.

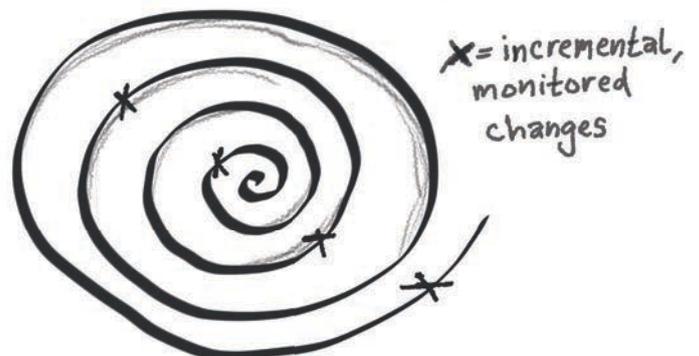
Then, don't think of feedback as something that just happens during end-of-the-year surveys. Give students ongoing opportunities to tell you how they are going. This lets you quickly course correct if something isn't working for the students.



Course reviews can be an ongoing process, and should draw from multiple sources:



Course reviews should be an iterative process — you rarely need to change **EVERYTHING**, but little changes overtime can add up to big improvements, like a virtuous circle.



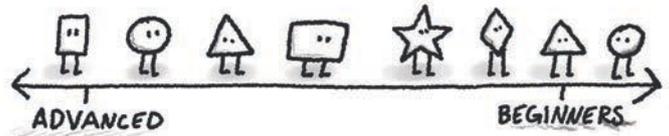
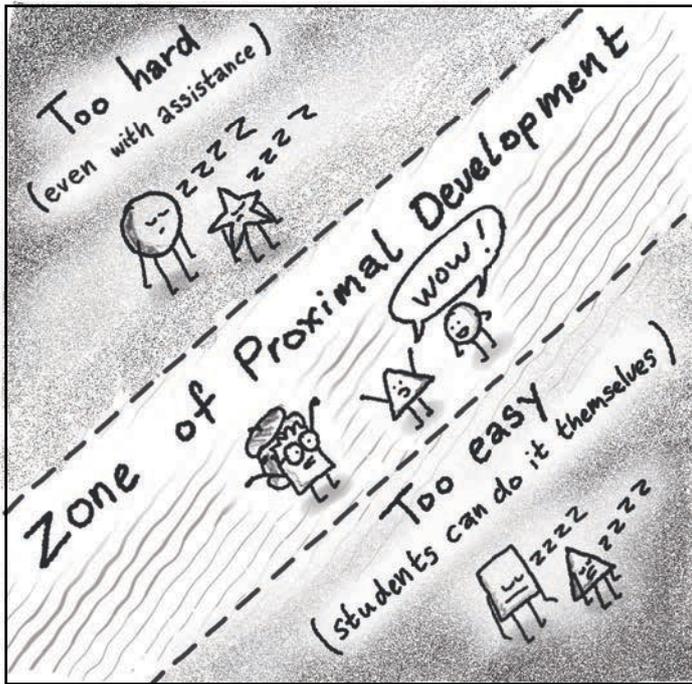
Consider:  
-Content  
-Delivery  
-Assessment

For things that are working, ask:  
How can I better support it?

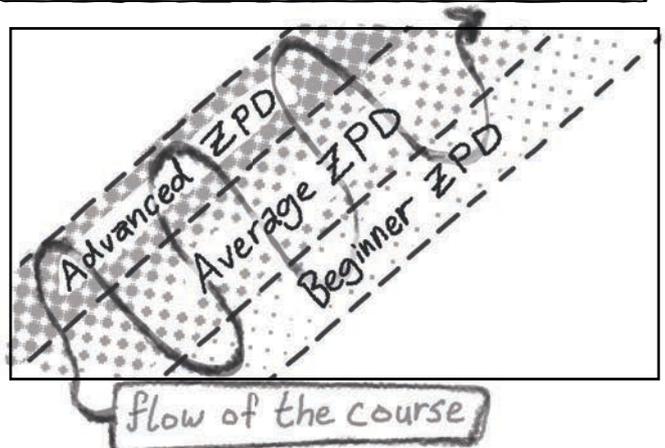
For things that aren't working as well, ask:  
What can I fix?  
What do I need to get help to fix?

Vygotsky suggests that Teaching should be centered in the Zone of Proximal Development, where students are able to accomplish things with assistance. If the work is too easy OR too challenging, students get bored.

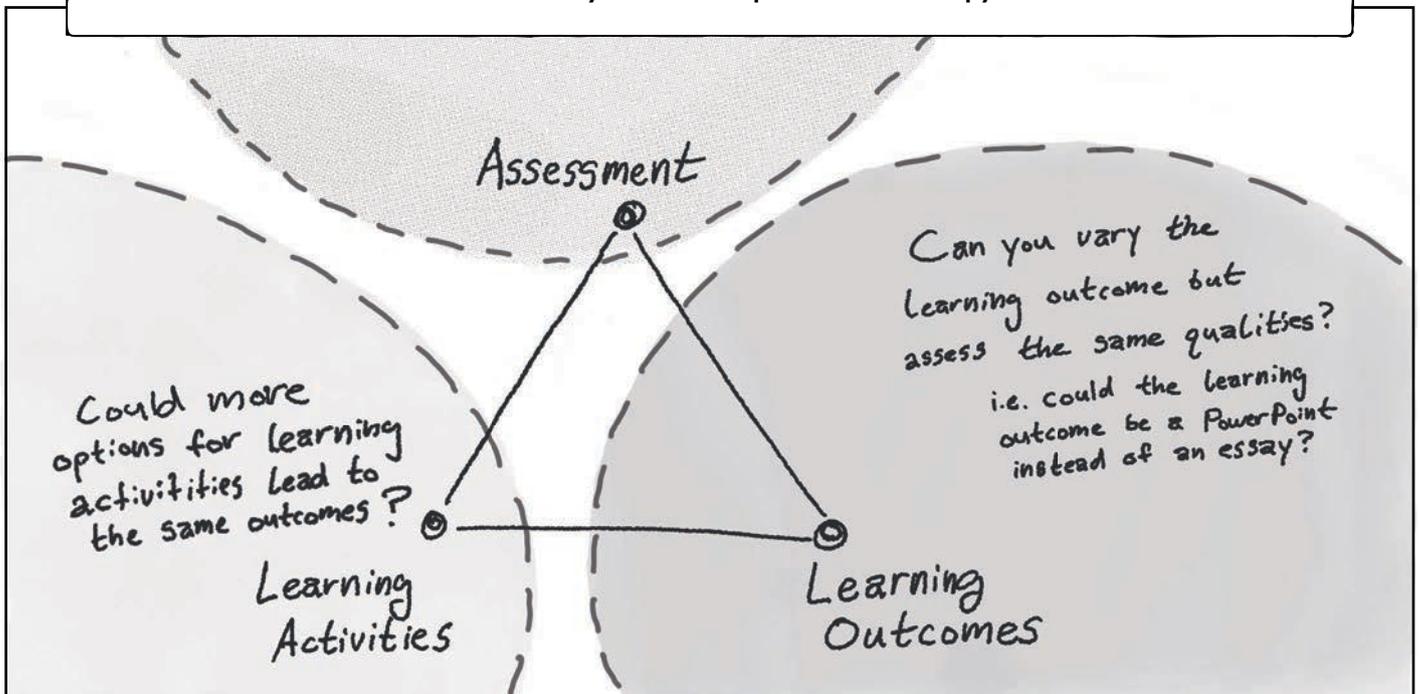
In diverse classrooms, every student has a different Zone of Proximal Development.



To account for this, class activities should vary in difficulty, moving in and out of different students ZPDs, but hitting everyone at some point!



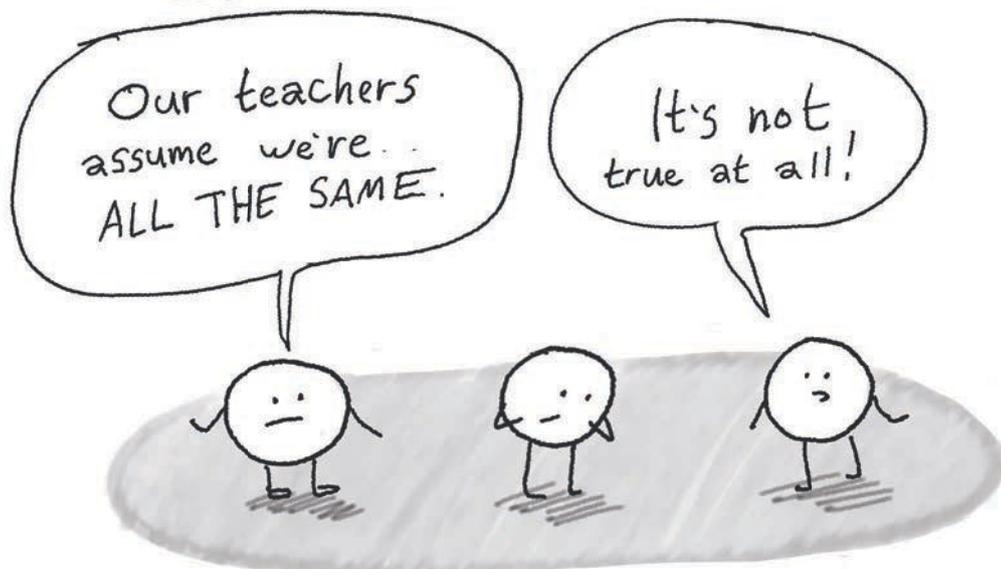
Think about what you can improve on this pyramid...



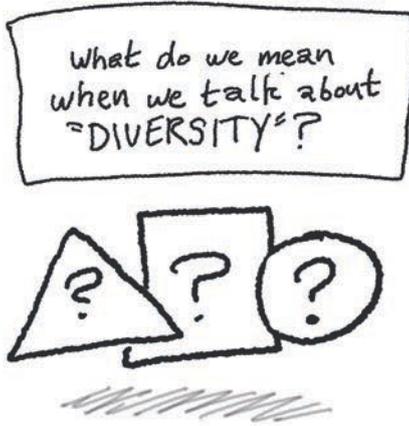
**Learning Outcomes, Learning Activities and Assessment** should all be grounded in the University's **Graduate Attributes**.

# THE SHAPES OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

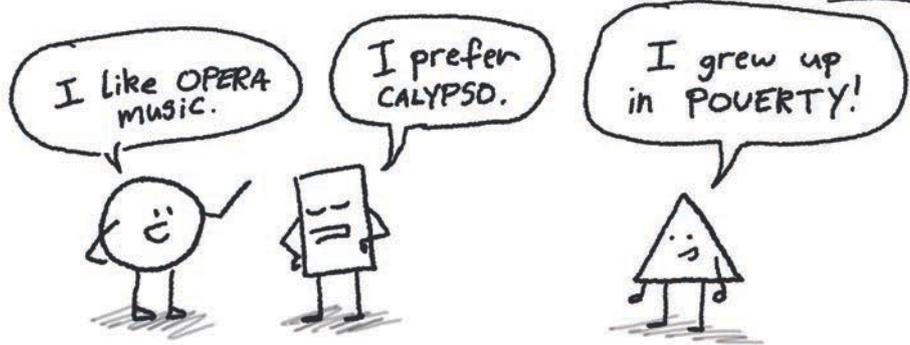
It can be easy to assume things about students based on how they look or who they spend their time with, but that doesn't paint a full picture of who they are.



If these **shapes** are three-dimensional, how much more complex are **people**?



This comic uses SHAPES as an abstract metaphor for DIFFERENCE ... but not all differences are EQUAL!

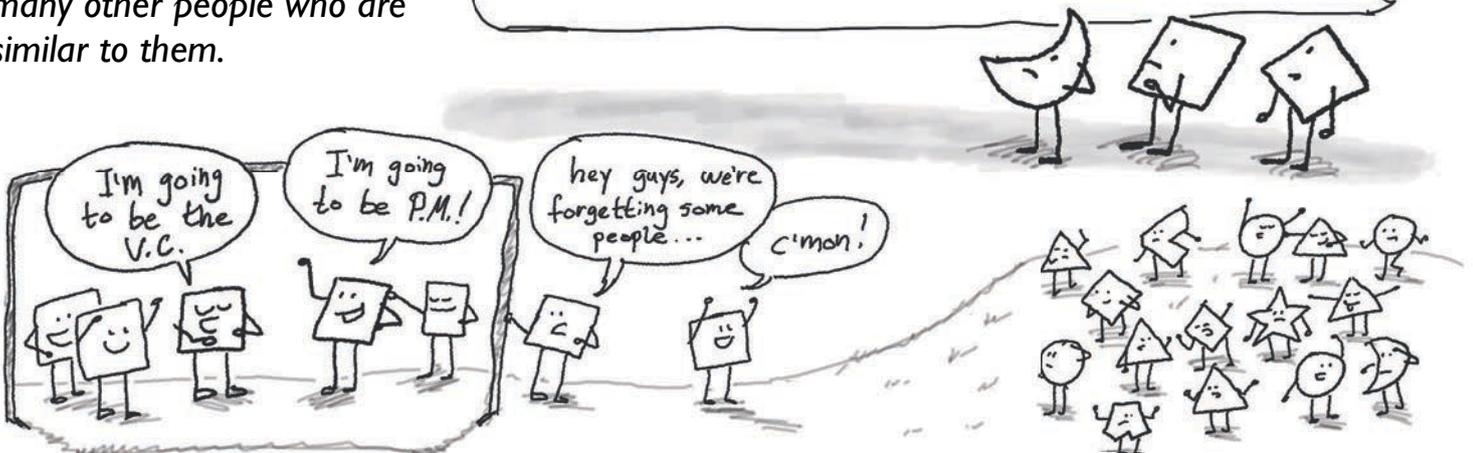
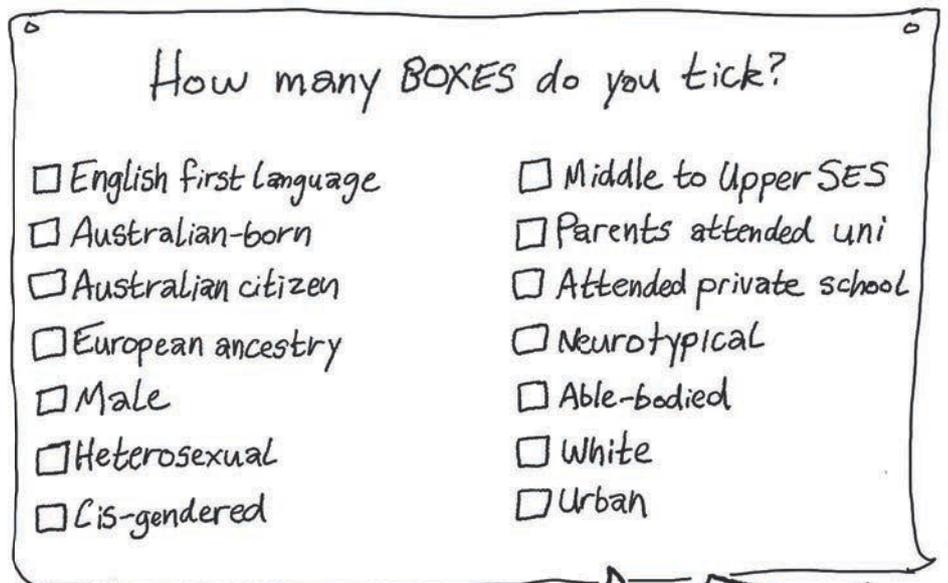
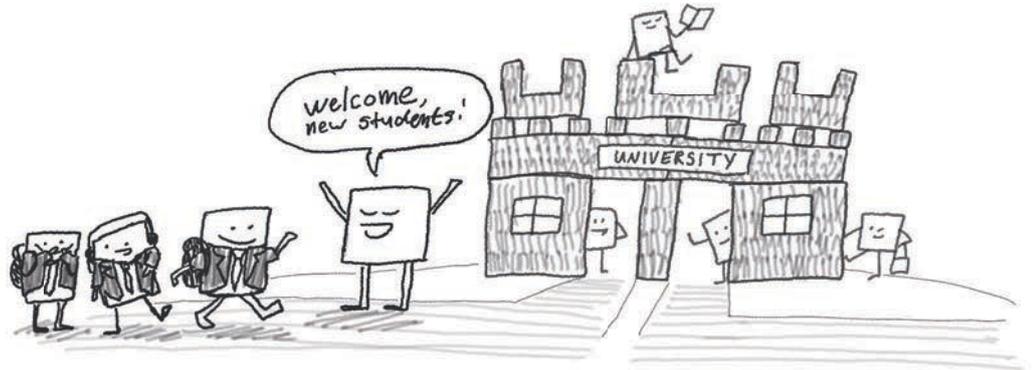


Australian society in general, and Australian universities in particular, have historically been built upon power structures that privilege certain kinds of people.

The more you fit into this shape, the fewer challenges you will face at this university.

The more you don't fit this shape, the more likely you are to feel excluded by university life.

People who fit this shape face a clearer path toward universities and encounter many other people who are similar to them.



Universities are becoming more open and inclusive of diversity, but people who most fit the traditional university identity have a responsibility to make the extra effort required to welcome, accommodate and respect people who are different from themselves.

**Developed by the Diversity and Inclusion in Teaching Community of  
Practice, 2018**

Kim Barbour, Media Studies

Ben Chandler, Student Health and Wellbeing

Melissa Connor, Manager, Work-Integrated Learning

Christopher Davis, Manager - Indigenous Engagement Development

Natalie Edwards, French Studies

Laura Grenfell, Law School

Anne Hewitt, Law School

Aaron Humphrey, Media Studies

Joy McEntee, School of Humanities

Dee Michell, Social Sciences

John Murphy, Learning Enhancement and Innovation

Giang T Nguyen, Applied Mathematics

Beth Nosworthy, Law School

Colleen Ortega, Learning Enhancement and Innovation

Braden Phillips, School of Engineering

Claudia Szabo, Computer Science

Anna Szorenyi, Gender Studies

Linda Westphalen, School of Education

Natalie Williamson, Department of Chemistry

Elizabeth Yong, Engineering



Use this space to share your thoughts about diversity and inclusion in assessment — you can use words, draw a picture, or both! You can also tell us what liked about the comic, what we should change or add, and how we could make it better. You can tear off this page and hand it to a friendly DITCOP member, or e-mail a photo of it to [ditcop@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:ditcop@adelaide.edu.au)

**Diversity and Inclusion in  
Teaching Community of Practice  
2018**