Peer and Self Assessment in Strategy and Change: A Service Industry Approach

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The peer and self assessment tools described in this case study highlight how these practices can be utilised to support the exchange of ideas, values and culture as well as provide multiple perspectives and insights an individual alone could not self-generate.

Context

*Strategy and Change: A Service Industry Approach* is a final year course for students studying tourism, hotel, sport and event management. In contemporary organisations servicing these sectors, the skilful management of organisational strategy and change is an essential prerequisite for success. Accordingly, the course introduces students to the management of strategy in such organisations, and seeks to prepare them for management roles in these rapidly changing and increasingly uncertain industrial environments. As the course is only offered to final year students, it seeks to integrate the knowledge they have accumulated throughout their degree program. Students are exposed to strategic management principles that are common across each discipline area of sport, tourism, hotel and event management. By analyses of discipline-specific cases and scenarios, students deepen their understanding of strategy processes.

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a broad knowledge and understanding of the principles and thought processes related to strategic management (content & cognitive outcome);
2. Apply diagnostic skills for analysing organisational problems (application outcome);
3. Conduct environmental scanning in the context of strategic planning and organisational change processes (application outcome);
4. Analyse specialised functions within the strategic process (application outcome)

Teaching and Learning strategy

Student learning in this course is supported using weekly readings, a two-hour lecture and a one-hour tutorial per week combined with a sequence of linked assessment items. In lectures, material is presented that expands upon the weekly readings. Lectures may sometimes incorporate guest presenters. Tutorials consist of
discussions, case analyses and presentations. The lectures, tutorials and course readings illustrate the conceptual material contained in the course through a wide range of examples from the various industries represented. Student attendance at all course lectures and tutorials, together with completion of all assessment items, is considered necessary for the satisfactory achievement of all the course learning outcomes.

**ASSESSMENT**

There are four formal items of assessment that contribute to the overall mark and grade for this course, with one of these in two parts. The tasks are participation in tutorial activities throughout the semester, an early (short) mid-semester examination in multiple choice format (week 5), an "environmental analysis" in two parts (explained below) and a final examination consisting of a blend of MCQ and short answer questions.

Peer and self evaluation occurs formally in the context of the environmental analysis, but also informally through tutorial participation.

**Assessment Item 1: Tutorial Engagement - 5%**

This assessment item recognises that being present at tutorials (attendance) enhances student learning, and that actively taking an interest in the course material and participating in group discussion (engagement) will facilitate deeper understanding. After attendance at five tutorials, students earn one mark for each subsequent tutorial they attend for a maximum of five marks. A roll is taken in each tutorial. Another five marks may be earned by means of meaningful contribution to tutorials through participation. This means that students need to actively contribute in the form of discussion, comments and questions. Levels of active and meaningful participation are recorded throughout the semester by the tutor. The tutor will determine whether individual student contributions have meaningfully added to the learning outcomes of the tutorial. This total Tutorial Engagement mark (10 marks) will constitute 5% of a student’s final grade.

Since tutorial participation is fundamentally a group communication process, this assessment item supports the achievement of Learning Outcomes 1-4. The tutorial activities expose students to the ideas of their peers (whom may have differing perspectives), thereby enriching the learning experience. Tutorial engagement supports the development of Griffith Graduate Skills such as effective communication (written, oral and interpersonal), information literacy, problem solving, critical evaluation, working in teams, ethical behaviour and responsible citizenship.

Tutorials are also fundamentally a learning experience in which guidance and feedback are integral to the process. Some of this guidance and feedback is from the tutor, some from other students (informal peer feedback in discussion) and some is the result of self-reflection (informal self-evaluation) that has been informed though what has been learned/discussed in tutorials, through readings and from lectures.
Assessment Item 2: Short MCQ examination (One hour, 40 items, 10%).

This item of assessment is simply to assess the content knowledge students have acquired at an early point in the course. It is designed to help ensure that students are motivated to engage in active learning from the beginning of the course. It provides both staff and students with early information about progress in teaching and learning. As such, its function is to act as an early warning device as part of Griffith's Amber Alert strategy.

Assessment Item 3.
(Part 1) Draft Environmental Analysis Report (Week 6) for peer appraisal (MAX 3000 words) Wk 7 - 15%
(Part 2) Final Environmental Analysis Report (3000 words max, Wk 9) 25%

In the Week 2 tutorials, students receive the task sheet for the environmental analysis report (See Appendix 1). They will then form into groups of three. Each group is assigned a unique identifying number and will choose an industry sector that suits them (i.e. tourism, hotel, sport, or event management). In the Week 3 tutorial, a class exercise is undertaken that involves determining the criteria for evaluation of the environmental analysis report (See Appendix 2). Involving students in developing these criteria helps them do a better job of preparing such a report. The criteria the students develop are the ones actually used for assessment of the report. An example of how these may look appears as Appendix 3.

Each group prepares a draft Environmental Analysis Report (3000 word maximum). THREE copies per group of this report are handed to the tutor during the tutorial in Week 6.

The tutor then hands each group's draft report to another group for appraisal. Groups do not know in advance whose report they will receive. Each member of the receiving group takes one copy of the draft report (from another group) and is responsible for reading and appraising it. Students are provided with a template for their appraisal (See Appendix 4). The template is used together with the criteria that students developed in week 2. This helps everyone to get a better understanding of the meaning of these criteria in practice. Each appraisal is limited to one page. Appraisals are typed, and provide constructive feedback in the form of advice or guidance on how the report can be improved. Appraisals are returned to the tutor, together with the original draft report, in week 7. These are then returned to the originating group.

The groups then have two weeks time for improving their draft report. Feedback from the appraisals as well as the students’ own additional learning is to be taken into account during this time. This means that improvement of the final report is not solely dependent on the quality of the appraisals, but it is also informed by what has been learned through writing appraisals. The final report is submitted in week 9 together with the three appraisals.

Thus, there are clear individual and group responsibilities within this assessment item:

(1) Each group writes a draft report by week 6.
(2) Each individual group member then has one week to write a constructive appraisal of another group’s report.
(3) Each group receives three appraisals and then has two more weeks to finalise their report, which ideally should incorporate the three sources of feedback they now have at their disposal.

Tutors assess the quality of the appraisals’ advice and the quality of the reports. Each student receives a mark out of 15 for their appraisal. Reports are assessed against the criteria generated by the students themselves in week 2. Each group receives a mark out of 25 for its report. All members of the group receive the same group mark, which means it is a shared responsibility for each group member to ensure that all members contribute equally.

This assessment item meets Learning Outcomes 1 through 4, and helps to develop the Griffith graduate skills of oral, written, and interpersonal communication as well as evaluation, analytical and problem solving abilities. Students will also be able to apply strategic management concepts and skills to analyse the organisational environments of specifically assigned industry sectors.

Assessment Criteria

In terms of assessment criteria, there are four relevant appendices:
- Appendix 1: A template for the appraisals
- Appendix 2: Specific guidelines on how to manage the process of involving students in the generation of assessment criteria
- Appendix 3: The actual task sheet for the environmental analysis report
- Appendix 4: The envisaged appearance of a marking criteria sheet after students have gone through the criteria formulation process

Assessment Item 4 – Final examination, two hours, 45%

All the readings, lectures, tutorials and assessment items throughout the semester are integrated. Student learning facilitated through these activities is assessed with a final examination consisting of a blend of MCQ and short answer questions. The exam should assure students that their individual learning as well as team and group learning is appropriately recognised. The final examination’s position at the end of the course also helps to ensure that student learning at the end of the course (when it is most advanced) is influential on the final grade.

Principles of Good Practice illustrated by the practice

The incorporation of peer and self assessment in this course is an innovation in that it is designed to achieve several outcomes consistent with principles of good practice in assessment.

First, it helps to engender student engagement in the learning tasks - what Chickering and Gamson (1987) referred to as “time on task”. Quite simply, learning
requires effort. The more time spent on tasks that are relevant to the achievement of desired learning outcomes, the more likely those outcomes are to be achieved.

Second, peer and self assessment are by nature authentic and resemble the kinds of tasks graduates of this program may reasonably expect to encounter when working as managers in this discipline (Biggs, 2006). Authenticity in assessment helps students to engage in the tasks because of their perceived relevance to the real world.

Third, the assessment aims to enhance the constructive alignment between student assessment activities, the associated learning tasks and the achievement of desired learning outcomes (Biggs, 2002, 2006; Meyers & Nulty, 2009). The assessment items are designed and sequenced in a way that ensures that each informs the next, building improved performance as students progress through the course. Accordingly, it is also notable that the award of marks increases for each successive item. In this way, learning outcomes that are more advanced carry more weight, while at the same time marks are given for interim learning achievements in order to facilitate student engagement and motivation.

Fourth, and related to the last two, the assessment in this course aims to engender the kinds of lifelong learning outcomes characterised by the following statement:

“Peer and self assessment practices are practices that learners integrate into their ways of thinking and doing and take forward through their lives. They support the exchange of ideas, values and culture, provide multiple perspectives and insights an individual alone could not self-generate, they help to inform judgement by acting as a vehicle that helps induct students into, create and participate in a community of critical scholarly enquiry” (Nulty, In press)

Thus, the use of peer and self evaluation further the development of the skills graduates of this program will need. Managers cannot be effective without them (Edwards, 1999). The use of these activities in the learning environment is also potent for learning: student understanding of the criteria by which they can judge the work of others and themselves is improved through practicing this skill.
Appendices

Appendix 1 - Detailed instructions for assessment item 3
Appendix 2 – Procedure for developing assessment criteria
Appendix 3 – Possible look of marking criteria sheet
Appendix 4 – Template for Peer Appraisals
Appendix 1 - Detailed instructions for assessment item 2

TASK SHEET: 3001HSL ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS PAPER

Due Date: Week 6 tutorials for the draft; then Week 9 for the final submission

Please Note: Final submission is through Off Campus & Assignment Handling Service.

Value: 25%

The Task
An environmental analysis is a necessary first step before internal organisational analysis and the later development of a strategic plan. Together these processes constitute strategic analysis. For this assessment item you will carry out the first part of strategic analysis. In a group of three, you will undertake an environmental analysis of a particular industry sector. Information on how to conduct an environmental analysis is presented in your text on pages 178-182. Please choose one of the following sectors for your analysis: south-east Queensland whale watching, south-east Queensland sky diving, Gold Coast or Brisbane (choose one) wedding planners or the Gold Coast backpacker sector.

Your paper should be in report format with an Executive Summary, brief introduction conclusion section and a reference list. In addition the body of your report should consist of:

1. A description of your chosen sector (approx. size, consumer groups served, core business, etc.) followed by a broad explanation of the factors that influence the sector’s demand and cost structures.
2. A detailed analysis of the sector’s task environment using Porter’s five forces model.
3. A detailed analysis of the sector’s broad environment using an established broad environment model.
4. A separate section based on your task and broad environmental that analyses identifies at least three key strategic issues facing organisations in this sector.

In developing your report utilise the mainstream management and strategic management literature as well as the more specific literature in your particular field (sport, tourism, hotel or event management). You will also need industry-specific anecdotal support. For that, you should consult industry specific sources (e.g. the official websites of organisations and industry groups), and the popular press (e.g., newspapers; the Factiva database).

Be sure to clearly state your chosen sector in your introduction before addressing the four points referred to above. You should finish your report with a concluding section that leads the reader to a clear understanding of the key environmental aspects that will influence future strategy formulation for organisations in your chosen sector.

You will work out the marking criteria for this report in the Week 3 tutorial. A criteria sheet will then be generated and posted on Learning@Griffith by the end of Week 4.

Instructions Checklist:
Attach this sheet to your report after your cover sheet, and please tick each of the following submission instructions below to signify that your report complies with the checklist.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTRUCTIONS CHECKLIST</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>CHECK Tutors’ use only</th>
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<tr>
<td>(Fill out and attach this double-sided sheet to your report after your cover sheet)</td>
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<td>Excluding reference list, the paper is no longer than 3000 words, and a computer-generated word count appears in the space below:</td>
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<td>ASSIGNMENT WORD COUNT:</td>
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<td>Paper is not submitted in any sort of plastic sleeve, folder or envelope, but simply has a staple in the top left corner.</td>
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<td>The complete document consists of (i) the OCAHS Group Assignment Cover Sheet (see <a href="http://www.griffith.edu.au/ins/assignments/">http://www.griffith.edu.au/ins/assignments/</a>); (ii) this double-sided sheet all filled out; and (iii) the actual assignment.</td>
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<td>On behalf of the group, a group member has submitted this copy of the assignment to SafeAssign. That group member’s name is written below:</td>
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<td>The assignment is written in 12-point font, and is double-spaced.</td>
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<td>We seek written feedback on this assignment (if this is not ticked, or “No” is ticked, the only feedback will be a final mark).</td>
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DEVELOPING THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The purpose of this activity is to develop a common set of criteria which will be used to mark the analysis assignment. So essentially, what we are attempting to do here is work out an answer to the question, “What would make a good assignment for this environmental analysis?” As the assignment is worth 30 marks, we will also need to work out how to allocate those marks. To do this, we will follow the steps below:

1. Students will receive the assignment task sheet in the Week 2 tutorial. Having considered the task, students will be asked to attend the Week 3 tutorial with three criteria that they individually believe will contribute to a good assignment.

2. In the Week 3 tutorial, the tutor will facilitate a discussion in which every student will read out one criterion from his/her list. The tutor will make no comment on the criterion suggested, but will simply write each one down on butcher paper or OHP in a clearly visible location in the room.

3. Once everyone has suggested a criterion, there will be a period for clarification of certain points (where needed), and for combining statements that seem to address similar points.

4. Students will then return to their groups to break the criteria down into categories. For example, do a number of criteria all relate to presentation, to structure, to analysis, etc.?

5. Students will then be asked to rank the criteria groupings from highest priority down. So if there end up being five criteria groups, they should be ranked from 1 to 5, with the most important being ranked 1. The convenor will then use this information to weight marks among the suggested categories.

6. A straw poll will be taken on whether the suggested criteria should be accepted, or if not, what else should be considered.
Appendix 3 – Possible look of marking criteria sheet

NAMES, ID Nos:
1. ___________________________________ 2. ___________________________________
3. ___________________________________

TUTORIAL DAY, TIME: ___________________________ CAMPUS (Please Circle):  GC   NA
TUTOR (Please Circle): K. So                  S. Karamchandani                  T. Kunkel             A. Beaton

The main purpose of this assignment is to encourage you to apply some of your learning in strategic management to a specific area of interest and present your findings in a logical and coherent manner. The outcome of this assessment will demonstrate your ability to work in a team. Problem solving and decision making skills as well as good written communication skills will be required.

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<th>Marking Criteria</th>
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<th>Excellent</th>
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<td>The Executive Summary must stand-alone, and not be a narrative form of the table of contents.</td>
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<td>ANALYSIS OF COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT</td>
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<td>Detailed, in-depth analysis.</td>
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<td>Applies Porter’s 5-forces model thoroughly, effectively, and appropriately.</td>
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<td>Detailed, in-depth analysis.</td>
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<td>Applies an appropriate broad environment model thoroughly, effectively and appropriately.</td>
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<td>STATEMENT OF KEY ISSUES</td>
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<td>At least three issues are presented.</td>
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<td>Avoids simply listing and describing symptoms.</td>
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<td>It is concise and does not introduce new material.</td>
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<td>Flows from analysis: Each issue is clearly discernible in the environmental analyses sections of the report.</td>
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<td>CONCLUSIONS</td>
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<td>A concise wrap-up of the report that reiterates the report's purpose and states its key findings.</td>
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<td>Does not introduce new material.</td>
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<td>WRITTEN PRESENTATION OF REPORT</td>
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<td>The report should be professionally presented and must closely follow the instructions on the task sheet.</td>
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<td>Theoretical and anecdotal points are well supported and use APA referencing appropriately.</td>
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<td>Professional layout with good use of headings and subheadings.</td>
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<td>Well written. Good sentence and paragraph construction; spelling, grammar and punctuation of a high standard.</td>
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<td>Must be succinct.</td>
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Overall comment:
Appendix 4 – Template for Peer Appraisals

3001HSL Assessment Item 2
Template for Environmental Analysis Peer Appraisals

You have just received one draft copy of the environmental analysis report from another group in your tutorial. You are now individually responsible for reading and appraising it. Below is a template to guide your appraisal. You should use this template together with the criteria you helped develop in Week 2 (see assignment task sheet). Your appraisal is limited to one page. Appraisals must be typed, and must provide constructive feedback in the form of advice or guidance on what is good about the report and how it can be improved. Appraisals must be returned to the tutor, together with the original draft report, in the Week 7 tutorial. These will then be returned to the originating group.

At this point, groups then have two weeks in which to improve their draft report. Each group will now have feedback from three appraisals to take into account. However, improvement of the final report is not solely dependent on the quality of the appraisals; it is also informed by what individuals have learned through writing the appraisals. The final report is submitted in week 9 – together with the three appraisals. Appraisals are assessed on the quality of the advice provided. Each student receives a mark out of 15 for their appraisal.

List in bullet point form what was good about this report:

- 
- 
- 

List in bullet point form the ways in which this report could be improved:

- 
- 
- 

Explain what you found unique about this report:
References


